

## Circular Voids

### Energy-efficient office building, Holderbank, Switzerland

#### Main author

**Christian Kerez**, architect, Christian Kerez AG, Zurich, Switzerland

#### Summary by the jury

This project to build a 15,000 square meter competence center includes research laboratories, office space, and generous training facilities. Perfectly circular atria cut through ceilings and floors crisscross the building, creating opportunities for employees and visitors to meet one another while also providing a sense of the building's size from within. Inner and outer loadbearing structures of the building are mutually-dependent, voids and passive solar heating allow a climate concept with a minimal technical installation with almost no core.

#### Appraisal by the jury

The project displays a series of outstanding features responding particularly well to most of the "target issues" for sustainable construction – merging architectural and technical considerations at the forefront of the discipline. The energy concept, for example, using cutting-edge surface geothermal heat-recovery, airboxes, and hybrid collectors, finds an appropriate spatial expression that would not be possible with standard systems. Here, architecture benefits from technological advances, without relinquishing its autonomy as an art form.

Notwithstanding the project's contributions to the advancement of the field, the members of the jury unanimously agreed that it must be withdrawn from the competition due to a latent conflict of interest. The design was awarded first prize in an architectural competition organized by Holcim for its proposed new center for research and development in Switzerland. Considering the proximity between the company and the Holcim Foundation with its Awards competition, the jury decided to remove the project from the award procedure. Nonetheless, respecting the exceptional value of the project, the jury conferred the first ever "Honorable Mention" of the Holcim Awards.



Image 1: The building from the outside, with its interior pillar structure supporting the slabs and the exterior bracing the building as a whole. It enhances the mutually-dependent structures and the relationship which is generated between the building and its industrial landmarks of the surrounding landscape. (Model picture: Walter Mair)



Image 2: Perfectly circular openings in ceilings and floors afford views in and through the large corporate building. They provide many opportunities for employees and visitors to see and meet one another. Users of the building sense its size not only outside, but inside as well. The atriums crisscross the deep and compact building. (Model picture: Christian Kerez)

#### Project data

Context	Architecture, building and civil engineering
Client	Holcim
Background	Private commission

#### Further authors

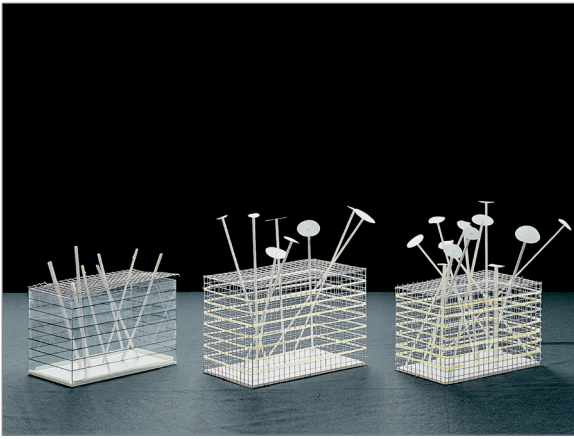


Image 3: Some conceptual models showing the principle. (Model picture: Hisao Suzuki)

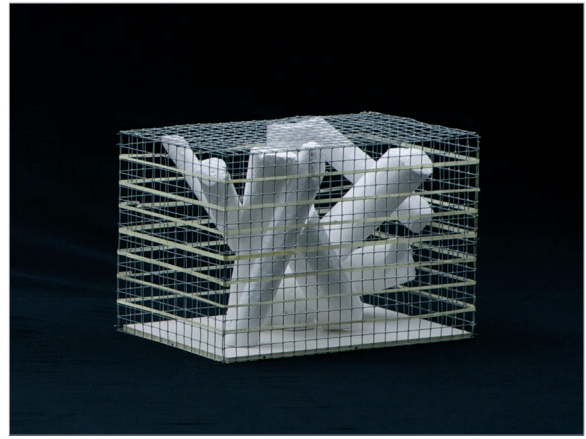


Image 4: Conceptual model showing the disposition of openings. (Model picture: Christian Kerez, Milan Rohrer)

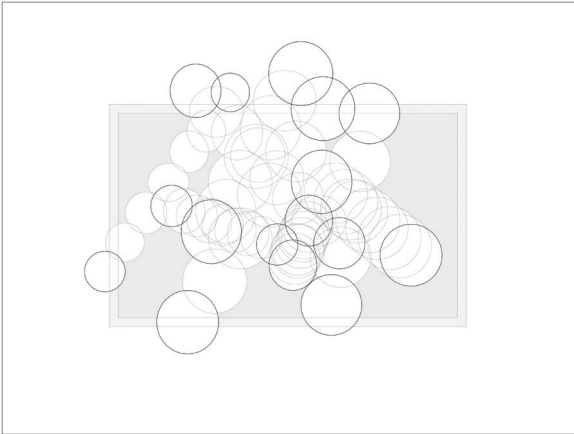


Image 5: Final layout overview of the sequence of openings.

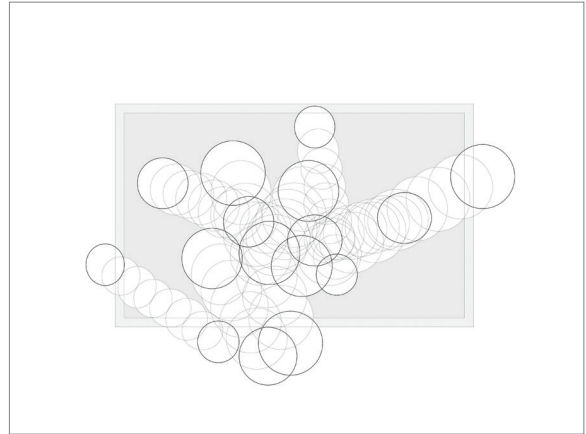


Image 6: Final layout overview of the sequence of openings.

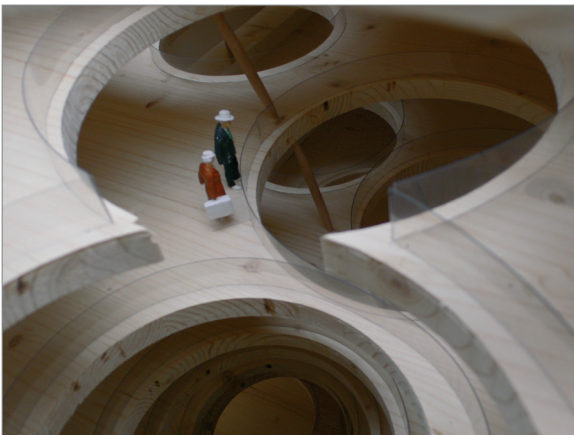


Image 7: Enhancing the relationship between floors. (Model picture: Christian Kerez)



Image 8: Situation of one internal space of the building. (Model picture: Christian Kerez)



Image 9: Model of the entire building. (Model picture: Hisao Suzuki)



Image 10: Representation of the relationship with industrial surroundings. (Rendering: Christian Kerez)