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Leonid Slonimsky, the founder of KOSMOS Architects, Zürich shares with "Art&signatures" concepts that are behind his recent projects:

In my article "Polygons and Butterflies" written for ArtDecision.eu. I explained the concept of a pavilion as an architectural phenomenon. Pavilions are ephemeral structures, built for a short lifespan with relatively small budgets, sometimes they become some of the most radical statements in the contemporary architecture discourse and play a more significant role in the architectural history than other, much more "permanent" buildings.

Today I would like to tell about several projects that connect art and architecture and transform the way we perceive and observe art nowadays. These projects implemented by KOSMOS Architects have different scales and context: from a small art installation to a project of reconstruction of a huge, industrial art museum.

"CREVASSE" FOR MAMCO

An important project which became in a way, a manifesto of multiple of key principles of **architecture of reuse** is "BAC" (Bâtiment d'Art Contemporain) project, which was a reconstruction of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Geneva (MAMCO and CAC). This was an international competition in three stages, and some of the most prominent architecture practices from all over the world took part. Our proposal got in the finals, along with two other proposals.

The "Crevasse" project was completed in collaboration with **De Vylder Vinck Architects**, a unique duo from Belgium, two of the most interesting architects in Europe nowadays. For the proposal we created a sort of poetic manifesto. Here is an excerpt from it:

project of reconstruction of mamco Museum, geneva, image ©Kosmos architects

"This crevasse is a cut. A crack. It is about opening. And not about designing. It is about lifting floor and opening walls. By that revealing structures and explaining space. Beams come visible. Beams are cut. Floors become edges. Walls become windows. Street is connected to the courtyard. All done precisely. At the same time straightforward. Done what is done. But no more. Clear by itself."

"CREVASSE" AND ARCHITECTURE

OPEN UP, ZÜRICH!

Another renovation of an art space which was recently completed in Zürich is the new **Lechbinska Gallery**. It is located in the center of Zürich, not far from the Opera Haus and the Kunstmuseum. The gallery occupies the space on the ground floor of the historical building of Mühlebachstrasse 12, where in the old times carriages were produced by Heinrich Eckert, a carriage-maker.

Lechbinska Gallery, Zurich, image ©Kosmos architects

The gallery is closely connected with the famous Zürich auction house "ICHEN" and was previously called "Escapement Art". The project transformed the space into a new "white cube" gallery with an enfilade of diverse spaces and an opening to the backside garden. In the white interior, two historical black columns made of cast iron were restored and are kept in their original expression: black and unpainted. The external space of the gallery was "activated" by a new staircase, painted in sky-blue color and a temporary pop-up pavilion for public gatherings in the garden. The pavilion, made of the yellow plywood boards used for concrete formwork, serves as a meditation space, a canopy, or a glühwein kiosk.

An exhibition of a design and research project "Together Spaces" with a topic of regulations and deregulations in contemporary public spaces, was designed for the OPEN HOUSE event in Zürich. It is a series of urbanistic projects in Switzerland and in other countries, that all have a common goal: to reveal the hidden potential of contemporary cities. While talking about the use of public spaces, projects raise larger, global questions: such as the usage and scarcity of existing resources; circular economy; openness and inclusivity; coexistence in the city, etc.

For the next year an Open Call was announced, which will allow artists and architects to reflect on the topics of accessibility of public spaces in cities and propose their "reading" of the topic.

DIGITAL TOTEM OF FASHION

The third project which combines art and architecture, with the art of fashion is the scenography of HEAD Défilé of 2022. It was designed by the faculty of Interior Architecture of HEAD Genève, as a continuation of interdisciplinary collaboration between the departments. The show was the first post-pandemic edition of this popular event, and following a two-week workshop with students, KOSMOS teamed up with Bertrand Van Dorp and reflected on the ways technology both separates and connects people nowadays, and explored duality in the scenography project called "Digital Totem Pole".

DIGITAL TOTEM OF FASHION, image ©Kosmos architects

The arrangement of the screens was used to show and display related details of fashion projects of students, placed 360 degrees around the "Totem". It also included each creator's name and key points and concepts. Three huge raw rocks, transported from the top of Salève mountain served as a physical and material juxtaposition of the multi-armed digital totem, constructed with the latest technology: aluminum profiles, LED-screens and electrical cords. The stones (250 kg each) served as structural reinforcement of the vertical Totem pole.

DIGITAL TOTEM OF FASHION, image ©Kosmos architects

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