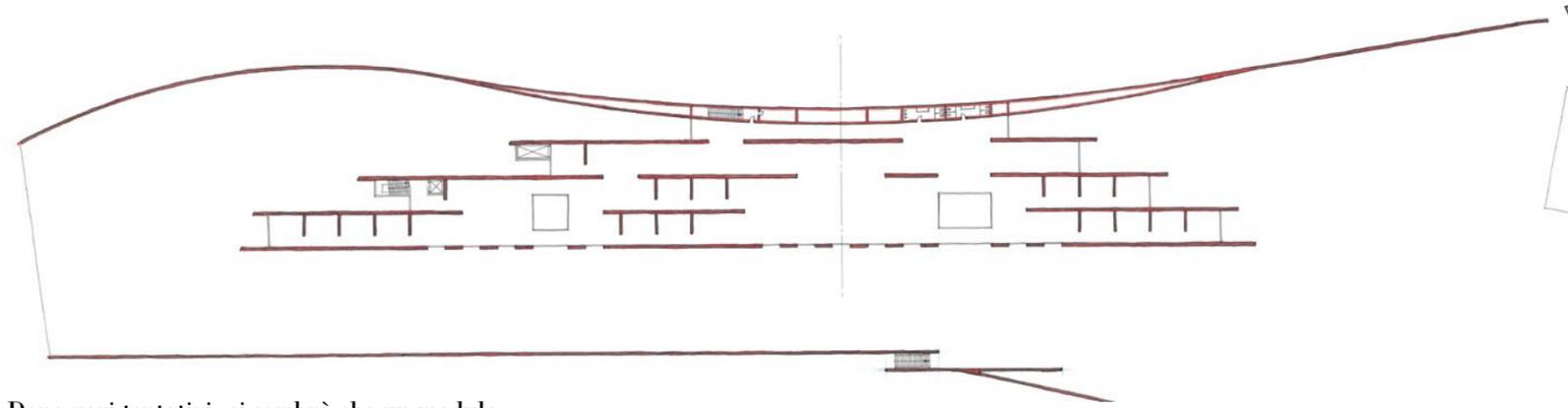




Il terreno era bello, ci andammo e già la prima volta il progetto si poteva intuire guardando il luogo. C'era un muro che divideva questa proprietà molto lunga e stretta dalla strada di Riehen, c'era un secondo muro parallelo al primo; e tutt'e due correvano in direzione nord-sud.

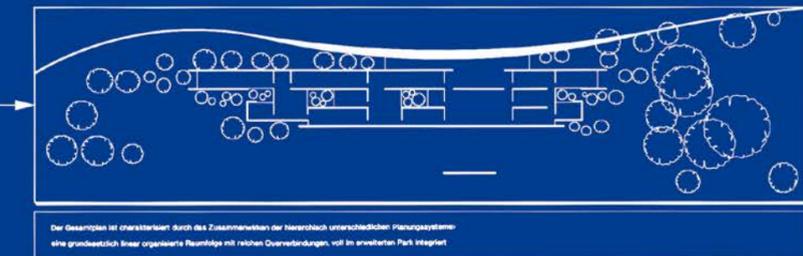
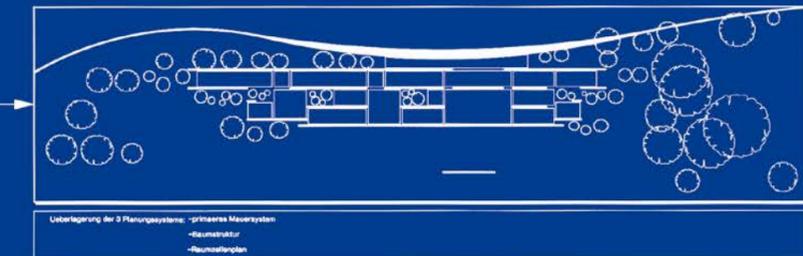
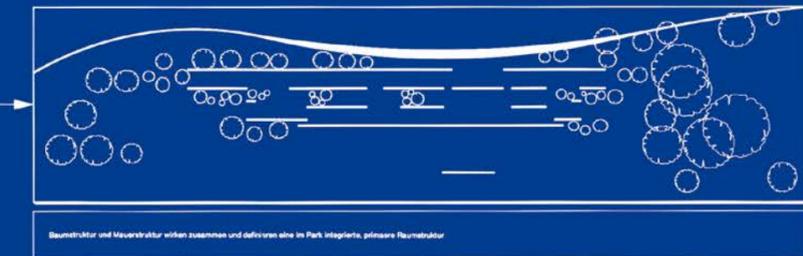
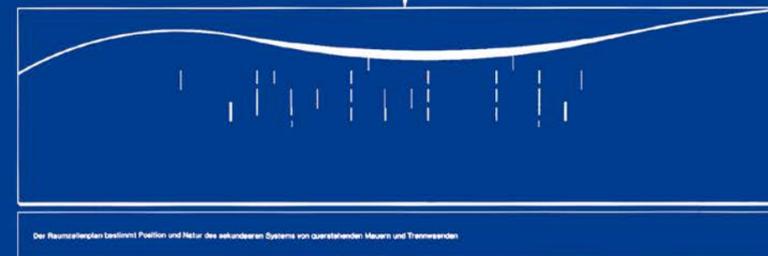
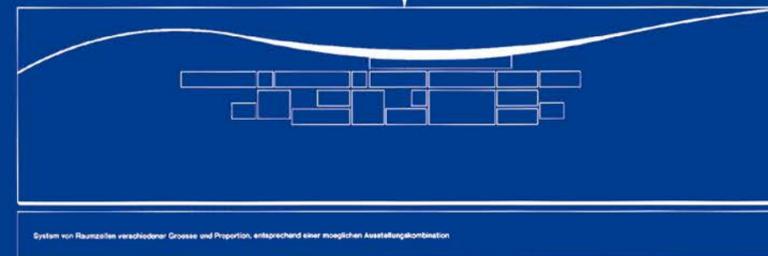
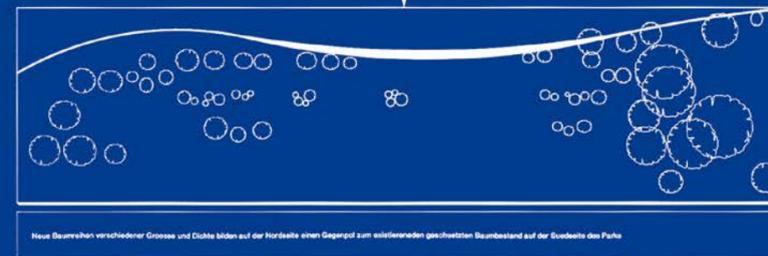
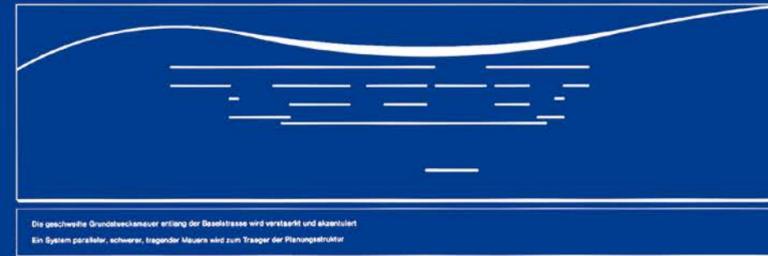
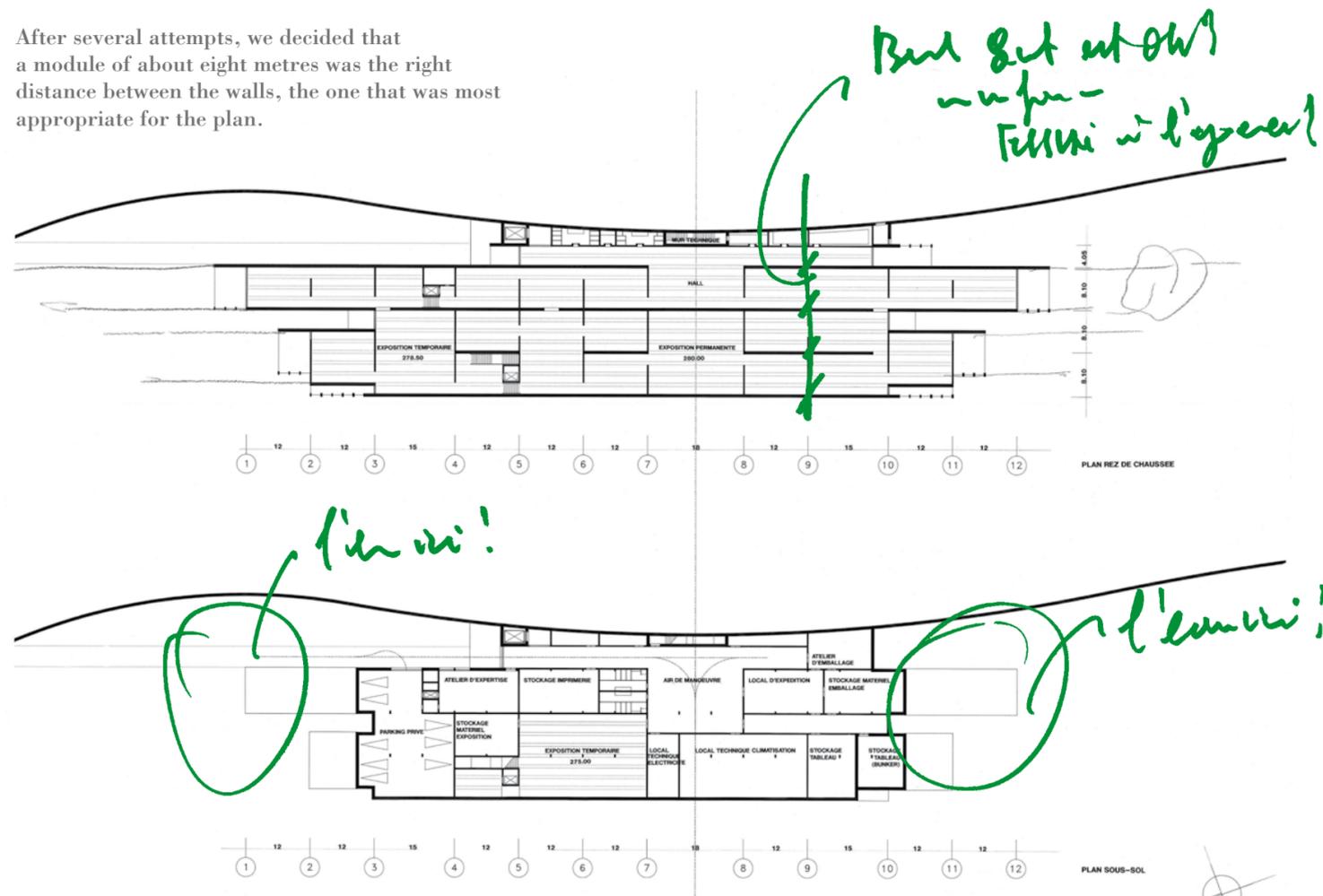
It was a lovely site. We went there and right from the first visit the project suggested itself from the location. There was a wall separating the very long, narrow terrain from the Riehen road with a second wall running parallel to the first. Both walls lay in a north-south direction.

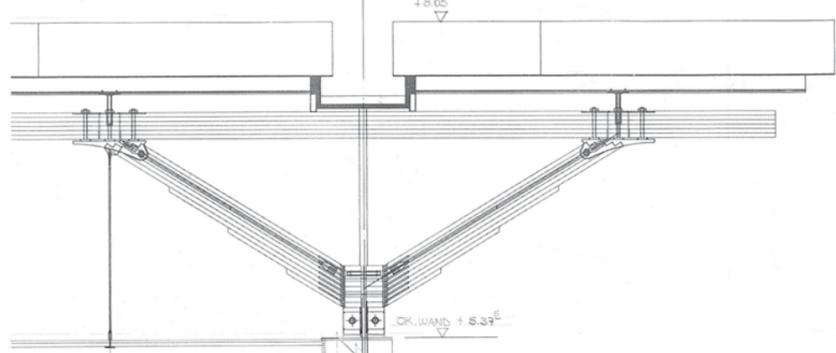




Dopo vari tentativi, ci sembrò che un modulo di circa 8 metri fosse la distanza giusta fra muro e muro, il più adatto in pianta.

After several attempts, we decided that a module of about eight metres was the right distance between the walls, the one that was most appropriate for the plan.





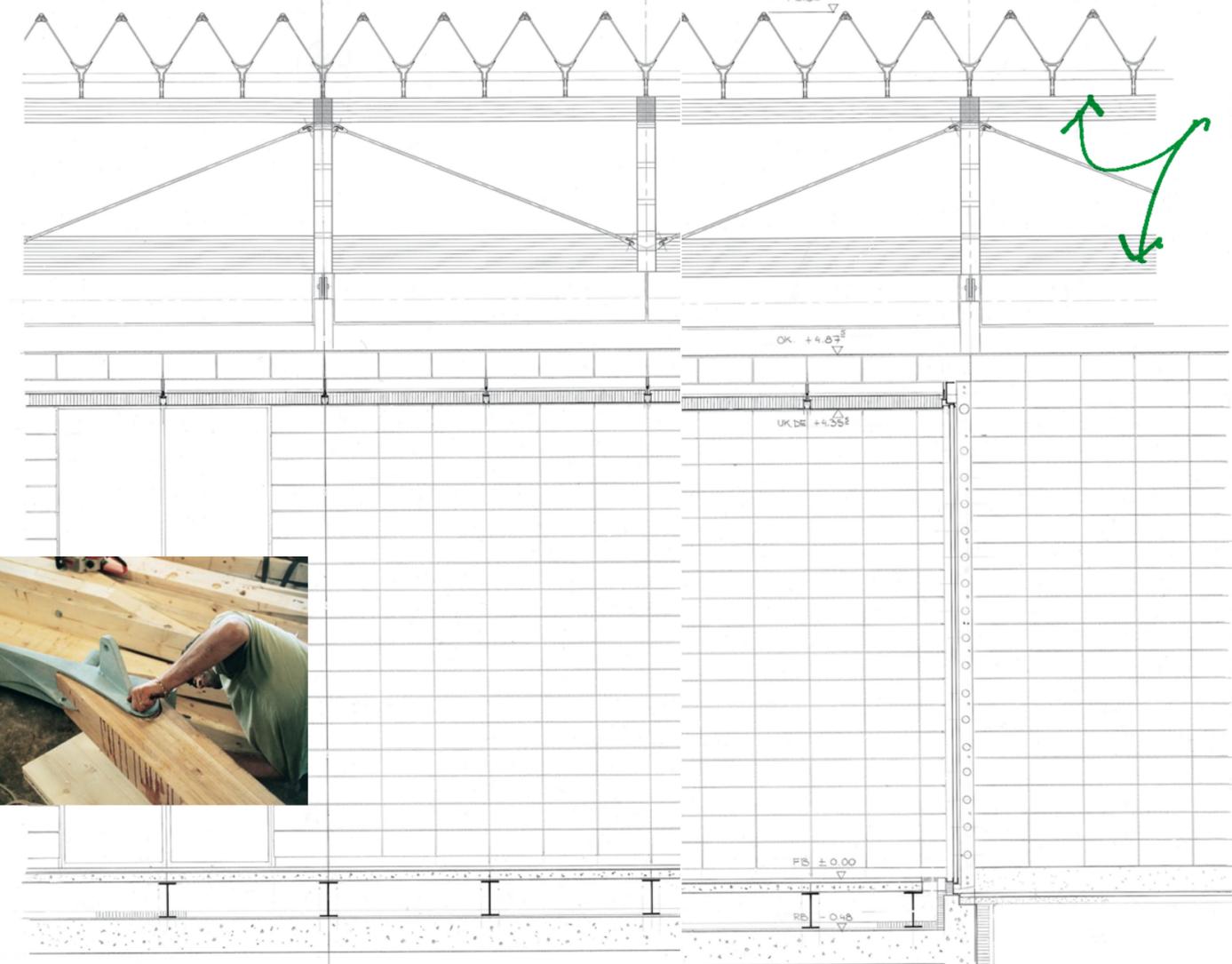
Quindi pensammo ad una copertura a onde: la parte dell'onda rivolta a sud era opaca, e quella verso nord trasparente.

So we began to consider a wave-shaped covering: the south face of the wave was opaque while the north face was transparent.



Passammo attraverso questa sperimentazione, poi capimmo che era la strada sbagliata perché il legno ci portava a delle sezioni eccessive, si rubava troppa luce, e perdevamo leggerezza.

Having gone down that road, we acknowledged that it was a dead end because wood involved excessively large sections, blocked out too much daylight, and deprived us of lightness.



Handwritten in green: Bernd: una jette esclusiva: le bois nous oblige, malheureusement, à des sections structurelles très gèneres!!!

Galerie Beyeler

4001 BASEL · BÄUMLEINGASSE 9 · TEL. 061 272 54 12 · FAX 061 271 96 91

Herrn Bernard Plattner
Renzo Piano Building Workshop
34, rue des Archives

F - 75004 Paris Basel, den 26. März 1994
EB/pz

Lieber Herr Plattner,

Ich habe volles Vertrauen, dass RPBW die besten Lösungen anstreben. Aber jetzt wo ich nochmals in Stuttgart war und gesehen habe was mit ähnlich kompliziertem Dach-System am Schluss erreicht wird und nachdem ich gestern abend die Größenordnung der Kosten erfahren habe, möchte ich sagen, dass ich keine Staatsgalerie bin, die einen Turmbau zu Babel finanzieren kann. Man sollte jetzt das effiziente, sichere, kittfreie und wartungsfreie Dach realisieren, das nur aus dem obersten Glasdach besteht (mit Ausnahmegewilligung) oder wenn Klimaraum nötig, nur noch mit der Raumdecke, die leicht von unten her geöffnet werden kann. Dann können wir auf alle Zwischendecken und die Treppe verzichten. Dann freue ich mich auch auf das nicht nur ästhetisch sondern auch ethisch einwandfreie Dach und die halbe Rechnung! Ich traue Ihnen eine kühne und trotzdem einfache Lösung zu.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

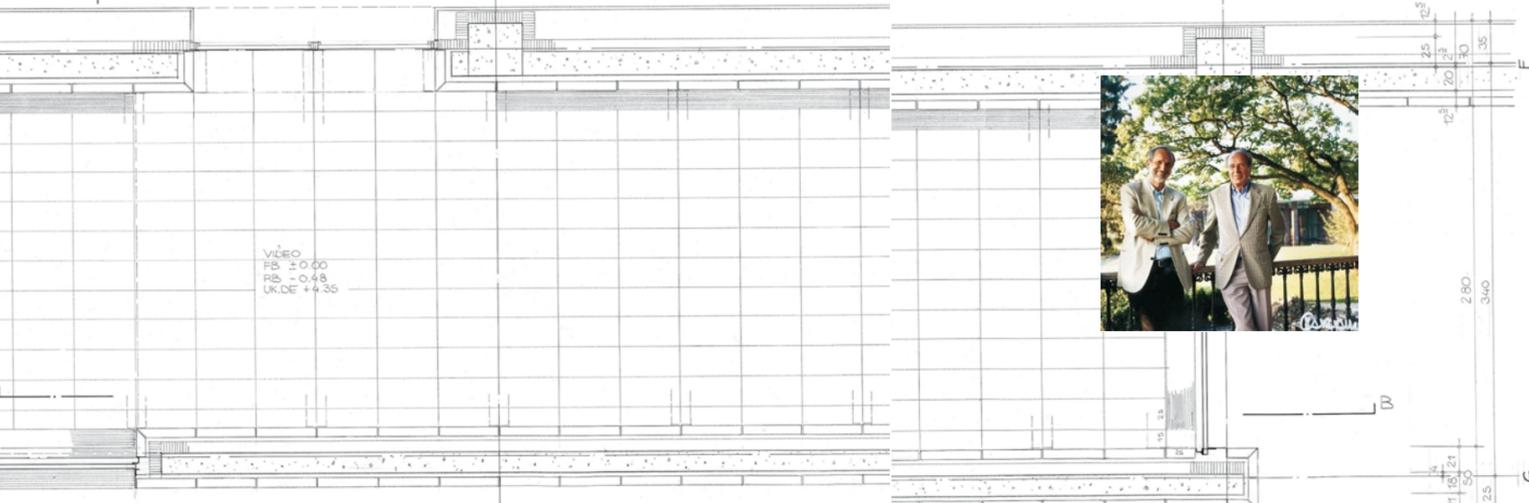
Handwritten signature: Ernst Beyeler

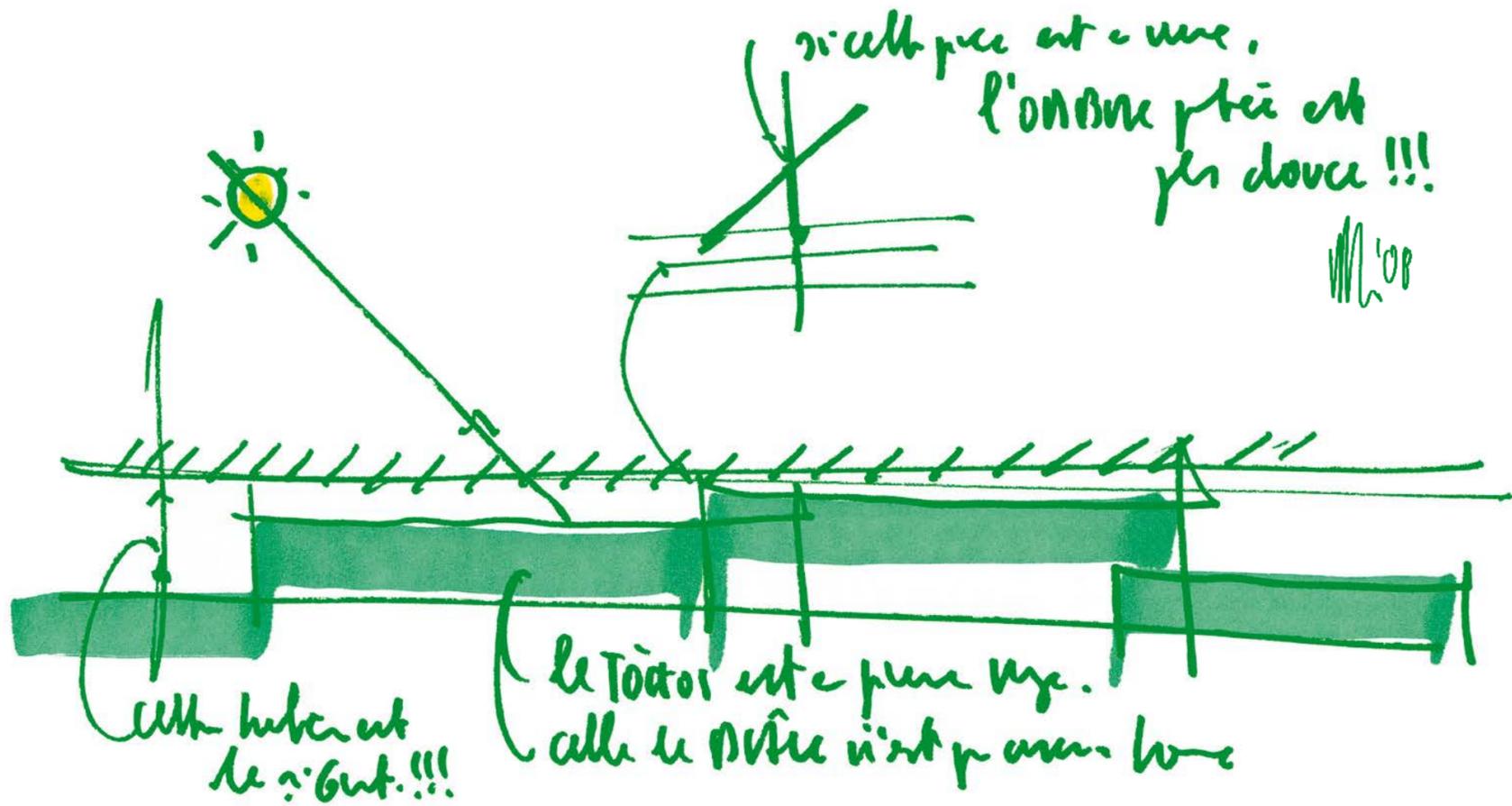
PS: Ich habe noch keine Antwort erhalten auf meine Anregung, dass die Belüftung auch von den Raumecken am Boden ausgehen könnte und die Luft sehr diskret in die Mitte des Raumes geblasen, wie in Davos, London, Stuttgart, etc.



...vorrei sottolineare che non sono una Galleria Nazionale che si possa permettere di finanziare una Torre di Babele. Dobbiamo quindi realizzare un tetto efficiente, sicuro, senza mastice e senza necessità di manutenzione...

... I would like to point out that I am not a National Gallery that can afford to pay for a Tower of Babel. So let's make a roof efficient and safe, without using putty or requiring maintenance ...



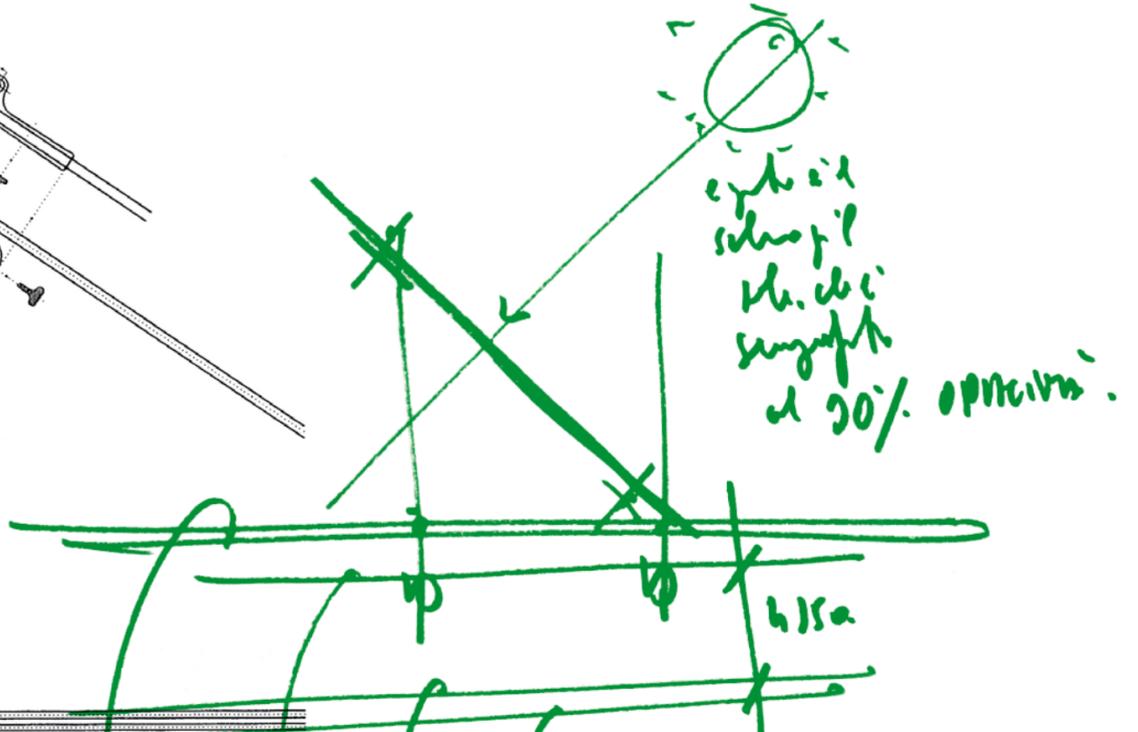
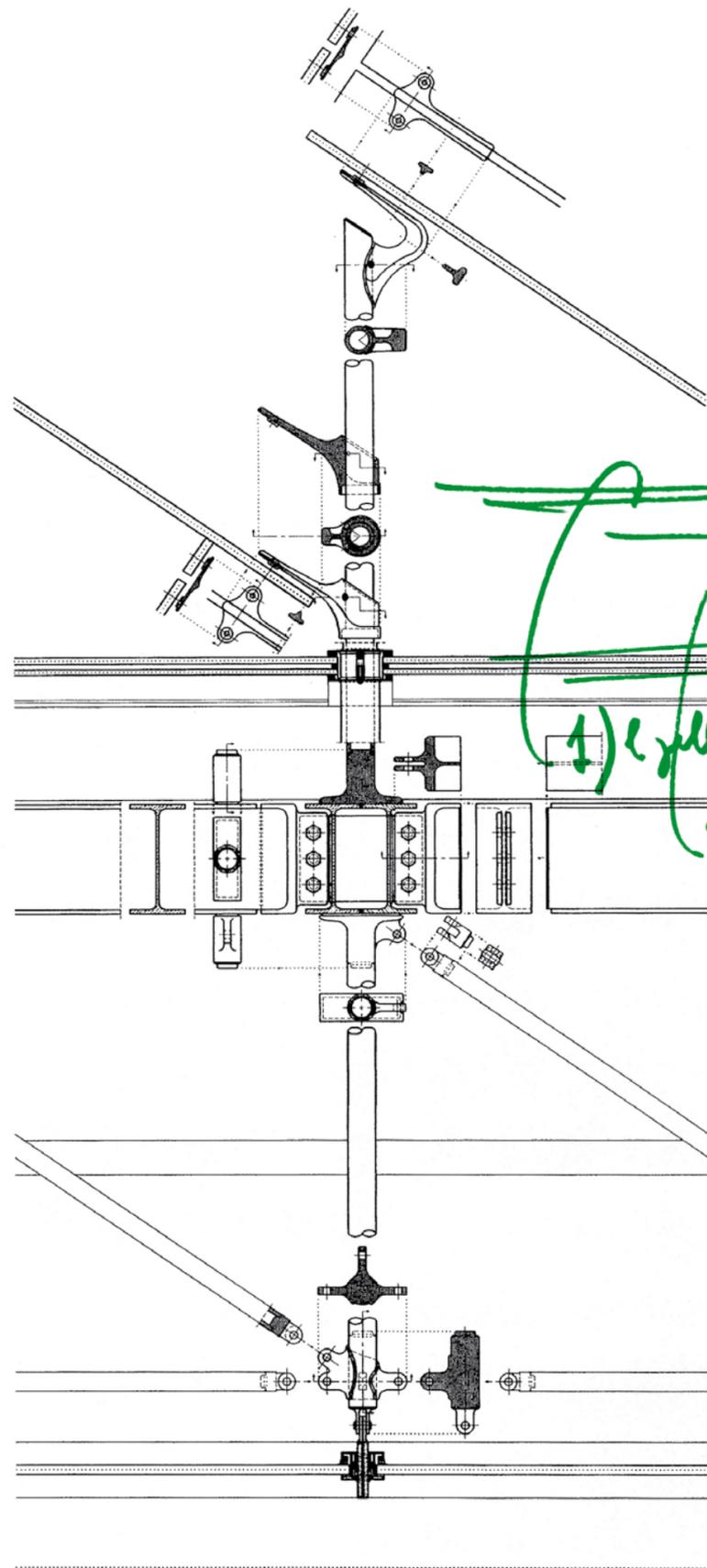


È allora che cominciammo a lavorare ad una copertura fatta di schermi obliqui. Fu l'idea che ci portò alla soluzione definitiva: una specie di tappeto volante.



That was when we started working on a roofing made with inclined screens. This was the idea that led us to the definitive answer: a sort of flying carpet.





- 1) l'elemento
- 2) il bullone
- 3) il rivetto
- 4) il rivetto a chiodo

L'acciaio era il materiale ideale per la struttura del tetto: ci consentiva la massima trasparenza, la massima leggerezza e le sezioni più piccole.

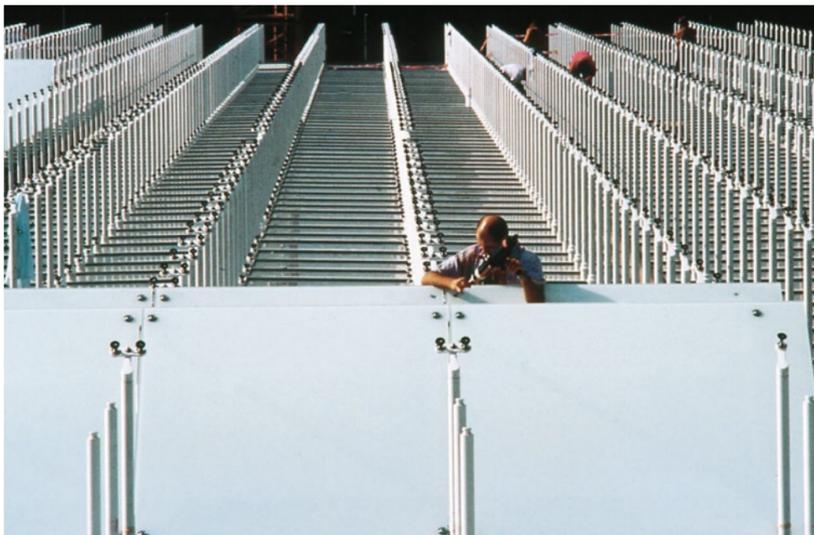
Steel was the ideal material for the structure of the roof: it gave us maximum transparency, maximum lightness and the thinnest sections.





Cominciammo a lavorare su degli schermi di vetro sempre opacizzato ma all'80%, e questi pannelli messi obliqui rispetto alla luce del sole non proiettano un'ombra completa, è un po' il principio del parasole sulla spiaggia.

Quando il lavoro fu finito molta gente si meravigliò di questa atmosfera così serena, così leggera ed eterea, così magica e metafisica. Ma quell'atmosfera fu ottenuta anche grazie a questo fatto, che si prendeva sì la luce da nord, ma creando un sistema di ombre che non era troppo freddo.



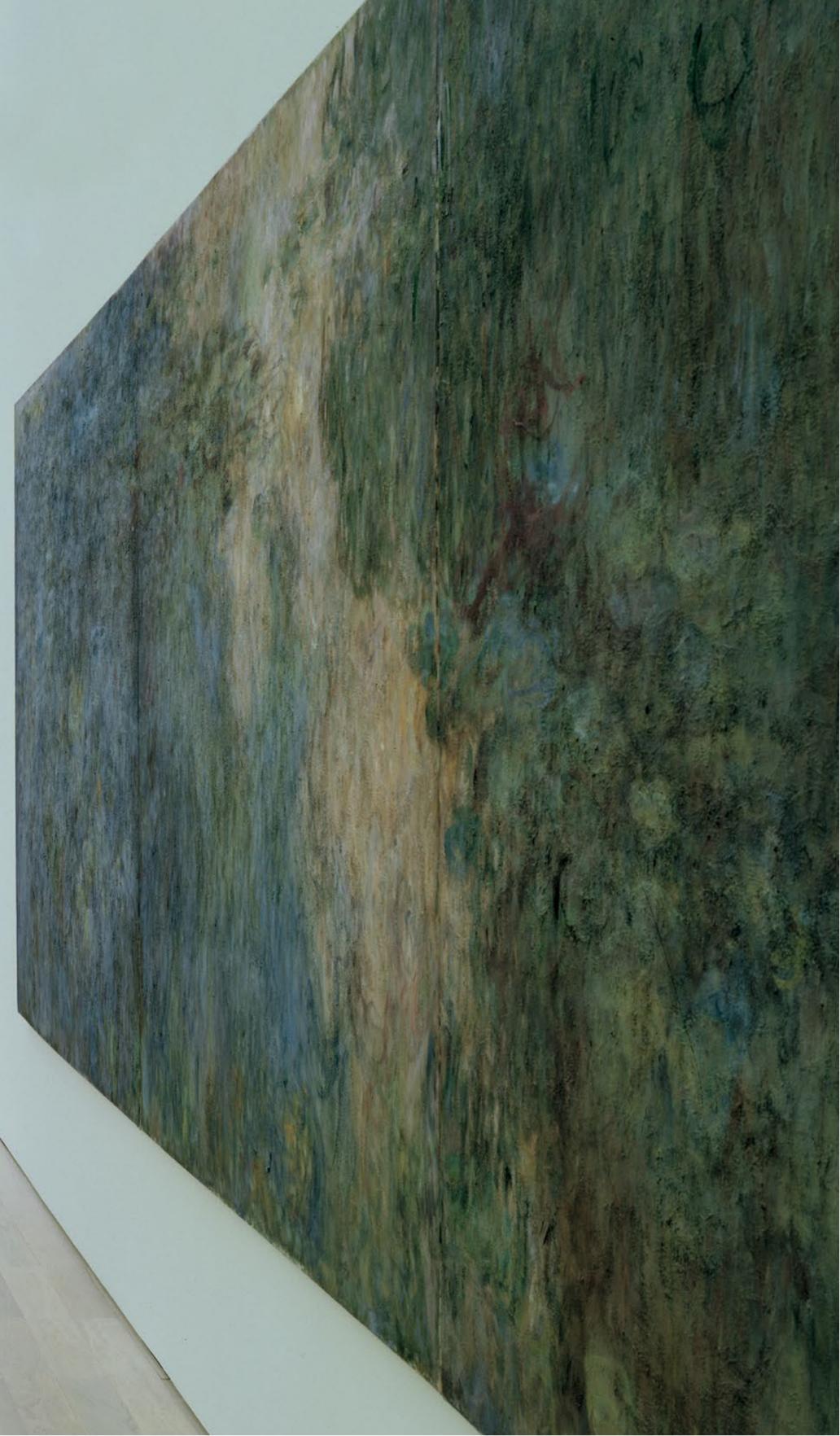
We started to work with glass screens, again opaqued but only eighty per cent: these panels, set at an angle relative to the sunlight, don't cast a total shadow. It is a bit like a parasol on the beach.

When work was finished, lots of people were amazed at this atmosphere so serene, so light and ethereal, so magical and metaphysical. But the atmosphere was achieved partly by virtue of the fact that the building took its light from the north while creating a system of shadows that wasn't too cold.









Dealer's Choice

Designed by Renzo Piano, the Beyeler Foundation's new museum near Basel houses a collection of modern, contemporary and tribal art assembled by Swiss gallery owner Ernst Beyeler.

BY RICHARD COVINGTON

Last October, after three years of painstaking construction and a series of last-minute alterations, the Beyeler Foundation opened its new museum in Riehen, a leafy suburb that is located a 25-minute tram ride from central Basel. Housed in a building designed by Renzo Piano, the museum is the brainchild of Ernst Beyeler, a 76-year-old Swiss gallery owner who, after nearly a half century as one of Europe's preeminent art dealers, wished to create a permanent home for his own collection of modern, contemporary and tribal art.



Alexander Calder's 'The Tree, 1966, painted steel, 16 1/2 feet high by 32 feet wide; installed in Berowerpark. Photo T. Dix.

Beyeler got his start as an art dealer in 1945 after taking over a failing bookstore in the center of Basel's old town. With the profits from a sale of Goya prints, he acquired prints by Toulouse-Lautrec, then drawings by the Impressionists and by Klee and Picasso. Early on, he decided to concentrate on modernist painters, publishing glossy catalogues to attract an international clientele. A hoard of important works by Klee and Giacometti was acquired in the late 1950s from the Pittsburgh collector David Thompson. Another big break came in 1957, when Picasso invited Beyeler to his studio in Mougins and said, "Choose what you like." Today, Beyeler still operates his gallery from the considerably expanded bookstore space on Bäumleinstrasse where he started out 52 years ago.

Although Beyeler established a foundation for his collection in 1982, he had nowhere to house it. Not until it was shown in a 1989 exhibition at Madrid's Reina Sofia museum was the collection displayed in its entirety. The success of this show and subsequent ones in Berlin and Sydney freed Beyeler to give the works a permanent home. As the collection's reputation grew, Basel authorities were moved to lend a hand. According to Beyeler, who was one of the cofounders of the Basel contemporary art fair and for decades excelled at luring collectors to the city, Basel began worrying that it might lose his incomparable anthology to another city. Skillfully playing on this anxiety, Beyeler negotiated with the canton of Basel to obtain a parcel of publicly owned parkland on an 80-year lease (with an option for a further 80 years). The canton will pay one-third of the operating costs of 5.25 million; the remainder is covered by the city.

Incorporating 145 paintings and sculptures from the 19th and 20th centuries, the Beyeler collection covers many of the significant figures of modern art. It starts with *Reclining Man*, an 1883 charcoal drawing by Georges Seurat, and passes from late Impressionism to Post-Impressionism with works by Degas, Monet, Cézanne, van Gogh (one of his late wheat-field paintings) and Henri Rousseau (a 1905 jungle scene). The era of 20th-century modernism is explored in works by Pablo Picasso, Fernand Léger, Miró, Mondrian, Matisse, Piet Mondrian, and sculptures by Constantin Brancusi, Klee and Max Ernst.

Tucked away unobtrusively behind a mottled reddish-pink wall of Patagonian porphyry, the long, one-story museum is set on a 2.3-acre plot of land which includes a villa and an English-style garden. (The villa houses the museum's administrative offices as well as a restaurant.) As visitors approach the museum, which is clad in the same reddish-pink stone as the boundary wall, they encounter a series of shallow terraces which descend gradually to a rectangular pond abutting the roughly 364-foot-long white-walled exhibit space. Outfitted with vaneels, the flat glass roof is most distinctive feature.

Large windows at the ends of the building also provide illumination.

In one gallery devoted to Monet's 40-foot-long *Pond of Water Lilies* (1917-20), reflections from the adjoining outdoor pond dance off the walls, sometimes competing for attention with the painting, sometimes lending it unpredictable vibrancy. According to Piano, this was the first room he visualized for the museum interior. Natural light is also emphasized in the narrow, sunlit conservatory which stretches along one side of the museum. Here visitors can plop down in comfortable couches and gaze through a wall of glass that looks across a rolling pasture toward hilly vineyards planted just over the border in Germany.

Inaugurated in the same week as Frank Gehry's much-publicized and controversial Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Piano's Beyeler Foundation is a model of serene understatement. Unlike the blatantly high-tech Pompidou Center in Paris, which branded Piano and his partner Richard Rogers as the bad boys of architecture when it was completed in 1977, the museum in Basel fastidiously hides even the barest whiff of technology, down to sequestering humidity meters behind the walls and placing motion sensors out of sight in ceilings and doors. "The Pompidou Center was about the desecration of art," Piano explained in his Paris workshop. "The Beyeler is the opposite; it's about consecration, a place of quiet, where you almost feel as if you should take off your shoes to appreciate the art and the building."



T. Dix/Fondation Beyeler (above and center); Associated Press (bottom).

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

To Serve Art, Not Overwhelm It

Architecture Heeds Its Purpose At a Small New Swiss Museum

By MICHAEL KIMMELMAN

BASEL, Switzerland — What is the most satisfying new art museum building? I haven't seen I. M. Pei's Miho Museum of Art near Kyoto, but one could argue that the answer is neither Frank Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain, nor Richard Meier's Getty in Los Angeles but the less ballyhooed Fondation Beyeler here.

Comparing this modest-size building, which Renzo Piano has designed, with big projects like the Guggenheim Bilbao or the Getty is tricky and imprecise. The Beyeler, which opened in October, might fit into one of the galleries Mr. Gehry created in Bilbao. The Guggenheim, brilliant in its way, is clearly more spectacular. But what makes Mr. Piano's museum special is precisely that it is not spectacular, or at least it is not meant to be a spectacle: it consists of 20 spare white rooms of an almost ethereal simplicity, arranged within a long rectangular shed or pavilion.

For once, the architecture of a museum is in the service of the art. Of course, architecture people and art people tend to see such things differently. To understand the full significance of the building, it helps to remember how much museum construction in the last 40 years, roughly since Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim opened in Manhattan, has tended in the opposite direction from the Beyeler.

Wright's landmark, openly hostile to much of the art it was built to display, continues to attract millions of tourists regardless of the art on view, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by museum officials elsewhere, who dream of their own Guggenheims. They



Renzo Piano, below, designed the Fondation Beyeler, top, a new museum near Basel, Switzerland. At center, its Giacometti room.

GRANDI OPERE Il Museo Beyeler di Basilea progettato dall'architetto italiano che in giugno sarà premiato da Clinton: una straordinaria raccolta di capolavori moderni

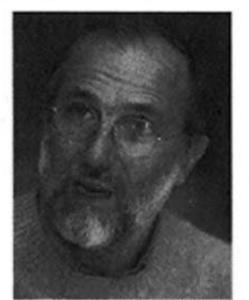
Renzo Piano, una scommessa su Matisse

dal nostro inviato FIORELLA MINERVINO

Ritagliata nel verde, la Fondazione Beyeler, il Museo da poco inaugurato a Riehen, vicino a Basilea, ha assunto d'improvviso l'importanza che merita per la magistrale fusione di architettura, natura, luce e il rispetto nei confronti dell'opera d'arte nonché del pubblico. All'inaugurazione lo scorso ottobre il Beyeler era sfuggito ai più, quale il motivo? La contemporanea apertura del Guggenheim a Bilbao, ideato da Frank Gehry, che per spettacolarità, dimensioni, eccentricità aveva richiamato mezzo mondo. Lo ha sottolineato il *New York Times* in un recente articolo dove lo definisce uno dei musei più interessanti di fine secolo (a confronto con Bilbao e il Getty Center a Los Angeles) per proporzioni, semplicità, luminosità. Una vera pinacoteca moderna.



Una scultura di Giacometti alla Fondazione Beyeler di Basilea. A destra, Renzo Piano



Nella pinacoteca svizzera sono riuniti i maestri della pittura del Novecento da Cézanne a Monet, da Picasso a Klee. Venti sale da capogiro

Menil a Houston, è una tappa cruciale nella sua avventura, al di là dell'Aeroporto Kansai a Osaka, o dei lavori alla Potsdamer Platz a Berlino, piuttosto che lo stupefacente Centro nella Nuova Caledonia che si inaugura domani. La sua prossima committenza, annuncia, è un museo, vicino per spirito al Beyeler. Si tratta dell'Harvard University Museum, a Cambridge nel Massachusetts. Ne uscire tre di musei: il Sackler, il Fogg, il Bush-Reisenger Strauss Center. «L'opera d'arte del collezionista» conclude Piano «è la sua raccolta. Con il museo offre alle proprie creature una casa pubblica e una seconda vita fatta di contemplazione e sacralità».

caso della stanza che ospita una pregevole versione delle «Ninfee» di Monet del 1917-20 che sembrano essere nate lì, in quell'acqua. Gli scabri e corrosi personaggi di Giacometti paiono incamminarsi verso il giardino, come attratti da una libertà riscoperta. La foresta che incornicia «Leone che si getta sul tillo» di Dogan Rousseau, non poteva essere spazio più adatto a fianco il terrifico «Serpente» della Cézanne. Per Cézanne, come per il magnifico Picasso ci sono intere sale raggiungono gli Matisse.

Segue un'ottantina di Brancusi, Mondrian, Klee, Kiefer, i memoriali per continua opera di Lichte scenberg fir Kiefer. La ranea in condotta: «Col dinskij-S rapporti cista dal mancankshop, vi, rist

Si sia s tran di c' che Pa d con Premio P

Das Museum als Arbeitsplatz
Auch Stockholm hat ein neues Kunstmuseum
Wie sollen Kunstmuseen heute aussehen?
Von Gerhard Mack



Die Natur lehrt zu den und in die Museen zurück: Oben das Stockholmer Museum für moderne Kunst, Architekt Richard Meier. Mitte: Ale E. von Lindman (Glockenhof) / Mike Nelson, oben: Ein Anblick des Getty Center in Los Angeles.

Tutto ciò non basterebbe a giustificare la rinnovata attenzione, se non fosse che al suo autore, l'architetto genovese Renzo Piano, è stato appena annunciato che il 17 giugno riceverà dal presidente degli Stati Uniti, alla Casa Bianca, il Premio Pritzker. Cioè il Nobel dell'architettura, assegnato finora per l'Italia solo ad Aldo Rossi. Fra le motivazioni della giuria, che parla di «architettura che incarna un raro Umanesimo», oltre che di «perfetta mescolanza d'arte, architettura, tecnologia e artigianato», compare l'accento al non spettacolare, non colossale, ma prezioso Museo di Basilea, sorto dalla collezione del noto gallerista svizzero Ernst Beyeler.

Una visita è d'obbligo e rende giustizia al rigoroso edificio rettangolare, dal volume di 42.800 metri cubi, composto da quattro

muri della stessa lunghezza, ricoperto da un tetto trasparente a pensilina, in struttura metallica: così la luce cade naturale dall'alto restituendo alle opere i loro colori, in uno spazio che risulta magico.

Le pareti delle 20 sale sono di altezze differenti, i muri sono rivestiti d'una pietra rossa che vuol rammentare l'arenaria della Cattedrale di Basilea; arriva invece dalla Patagonia, in compenso non si sfalda e richiede poca manutenzione. Costo dell'opera, costruita fra il 1993 e il '97: 55 milioni di franchi svizzeri (una sessantina di miliardi di lire). Ernst Beyeler ne è il presidente, direttore artistico è Marcus Bruedelin. Numerosi i custodi, grazie anche a un consistente finanziamento

dal Cantone della Città di Basilea; Riehen ha offerto il parco in uso per 80 anni. L'incanto del luogo nasce dal connubio con la natura: l'acqua dei laghetti, i magnifici fiori, le piante centenarie del parco (appartiene alla neoclassica Villa Berower) a ogni passo sembrano sbucare dalle pareti, ora attraverso un vetro, ora da un inatteso taglio nel muro.

Infine si incontra il Giardino d'Inverno, la parete a vetrate che offre una pausa per riposarsi dalle emozioni artistiche o consultare volumi in confortevoli divani. Nelle sale ciascun dipinto possiede un suo spazio adeguato, con ripetuti rinvii alle sculture africane. L'impressione finale è di trovarsi in una casa, con il