

Hans Danuser – The Zumthor Project 1988 - 1998 - 2009

The Photographs and a New Book

Abstract

Pictures write history, too. In 1988, Hans Danuser first showed the photographs commissioned by the architect Peter Zumthor: THE ARCHITECT'S STUDIO in Haldenstein, SHELTERS FOR A ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE in Chur and the SOGN BENEDETG CHAPEL in Surselva. The architect had given the artist carte blanche; the resulting photographs were initially presented in exhibitions and in a catalogue, before travelling around the world in journals and books. *"The photographs are a milestone in the history of architectural photography: they are the product of an artist's radically subjective view of someone else's buildings. What's more, the sun did not shine on them; it was foggy. They ignited a debate about pictures, buildings and history. The book and the exhibition Seeing Zumthor- Images by Hans Danuser sets forth the heated debate these photographs sparked twenty years ago."* Köbi Gantenbein

The exhibition shows the original photographs of the first three projects completed by Peter Zumthor, prepared and selected for the exhibition PARTITUREN UND BILDER at the Gallery of Architecture in Lucerne, 1988, for the Forum Stadtpark Graz, 1989 with a publication of the same name, and for picture inserts subsequently published in OTTAGONO, DU and DOMUS. In addition, the exhibition will include the photographs Hans Danuser took of Zumthor's THERME VALS, in collaboration with percussionist Fritz Hauser's sound installation devised for the thermal baths in the year 1998. (CD "sounding stones – Therme Vals"; www.fritzhauser.ch) All of the gelatin silver prints on baryta paper have a basic format of 40cm x 50cm.

The exhibition and the book offer new insights into Hans Danuser's photography. In conversation with Köbi Gantenbein, editor-in-chief of the journal, *Hochparterre*, Danuser talks about the context in which he took his pictures while an essay by Philip Ursprung, Professor of Art History at the University of Zürich, examines the profound influence of Danuser's pictures of Sogn Benedetg, Chur and Vals on the representation of architecture in photographs: *"With his shots of Sogn Benedetg, Danuser radically affected the conventions of architectural photography. Instead of producing a neutral documentation he pursued his own personal interpretation. And instead of reducing the phenomenon of the chapel to a single shot, he in effect divided the building up into individual components, as though for a short film that dissects its subject matter into sequences showing it from different perspectives—these days this approach would be described as "performative."*

These fragments allow viewers to reconstruct the building in their own imagination. And in so doing Danuser colored the reception of Zumthor's architecture. In the same sense that anyone who has ever seen Hans Namuth's photograph of Jackson Pollock at work in his studio, so, too, will Danuser's photographs forever be linked with Zumthor's work." Philip Ursprung

Seeing Zumthor. Images by Hans Danuser – Reflexions on Architecture and Photography, gebundene Ausgabe, 88 Seiten, 40 Triplex Abbildungen; mit einem Essay von Philip Ursprung und einem Gespräch von Köbi Gantenbein mit Hans Danuser; Edition Hochparterre bei Scheidegger & Spiess, Zürich; ISBN 978-3-85881-235-3, in deutsch und englisch, 2009

Work-List

ST. BENEDICT CHAPEL, SUMVITG, 1988 – 1992

6 parts, I, II 1 – II 2, III, IV 1 – IV 2,

Vintage print, silver gelatine on baryt paper, format of each print: 50 x 40 cm

Edition of 3

THE ARCHITECT'S STUDIO, 1988 – 1992

7 parts, I, II 1 – II 3, III 1 – III 1, IV

Vintage print, silver gelatine on baryt paper, format of each print: 50 x 40 cm

Edition of 3

SHELTERS FOR A ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE, 1988 – 1992

7 parts, I, II 1 – II 3, III, IV 1 – IV 2,

Vintage print, silver gelatine on baryt paper, format of each print: 50 x 40 cm

Edition of 3

THERME VALS, 1998

9 parts, I, II 1, II 2, III, IV 1 – IV 5,

Vintage print, silver gelatine on baryt paper, format of each print: 50 x 40 cm

Edition of 3

Hans Danuser work is in the collections (selection) of: Museum of Fine Art Zurich, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Collection Walter A. Bechtler, Zurich, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Aargauer Kunsthau, Novartis Art Collection, Basel, Collection Stiftung Kunst Heute, Kunstmuseum Bern, Collection of the Swiss Confederation, Collection of the city of Zurich, Collection of the Canton of Zurich, Kunstmuseum Graubünden, Collection of the Republic New York Corporation, Collection Howard Stein, New York, Collection Georg Reinhart, Winterthur