



Poolhouse

On the outskirts of Rankweil Brederis, surrounded by the latest of single-family houses, there is a hybrid live-in sculpture which reaches far beyond accustomed construction normality. Is it a complex pavilion formation, a perforated atrium house, an ultramodern interpretation of a regional farm building? None of these attempts to give a definition does justice to this one storey building.

Originally there was the plan to build a bath house by a natural pond in the backyard orchard; the longing for a detached bath house was the implicit formulation of the clients' desire to escape the sixties idyll of their single family house. Responding to the fascination of the original idea of bathing in a natural pond, the architects took the idea much further than what they initially were asked for. Why not domesticate the force of natural water? Why not cast it into abstract forms and place it in the centre of focus? Why not replace the small scale dwelling spaces of the sixties by a generous space continuum of the new millennium? Why not make the play of light and shadow, views and vistas, narrowness and wideness, the house as path and square and the artificial pond in the centre to the core theme? As a consequence of the underlying desire, the client, a couple in their forties, easily embraced the idea of unconventional living drenched in the experience and fascination of water in all its facets.

The activities of arriving, resting, cooking, eating, communicating, relaxing, storing, dressing and sleeping are lined up counterclockwise around the pool. The sequence of spaces, sensitively differentiated in orientation, visual contact, dimension and incidence of light is bound together by the omnipresent light reflections of the water surface and the stringent range of materials: exposed concrete, granite, zebrano, aluminium and glass.

The complex interior of the concrete sculpture varies from hermetic to transparent, partly separating, partly connecting the interior and the exterior. Atmospheric layers merge, being framed sometimes horizontally, sometimes vertically. The architectural elements draw a slightly distant but very precise picture in grey and green shades within which the ultimate perfection lies in every single detail. On the basement level a different atmosphere prevails: light wells give light to precisely shaped, introverted spaces. In the sauna and utility rooms the cream white shine of epoxy coating disconnects the spaces from their actual function.

In the hands of the designers the concrete is moulded into a live-in sculpture which gains its expressiveness from its inner tension between the concrete shell - complex, precise, hard -, and in the heart the tamed water - simple, soft and continually changing.

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