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Reformed Church at Rigi-Kaltbad

Architects: Ernst Gisel BSA/SIA, Louis Plüss, Zurich

The Protestant mountain church at Rigi-Kaltbad was erected primarily for the resort community and has no permanent pastor. It is accessible from a footpath, which widens out to form a square in front of the church. The external design of the church is characterized by the sloping roof of the rounded auditorium and the contrasting accent of the high-rise structure, the tower. In order not to interfere with the optical effect of the surroundings by building a high structure, the actual auditorium, the church proper, was placed one storey below the level of the path. The gallery, then, lies at grade level with the path. The interior descent is also proving convenient with regard to the snow conditions prevailing on the mountain.

Chapel of Our Lady on the Niesenberg AG

Architect: Hanns A. Brütsch BSA/SIA, Zug

The polygonal structure of the Chapel of Our Lady was set up on a prominent site. The high interior with its free spatial axis has carefully conceived, restrained illumination. The surroundings of the Chapel were left entirely undisturbed.

St. Fridolin's Church in Glarus

Architect: Ernest Brantschen BSA/SIA, St. Gall

The plan emerged from a public competition. At its basis is the endeavour to unite the congregation solemnly around the altar. Thus the approximately square plan and the seating groups constituting a quadrant were combined. The nave, 8 meters in height, is uniform, but sparsely illuminated by high windows, whereas the higher-sited choir is radiantly illuminated through a rose-window. The lowest part of the space is the chapel, above which is the choir loft. Both parts are clearly visible from the outside.

St. Othmars Church at Roggwil TG

Architect: Ernest Brantschen BSA/SIA, St. Gall

The small church with only 100 seats has a simple clear design. Its architectural tension is achieved mainly by the fittings. Altar, baptismal font and holy water basin were cut out of sandstone following the architect's design. Tabernacle and altar cross by Ferdinand Hasler, Altstetten, are of iron. The stained-glass windows are by Walter Burger, Berg.

Catholic Bruder-Klaus Church in Basel

Architect: Karl Higi SIA, Zurich

A quiet forecourt gives access to the church, which is entered via a deeply recessed portal. From the portal there is a view across the baptismal font toward the altar. The polar tension between priest and congregation is expressed in the sedia, the throne facing the worshippers. The large stained-glass windows are by Ferdinand Gehr, the portal by Albert Schilling.

Catholic Parish Church at Schellenberg, Liechtenstein

Architect: Eduard Ladner, Wildhaus

A simple country church was to be erected for a parish of scarcely 500 people, most of them farmers. The church is characterized by the tension set up between the nave, rectangular in plan, and the semicircular altar area. The tension is resolved by the relationship of the dimensions of the two parts, and also by the uniform flooring, the continuous walls and the vaulted ceiling spanning the whole interior.

2 Reformed Church at Oberglatt

Architects: Ernst Gisel BSA/SIA, Louis Plüss, Zurich

The community is rapidly being transformed from a farm village to a large suburban town. Of decisive importance for the future character of the village was the determination to erect the church on the old square in the centre of the village. In the planning of the church it was attempted not to disturb the existing buildings and to fit the new structure into the given site. The visitor enters the church via a small stairs leading up half a level to the actual forecourt. The tower rises up out of the interior and is the source of illumination. The interior is accented above all by the untreated concrete surfaces of the walls and the natural stone flagging on the floor. The timber construction of the roof is faced on the inside with redwood, as is the railing of the gallery. The enamelled portals were designed by Max Hellstern.

Churches of Tomorrow—for Today already

by Walter M. Förderer

In this article the author seeks to elaborate a new conception for church architecture, given our conditions of increasing urbanization, urban sprawl into the countryside and social mobility. There is becoming apparent a need for new churches everywhere in the new residential districts; but the extended type of settlement, the parcelling of the land for residential purposes and the division between the denominations are making it impossible for the church, as in the old days, to be sited in the centre of a community. However, modern church architecture—in the author's opinion—does not appear to have become aware of these changes and is continuing to comport itself, or increasingly so even, as if the church were still the focus of modern life. The more random the location of the site and the smaller the volume, the more thoughtlessly does the architect select a superficial symbolism to designate the church as such.

On the other hand, the author points out that among the public at large a certain iconological feeling is still very much present. No matter how various are the designs of modern churches, they are always clearly churches, and also their interior spatial dispositions and articulations are still comprehensible as possessing symbolic value. We have to rebuild on the basis of this understanding that is still shared by the whole community. We can even proceed from the assumption that the church always has to be an individual detached structure. Since it is no longer the focus of the community, it can be integrated in existing complexes; in fact, it can even be articulated as a floor within a central building. It is then no longer designated as a church by its external architecture, but by the nature and the application of works of art. Not only do works of art of religious significance lend themselves to the designation of a church, but, on the contrary, the residual sense of the iconological in the public can be transferred to the works of art which are installed there. They are invested with the significance inherent in the different parts of the church. In this way the purely subjective content of modern non-representational art can be rendered objective in their given spatial setting, and there can result a new understanding for this art itself.