

CASABELLA

DAL 1928

Et

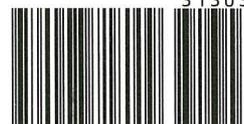


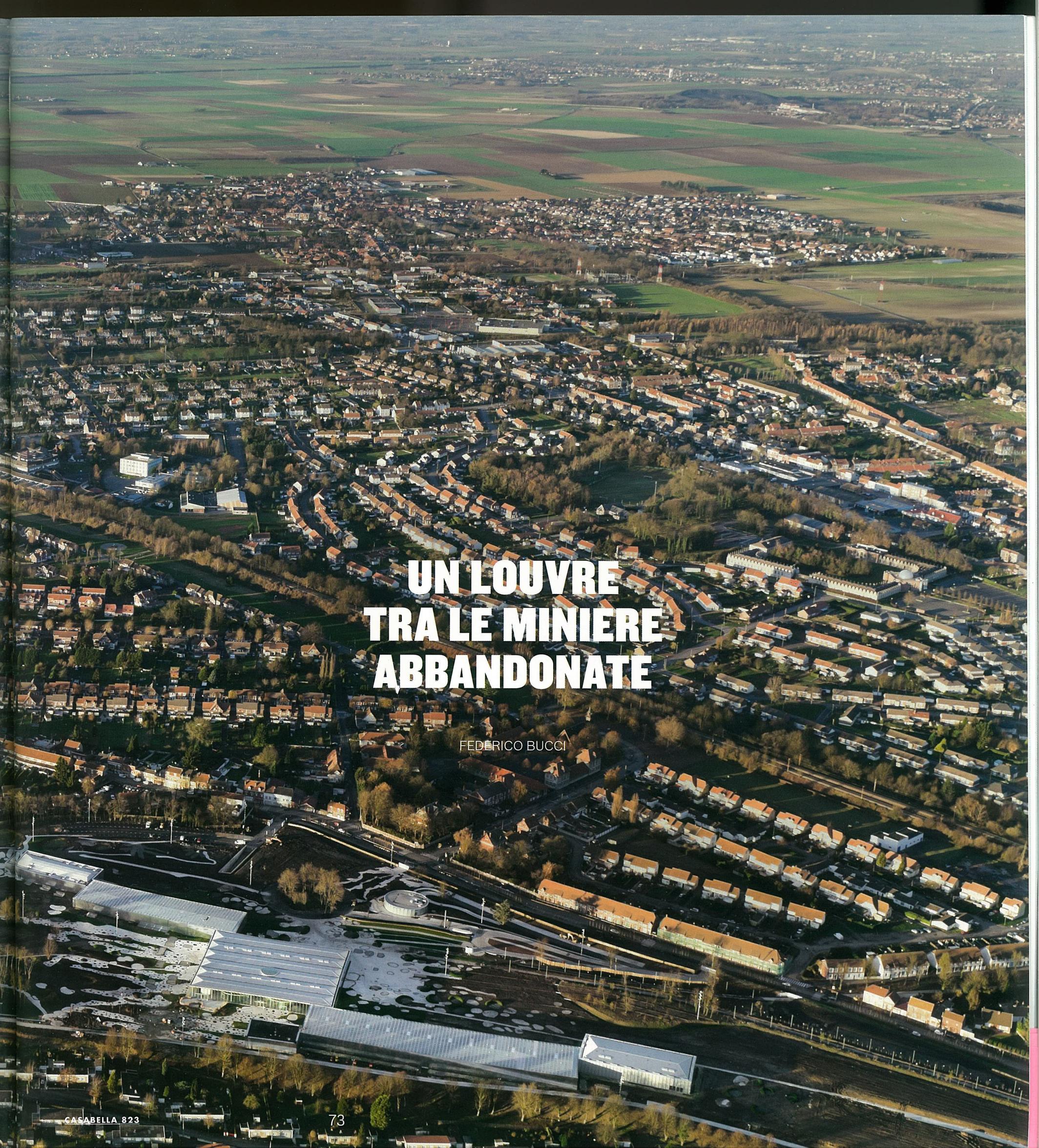
**NIETO SOBEJANO
HLPS
LE CORBUSIER PIRANESI
AWP+ITHAQUES
BBK ARCHITEKTEN
HANS-JÖRG RUCH
SEJIMA+NISHIZAWA
SANA+GULBERT**

823

ITALIAN+ENGLISH EDITION

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An aerial photograph of a residential town, likely in Italy, showing a dense cluster of houses with red-tiled roofs. In the foreground, a large, modern building complex with a glass facade and a curved roof is visible, surrounded by landscaped grounds. The background shows a vast, flat landscape with green and brown fields under a clear sky.

UN LOUVRE TRA LE MINIERE ABBANDONATE

FEDERICO BUCCI

15



ROLAND HALBE

16



ROLAND HALBE

11, 12
 -il cantiere del parco
 disegnato da Catherine
 Mosbach attorno al museo
 -the worksite of the park
 designed by Catherine
 Mosbach around the museum

13, 14
 -due dettagli del
 rivestimento esterno in
 pannelli di alluminio
 anodizzato
 -two details of the outer
 cladding in panels of anodized
 aluminium

15
 -il nuovo parco sull'area
 della vecchia miniera e il
 percorso pedonale che
 dalla stazione di Lens
 conduce al museo
 -the new park on the area of
 the old mine, and the
 pedestrian walkway leading
 from the Lens station to the
 museum

16
 -la Hall di ingresso al
 museo: la relazione tra
 l'architettura e il paesaggio
 circostante è espressa sia
 dalla trasparenza delle
 pareti vetrate, sia dalla
 diafana opacità del
 rivestimento in alluminio
 che riflette l'esterno e si
 pone quasi in continuità
 con il colore del cielo tipico
 di questi luoghi
 -the entrance hall of the
 museum: the relationship
 between the architecture and
 the surrounding landscape is
 evident in the transparency of
 the glass walls and the
 diaphanous opacity of the
 aluminium cladding that
 reflects the outside and seems
 to match the typical color of
 the sky in this region

DATI DI PROGETTO

-PROGETTO

SANAA e Imrey Culbert

-PROGETTISTI

Kazuyo Sejima e Ryue Nishizawa; Celia Imrey e Tim Culbert

-PAESAGGIO

Mosbach Paysagistes

-MUSEOGRAFIA

Studio Adrien Gardère

-STRUTTURE

Betom Engénierie, Bollinger + Grohmann GmbH, Sasaki Associates

-IMPIANTI

Transplan e Hubert Penicaud (ambiente), Arup Lighting (luci), Avel Acoustique (acustica), Groupe Casso (sicurezza)

-GESTIONE

Bureau Michel Forgue

-COMMITTENTE

Region Nord-Pas-de-Calais

-DATI DIMENSIONALI

28.000 mq superficie totale

12.500 mq superficie

coperta

7.000 mq superficie

espositiva

-CRONOLOGIA

2005: concorso

2010-12: realizzazione

-LOCALIZZAZIONE

6 rue Charles Lecocq,
62301 Lens, Pas-de-Calais,
Francia



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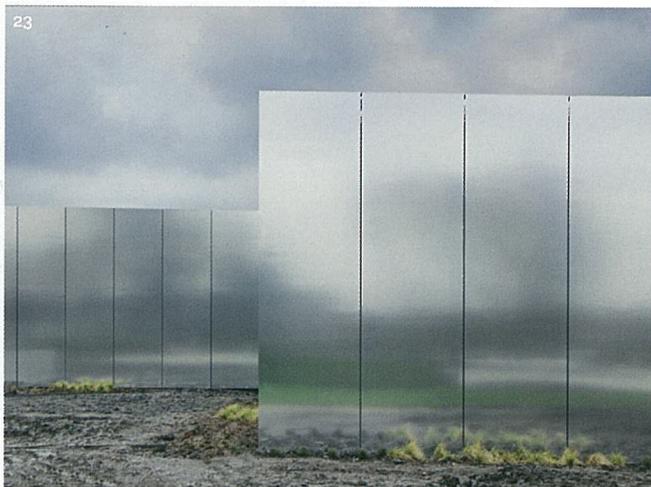
22



ROLAND HALBE

23

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24

ROLAND HALBE



23, 24

-il pannello di alluminio delle sale espositive e il pannello di vetro utilizzato nel Pavillon de Verre e nella Hall d'ingresso

-the aluminium panel of the exhibition spaces and the glass panel used in the Pavillon de Verre and the entrance Hall

25

-disegno di dettaglio della Galerie du Temps. Legenda

-1- grata parasole
-2- lucernario con vetrate doppie 10+(8+8)mm
-3- persiana interna mobile
-4- vernice su trave a T d'acciaio w250t=20xh600-1100t=10mm
-5- pannello a nido d'ape in alluminio t=2+20+1mm
-6- isolante t=140mm
-7- calcestruzzo t=280mm
-8- pannello a nido d'ape in alluminio t=1+(1+18+1)mm
-9- guida di calcestruzzo levigato t=150mm
-10- isolante 90mm (riscaldamento a pavimento)
-11- calcestruzzo strutturale t=240mm
-detail drawing of the Galerie du Temps. Legend
-1- sunshade grille
-2- double glazing glass sky-light 10+(8+8)mm
-3- interior movable louver
-4- paint on steel T-beam w250t=20xh600-1100t=10mm
-5- aluminum honeycomb

panel t=2+20+1mm

-6- insulation t=140mm

-7- concrete t=280mm

-8- aluminum honeycomb

panel t=1+(1+18+1)mm

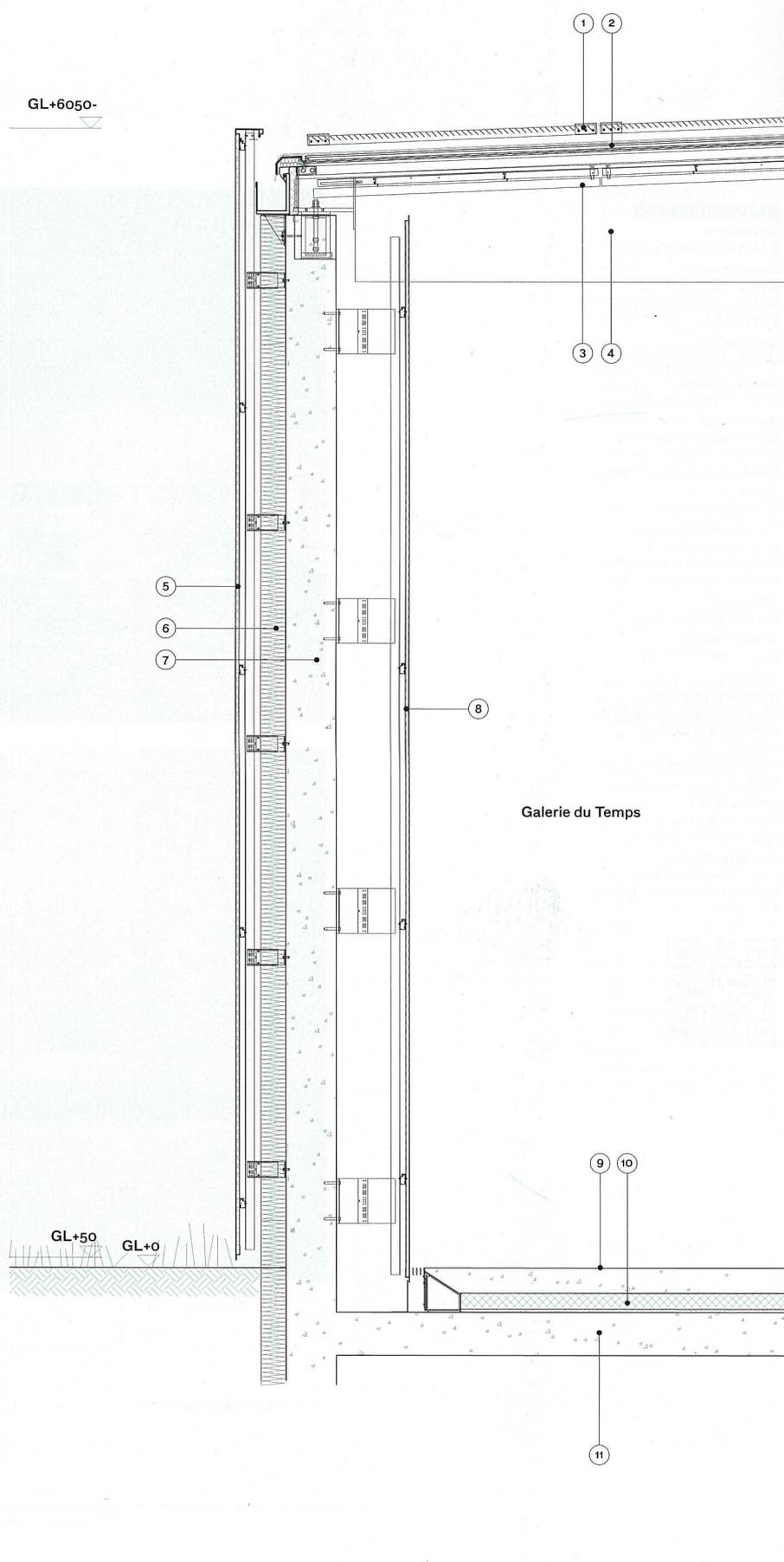
-9- polished concrete screed t=150mm

-10- insulation 90mm (floor heating)

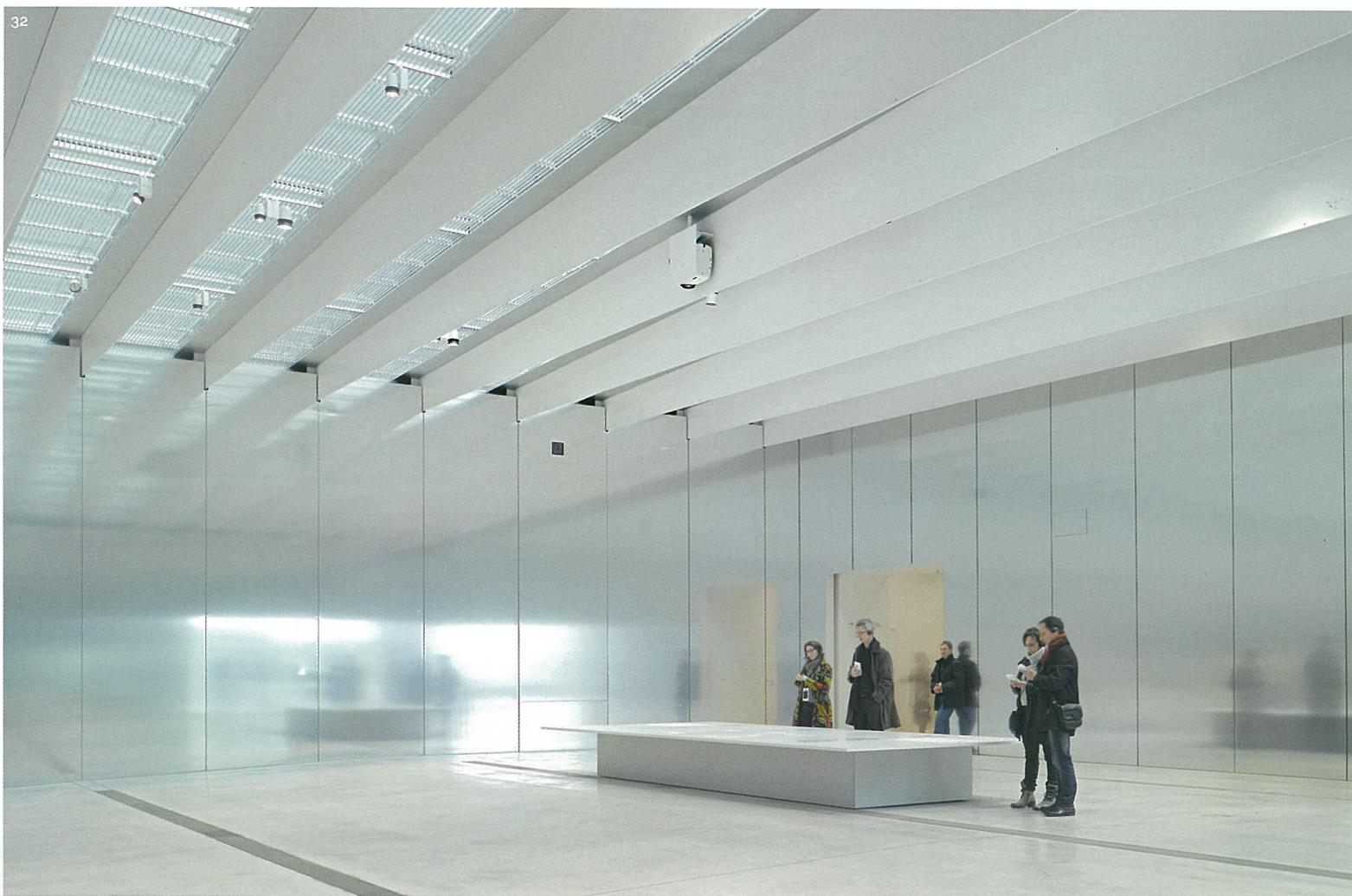
-11- structural concrete t=240mm

25

GL+6050-



Galerie du Temps



31
-veduta della Hall
dall'ingresso della Grande
Galerie
-view of the entrance Hall of
the Grande Galerie
32
-l'ingresso della Grande
Galerie
-entrance to the Grande
Galerie



ROLAND HALBE



ROLAND HALBE

to a work of architecture reduced to minimum terms, whose identity is the expression of the necessity of things.

The plant, built to give the Upper Engadine an independent power facility capable of providing current in case of outages in the main network, stands on a crest near the existing 150 kW high-tension line.

Perched on a promontory at 2300 meters above sea level – against the Swiss pass that connects the Engadine to the rest of the canton Graubünden, between the drainage basins of the Rhine and the Danube – the construction is positioned to be safe from avalanches, far from the many natural waterways, and easily reached from the road network near the Julierstrasse.

The volume of over 16,000 cubic meters required to contain the transformer is given a powerful but also hermetic character. The imposing bulk of the substation is rooted in the terrain, penetrating the mountain crest, partially melding with it, emerging like a fortress guarding the pass.

In this way, an artificial rise echoes the existing highland, becoming a symbol of the energy that springs from the ground. Its figure – mitigated in its form and blended in terms of materials – gives the construction the character of fixity that belongs to such high-altitude works.

The part of the edifice visible from the mountain slope is bordered by a reinforced wall clad in stone obtained during the excavation for the work; the wall, seen as a continuous buttress extended to the whole construction, has its own foundation and is made with large slabs of stone on which the holes from the blasting and cutting are still visible.

The contours of the resulting bastion, the gate and the posts of the openings, are resolved with hewn stones to permit precise demarcation of the geometric profiles of the architecture and accentuation of the refraction of light.

The flat roof on which it is possible to walk is also clad with large slabs of hewn stone, and contributes to reinforced the severe character of the construction, which stands out in the mountain landscape with the security of its volumetric power, the force of integrity of the design, the loyal nature of the materials used. After the access door in brass, one reaches the operative heart of the plant. All the technical processes, including the switching and movements from the assembly room to the electrical cells, happen inside the building, avoiding the need for fenced-off outdoor areas often used in switching stations, and favoring an essential, logical composition.

● ● ●
page 74

A Louvre amidst abandoned mines

Federico Bucci

«Avec des cathédrales pour uniques montagnes
Et de noirs clochers comme mâts de cocagne (...)

Avec un ciel si gris qu'un canal s'est pendu

Avec un ciel si gris qu'il faut lui pardonner (...)

Avec de l'Italie qui descendrait l'Escaut

Avec Frida la Blonde quand elle devient Margot (...)

Le plat pays qui est le mien»

Jacques Brel

“A Carpaccio in Venice, La Berma in Phèdre, masterpieces of visual or theatrical art that the prestige surrounding them made so alive, that is so invisible, that, if I were to see a Carpaccio in a gallery of the Louvre or La Berma in some play of which I had never heard, I would not have felt the same delicious surprise at finally setting eyes on the unique and inconceivable object of so many thousands of my dreams.”

Thus Marcel Proust narrates the unity between the work of art and its space. It is no coincidence, as Deleuze tells us, that in the apprenticeship of the Recherche the sign never shines in solitude, but stimulates “étonnement délicieux” (i.e. “delicious surprise”) in relation to the place that contains it. This is why Carpaccio fills us with joy in Venice, with the large paintings of the Stories of the Patron Saints (1502-7) in the school of San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, and Madame Berma, an imaginary character based on the actress Sarah Bernhardt (though the most expert Proust scholars also mention Julia Bartet and Gabrielle Réjau) wins hearts when acting in Phèdre, the tragedy written by Jean Racine in 1677.

Remaining in the pages of the Recherche du temps perdu I can also read the episode of the death of Bergotte (actually Anatole France), stricken in front of the View of Delft by Vermeer, “prêté par le musée de La Haye pour une exposition hollandaise”. As Giovanni Macchia, the great scholar of French literature from Apulia, has explained, here Proust speaks of himself, in illness, when he has himself taken to the Jeu de Paume to see the exhibition of Dutch

paintings and, above all, that work he so loved, before which he dreamt of dying. The question is an intriguing one: is he struck by the silence of the beautiful “petit pan de mur jaune” or can he not bear the fact that the elusive enigma of Vermeer dissolves feebly in the Parisian social whirl?

I think of all this as I admire, in excellent health, thank you, the splendid portrait of Baldassarre Castiglione which Raphael painted in Rome in 1514-15.

I am in the main room of the Louvre Museum facility recently opened in Lens, a town of 40,000 inhabitants in northern France, department of Pas-de-Calais, about 200 km from Paris and 140 from Brussels. To get here from Milan I landed at Charleroi (the airport to the south of the Belgian capital), took a shuttle bus to the Lille station and then a train to Lens. The total travel time, including waiting for connections, was about four hours, half of what it takes to cross the Pays Noir, the Walloon coal district developed with the help of many of our countrymen in the postwar era, with superhuman sacrifices. I mention this not only because the mine of Bois de Cazier at Marcinelle, site of the notorious accident of 8 August 1956, when 262 workers lost their lives, is just a few kilometers from Charleroi, but also because the same landscape, a Plat Pays with a “ciel si gris” and black coal dunes (spoil heaps, no longer used), openly trespasses into this part of France, now a rather depressed zone due to the massive abandonment of its industrial facilities. So this is a very educational voyage, even for the most distracted tourist, which reveals the spirit of the place.

I look into the blue eyes of Baldassarre Castiglione (1478-1529), born in Mantua, a citizen of the world, who seems rather perplexed, caught in that intense expression by his friend Raphael, and seems to ask me: “what am I doing here?”. Then he adds the quotation from Dante every “mantoano” learns in childhood: “io son ... de la tua terra. Ahi serva Italia di dolore ostello...” (I am ... of your city. O Italy, you slave, you inn of grief). Already, that verse of the Purgatorio that ends with “bordello”, brothel, offers a very useful metaphor to talk about our national artistic heritage, the theme of this issue of “Casabella”. In any case, the painting was in Mantua at the start of the 1600s, and after a tour of the art markets of Europe, it reached Paris in the very fine collection of the cardinal Giulio Mazzarino (1602-61), containing over 500 pieces, most of which were

confiscated, after the death of the powerful diplomat, first by Louis XIV and then by the Louvre after the Revolution.

Now this extraordinary painting by Raphael is here, in Lens, in the “Grande Galerie” of this new outlying Louvre facility, which displays a number of exceptional masterpieces of occidental and oriental art in chronological order, triggering unusual juxtapositions. The dates are indicated in slight relief on one of the lateral metal walls.

There's no denying it... I feel a “delicious surprise”, though I don't think Proust would have shared it with me.

The gallery is free of pillars and lit only from above by a double ceiling that through the rhythm and elegant design of the beams spreads natural and artificial light into the exhibition space.

The architects Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, creators of the Louvre-Lens project together with Tim Culbert and the landscape architect Catherine Mosbach, are correct when they say that the main quality of this space does not lie in its almost invisible “material” features, but in the “atmosphere” magically created by the light that literally suspends the artworks and reflects their impalpable shadows on the metal walls.

After the visit to the “Grande Galerie”, with La Liberté guidant le peuple (1830-31) by Delacroix (also seen on the advertising posters, which with a patriotic caelembour invite Tous a Lens), I enter the Pavillon de verre: a smaller space, completely transparent at the sides and opaque at the top, devoted to theme exhibitions (today there is Le temps a l'oeuvre, a reflection on the perishability of time, curated by Pierre-Yves Le Pogam), where the paintings are arranged inside two large white cylinders, while the sculptures, placed up against full-height glazed walls, seem to project outwards into the park. The museum, organized in a series of pavilions placed together at the points according to slightly angled alignments, has a transparent entrance hall at its center (68.5 m x 58.5 m), marked by the geometric pattern of the slender white pillars and the curved enclosures (“bulles” with a height of 3 m, lower than the ceiling and, again, glazed) for the service spaces of the museum, including the bookstore, the cafe, etc.

The building is completed, on the side opposite the “Grande Galerie”, by two other spaces: another gallery (80 m in length) for temporary exhibitions, and a smaller volume

for a 300-seat auditorium.

We shouldn't forget the underground spaces, because in the level for the rest rooms, an “Achille's heel” of many old and new museums, visitors cross a spectacular balcony overlooking the art storerooms.

Outside it is raining and work proceeds on the park, without which it is hard to understand the overall drift of the project, winner of a public competition held by the Région Nord-Pas de Calais, based on an initiative of the Ministry of Culture to open a Louvre satellite and completed (not without controversy) in 2005.

The design of the park, organized around a pedestrian route of 5 km that ideally starts at the Lens railway station, seems to put the low profile of the museum on a slight rise, where its aluminium walls almost blend with the sky. All around, an intense green carpet alternates with concrete platforms, marked by a series of cuts and curved motifs from which the lawn emerges, also forming surprising dips, in a double dialogue with the contemporary nature of the internal museum spaces and the spoil heaps that represent, nearby, the indelible memory of this territory.

It's cold. I go back inside and again walk by the portrait of Baldassarre Castiglione. Raphael always manages to make him speak. Now he is quoting a passage from his famous book, Il Cortegiano (1528), a philosophical dialogue on the ideal model of life in a Renaissance court. Describing perfect comportment, he advises: “to avoid any kind of affectation as though it were a rough and dangerous reef; and (to coin a new word, perhaps), to practice in all things a certain sprezzatura [nonchalance], so as to conceal all art and make whatever one does or says seem effortless, and almost unpremeditated. I believe that grace is greatly derived from this; because all are aware of the difficulty of things that are rare and well done, whereas ease generates the greatest wonder; and, to the contrary, striving as they say to achieve things in a far-fetched way brings great disgrace and little credit to every thing, no matter how grand it may be”.

He may be far from his native land, but I must admit that our “Mantoano” looks quite content, because the space that contains his magnificent portrait today flaunts precisely that “sprezzatura” he once recommended. A virtue, a modus operandi that belongs not only to the architectural and landscape design and its relationship with the characteristics of the place, but also

to the story itself of this cultural undertaking, destined to boost the economy of a territory abandoned by industry: a major museum decides to open a satellite facility, holds a competition, selects a winner, builds the project and takes on a collection of outstanding works of art. All without displaying too much "effort", though the strain must have been a great one, given the times.

Incredible, only a few hours away from here, where our museums with their packed storerooms are wrecks that lend out works for exhibitions in the rest of the world! Le plat pays, qui est le mien.



☉ page 88
The "cathedrals" of the 20th century and museum entertainment
Francesco Dal Co

On 4 December 2012, when the President of the French Republic François Hollande and the Minister of Culture Aurélie Filippetti opened the new branch of the Louvre at Lens, they celebrated the completion of one phase in a long, difficult but substantially linear history. Had these pages been roomy enough, and above all were it possible to put the subjects on the same plane, it might have been useful to combine the photograph of the above-mentioned President and Minister with the one that accompanies the start of this note, where we see André Malraux and Le Corbusier. The snapshot from the early 1960s shows them in the architect's studio on Rue des Sèvres in Paris, observing some photographs taken at Chandigarh. At the time Le Corbusier was working on the design of the Maison de la culture e de la jeunesse which the members of his team André Wogenscky and Pierre Guariche would complete in the summer of 1969, four years after his death. Malraux, since 1959, had been the Minister of Culture of the Fifth Republic, guided by General De Gaulle.

The history of the construction of the Maison de la culture e de la jeunesse and the figure of the mayor who promoted the transformation of Firminy into a "ville verte", Eugène Claudius-Petit, could easily be included among the episodes examined by Marc Fumaroli in *L'État culturel*. This vivacious and instructive book, summed up on this page, reconstructs and interprets the implications of the process that led France, in the 20th century, to

embrace a new "lay religion", «the most extraneous to the portents of Rousseau», a cult of culture officially managed by the State starting in 1959, thanks to the creation of a new Ministry, whose first chief was Malraux. Various tools were employed by Malraux and his successors to attempt to root the practice of this religion in French society, to bear witness to a collective identity and an outstanding characteristic of the nation; among them, particular importance can be assigned to the construction, in every city, of new Houses of Culture, and the completion of certain "major works".

Even the combination of the terms "culture" and "jeunesse" with the noun "Maison" in the name used for the work designed by Le Corbusier at Firminy reveals the continuity of the threads that connect the policies promoted by Malraux with what was being done in pre-war France, in the years of the Popular Front, but also during the period of German occupation and the Vichy government, as Fumaroli has demonstrated. Starting with this premise, it is easier to understand the goals pursued by the policy launched by Malraux, for the spread of widespread devotion to the «masterpieces of humanity and, first of all, the legacy of universal masterpieces of which France is heir». So while the Houses of Culture «were to be the "cathedrals of the 20th century"», later «the idea emerged of applying that program, and expanding it, in places that had previously been excluded: museums, monuments, protected areas, libraries». In this context it becomes clear how one of the most emblematic of the "major works", built in Paris in the 1980s by order of François Mitterand, «the project of the Grand Louvre that positioned a House of Culture designed by I.M. Pei in the middle of the palace of the kings of France and the most famous museum in the world», indicated a model and opened the way for «a new series of cultural places», as Fumaroli explains. While in 1977 the opening of the Centre Pompidou, the biggest of the Houses of Culture as they were envisioned by Malraux, coincided with the absorption of "State modernity" in the cult of the "lay religion" that arose in France in the period after World War II, that of the Grande Louvre set the stage for the creation of works like the one built by SANAA in Lens, which Federico Bucci describes in this issue of «Casabella». As Fumaroli has observed, the fact that the Grande Louvre offers palpable evidence of the similarity that has taken hold between the

design of a shopping center and the museum conceptions expressed by the "major works", revealing a change in the very meaning of the word "culture", whose «hidden relationship, but of intense emulation, with the techniques of market analysis belonging to trade and advertising» is not at all mysterious for those who in the name of the State manage museum policies, engaged in «formulating "demands" that are still obscure, inchoate desires» and «satisfying the demands of their clients, more than those of consumers».

The graphics of the poster announcing the opening of the new museum in Lens can be seen as further proof of this thesis. As in Metz, where the grim face of Picasso formed a backdrop for the words *Je m'installe à Metz*, a astute slogan whose close relationship with the advertisements hatched by the marketing experts of large retail chains cannot escape us. The same approach would apply, in fact, to the new Louvre facility in Metz, designed in an evocatively weird way by Shigeru Ban, or for the start of work in Abu Dhabi, not coincidentally hyped in 2009 with the presence of the former President of the Republic Nicolas Sarkozy, on the new local branch of the Museum. Designed by Jean Nouvel, the new facility should be open to the public in 2015. Visitors will have a chance to gape at its extraordinary dome, destined to overshadow, also due to the billions of dollars invested in the operation, while granting the honors of war, the by-now obsolete pyramid built by Pei in Paris. Jean Clair has convincingly interpreted the phenomenon (and others like it) outlined above, whose size and implications are well explained in this passage from his book *Considérations sur l'état des beaux arts*: «at the dawn of the second millennium the monk Glaber looked with wonder at the "white mantle of the churches" as it spread across Europe. At the end of that same millennium one might be amazed to see the gray mantle of museums covering the Occident (...). In the 11th century the worship of relics had accelerated the construction of abbeys and led to the formation of new routes of communication. Today the cult of art works prompts the building of new temples and regulates the major cultural migrations of tourism». Under the influence of the museum, even the nature of the work of art has changed, to such an extent that perhaps not even Malraux would have been able to foresee it. This has happened, according to Jean Clair, along two paths: that of pure

solipsism, of radical self-reference, and that which «claims to abolish the borderline between art and life». If it is true that there is little difference between a pile of rubble left by workmen on the sidewalk of a museum and the pile made by Arman at the center of one of its rooms, between the performance of a mime in the public square and the action of a Body Artist basking in the worship of the art congregation, apart from the fact that the showcase artfully isolates the latter in keeping with the ironic imperative of a Magritian «*Ceci est un œuvre d'art*», we should add that the fate of art works from the past is a similar one, wrecks of time once mercifully stored away in museums, and now displayed as attractions and merchandise by those same institutions.



☉ page 94
A freehand supercircle clad
Enrico Molteni

On the Vitra Campus, precisely at the opposite corner from the VitraHaus by Herzog & de Meuron (cfr. «Casabella» n. 788), stands a new building of vast size with a strange profile. The return to Japan, after the positive experience with Tadao Ando, has brought the studio SANAA to Weil am Rhein to design an industrial building, replacing an existing facility and twice as large, to use as a warehouse for different types of functions. The present industrial needs in the furniture sector no longer match those of the buildings designed by Nicolas Grimshaw (1981-87), Frank Gehry (1989) and Álvaro Siza (1994). «Vitra still produces, but today it is very important for goods to enter and leave in the most efficient, rapid way possible», says Rolf Fehlbaum, chairman of Vitra. «The insight of Kazuo Sejima, following the briefing about the many movements and many accesses needed, has led to the idea of creating a new type of factory connected with a new industrial concept». SANAA has designed a facility with a round form, with no front or back, an alternative to the traditional orthogonal volumes of production plants; logistical flow is radically optimized in the new structure. Trucks can circulate with ease around the building in large continuous drives, dock for the required time and then depart in different directions. Inside, the goods stored in the warehouse all have a limited distance to travel in

order to reach the shipping-receiving hatches. From the structure to the layout of the sprinklers, from the free storage areas to the zones with shelving, everything is organized in a rigorous way, according to a meticulous grid logic. «The alignments, the zenithal openings and all the technical elements for water, fireproofing, lighting, etc., are made in such a way that in the end they are hard to see, though you can sense their presence», Fehlbaum points out. «The internal space seems to float, as if it were intangible, spotless. I think the result is very refined, conveying an incredible impression of clarity». An ethereal atmosphere that reflects the sophisticated logistical automation of the warehouse, distant from the raw goods, sweat and noise of the existing factories. The steel structure is composed of slender H-shaped pillars, 9.5 m high, with I-beams and trusses with spans of 17.5 by 22.8 meters. Since the circular concrete facade contributes to make the building stable, all the structural elements in steel are reduced to a minimum size. Natural light enters the space through many linear skylights and is further diffused by the white steel structure of the ceiling, creating a very luminous workplace. The comparison with the roofs of the various existing buildings brings out the idea of an almost transparent ceiling. Outside, custom-made corrugated panels cover the building, wrapping it like elegant drapes while simultaneously hiding and "unveiling" the activities inside. By modifying the regular form and measurements of a standard, low-cost industrial product, a facade has been obtained with an innovative look, though still very simple. The alternating arrangement of panels made with three different shapes creates an effect of vibration along the whole facade. The very glossy surface of the white plexiglass panels reflects the light and the landscape. The form and position, as well as the pale, shiny image, allow the new structure to stand out with respect to the neighboring buildings. A tiny tail with a sinuous form connects the building by SANAA to the central factories, providing a counterpoint for the equally singular gesture of the mobile roofing designed by Siza. But how is this strange figure, intelligently suited to all the above aspects, actually designed? And, above all, what should we call it? The supercircle, or "squire", is a geometric form that combines the properties of a square with those of a circle. It is a special case of the superellipse, a mathematical curve derived from the ellipse