



⇒ **A different kind of web**
Santo Volto Di Gesù Church in Rome/I

There were times in the past when church doors were very much closed to the outside world. Even today we find places of worship built along the lines of Christian sacred buildings: anything related to the outside world must stay outside. Visually the "real world" is not present. The churchgoers should be concentrating on the service and the ceremonial activities that go on inside the church, after all. As a result churches were designed with stained glass windows or openings positioned high in the walls.

Since the Sixties, however, churches have begun to open up towards the world around them, making more space for a common area to be shared by worshippers and the public alike. The Santo Volto Di Gesù Church in Rome is a celebration of window design. The architects who designed the church were able to gather a team of Italian artists and sculptors at the start of the project and placed immense importance

on the role of natural light as a prime element among all the design criteria to be considered. The Santo Volto Di Gesù Church has not been described as one of Italy's most successful architectural projects for nothing. The glazed area to the rear of the altar is an especially impressive feature. This façade faces north, filling the interior of the church with soft, shadowless light. Through the pattern of lines on the glazing the large spiral window generates a three-dimensional quality, almost arousing the impression that one could get up and walk through it. A crucifix is mounted at the centre of the spiral, leaving the onlooker with no other alternative than to see the Son of God floating in the heavens. Another interpretation may see the window as some kind of spider's web. Whatever interpretation you prefer, this sacred building, as strikingly proven by the architecture of the church, is clearly capable of venturing to look outside. It is only a matter of integrating the view.



Project team::

Client: Opera Romana per la preservazione della fede e la provvista di nuove chiese in Roma

Architects: Sartago Architetti Associati

Altar window: Carla Accardi

⇒ **Light art to combat anxiety**

Light art for a new radiotherapy building in Skåne University Hospital in Lund/S

There are times in life when you have to persevere. That sometimes means waiting and worrying, worrying and waiting. If you are lucky you will find something to focus on to take your mind off the waiting. Swedish-based artist

Aleksandra Stratimirovic developed the "Kaleidoscope" light art installation for this very purpose. In an effort to help patients dispel their anxiety before radiation treatment different versions of "Kaleidoscope" have been installed in six radio-

therapy rooms in the University Hospital in Lund. The work is mounted on the ceiling in each of the rooms and consists of light dots spread in regular symmetrical shapes resembling kaleidoscopic fractals. Each room has its own

dominate the space, but offer a playful, relaxing and hopeful element into the clinical and highly technical environment. An ambitious and necessary project, given that radiation therapy is linked to specific hospital facilities: the sur-



pattern. Colourful kaleidoscopic patterns occur in undulating sequences, and geometric variations and irregular structures follow and replace one another at a meditative pace. To engage the viewer's attention the sequences are programmed in detail and only repeat after 50 hours. The light installations are integrated into the architecture and do not

gery itself, the waiting room and the doctor's office where the patient is prepared for the treatment.

Project team:

Artist:

Aleksandra Stratimirovic

www.strati.se

Photos: Tommaso Bonaventura

IN BRIEF

⇒ **Humble**

The Church of Seed, Huizhou/ROC

The Church of Seed is located on one of the seven famous Taoist mountains in China. This church not only provides space for Christian worship and meditation, but also recreational and meeting facilities for the surrounding village people. Rather than promoting the religious message actively, it is communicated subtly through the play of light and shadow in the architecture.

The Church of Seed uses raw and natural materials. It comprises in-situ concrete with bamboo formwork. The bamboo texture left on the concrete surface reduces the massiveness of the concrete walls and harmonizes with the surrounding trees and green landscape.

The church has a surface area of 280 square metres and can accommodate up to 60 persons. The south-east facing wall has a cross shaped opening which allows the morning sun to penetrate the interior. In general, in Christian churches the symbol of the cross is positioned behind the altar. In this case, the light cross is beside the altar, as if God is looking on as a silent observer. Similar to the architectural concept: not obtrusive but embedded in the context. Together with the floor-to-ceiling window on the other side of the altar, the chancel is framed in light, with the light cross and the view through the window forming a balance between God's sacrifice and His gift to the world.

The stepped roof is partially glazed, allowing diffuse light from the north to penetrate the interior and generating an effect similar to the light on an overcast day. The ceiling height thus increases from three to twelve metres inside the church, which gives rise to an interesting



change in human scale when one enters the space and looks towards the altar. Visitors can walk up to the stepped roof terrace and view the mountains and water in the distance from the observation deck, enhancing their feeling of humbleness in the face of God's creation. In contrast, the transparent windows and doors to the church imply a certain closeness to the surrounding village life.

Although a seed is the starting point of this design, the church does not intend to literally illustrate its image. The abstract form and space of the church is conveyed through the interplay of light, shadow, material and texture. This is not a piece of architecture which purely celebrates its sculptural form, but a building which respects the natural environment and local culture.



Project team:

Design architect: O Studio Architects

Project architect: Guangzhou Architectural Engineering Design Institute

Main contractor: Maoming Construction Group Co. Ltd.

Photos: Fai Au, Iwan Baan