Landscape and Structures

Exhibition at the Oskar von Miller Forum
7 November to 6 December 2013, Monday to Friday from 10 am to 6 pm

The lecture by Jürg Conzett, Chur, Switzerland, on 7 November 2013 at 6.15 pm opens the exhibition at the Oskar von Miller Forum

The exhibition with large black and white photographs presents Switzerland’s civil engineering structures that bear a special relationship to the landscape. Civil engineering structures comprise bridges, jetties, tunnels, supporting walls and passageways, i.e. structures serving traffic routes. The personal selection of civil engineer Jürg Conzett and photographer Martin Linsi - both from Switzerland – were made during forays through their home country. Conzett and Linsi are primarily interested in engineered structures of architectural merit. A central theme are structures which on the one hand take account of engineering and efficiency yet are also designed to elicit certain emotional responses in the user and beholder. Jürg Conzett has planned a number of bridges in Switzerland himself. Photographs of six of his bridges and the widening or supplementation of existing bridges are shown in the exhibition.

"Jürg Conzett wished to present the structures so that one can understand them as a whole", says Martin Linsi. People should see where a bridge begins and where it ends, how it rests on pillars or is suspended by cables. The composition of the photographs was also important for Martin Linsi. “They are not only meant for experts”, he comments. “They are intended to be informative but the images themselves are also to have an impact.” Nothing is supposed to detract from the structures, which is why they are shown deserted – without people, cars or trains. In addition, the black and white photography sharpens the focus on substance and conveys a sense of timelessness.

Civil engineering structures as works of art

Infrastructure constructions such as bridges, tunnels, mountain passes, viaducts, roads or their supporting walls are very prominent features in Switzerland. The photographs in the Oskar von Miller Forum showcase civil engineering structures made of concrete, stone, wood or steel, of which the over 500 year-old “Chibrücke” bridge in Stalden is the oldest and the Valserrheinbrücke bridge, built in 2010, the most recent. The exhibition focuses on how landscape-oriented engineering can draw valuable inspiration from engaging with its own tradition. Topics cover the use of local materials, craftsmanship, monument conservation and adapting existing structures to the higher volume of traffic. In addition, two models show road construction embedded in the landscape – the panoramic road at Susten mountain pass and the first motorway from Chur to Landquart in Grisons.

The photographs presented at the Oskar von Miller Forum are a selection of the Swiss contribution to the 12th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale in 2010.
About Jürg Conzett


Jürg Conzett is a guest member of the Association of Swiss Architects (BSAA), of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and a member of the Schweizerischer Werkbund (SWB).

Photographer Martin Linsi is a freelance photographer and lives in Einsiedeln/Switzerland. An important theme in his work are human traces in landscapes. Linsi completed his training at the Gloucestershire College of Art and Design (England). Since then he has participated in numerous larger and smaller individual and group exhibitions in Switzerland, most recently in 2011 at the Swiss Architecture Museum (SAM), Basel and in 2012 at the power station Kubel, St. Gallen. In recent years, his photographic portrait of the canton Schwyz (2005) and the documentation “Landscapes and Structures” (2010) received broad recognition.