

AFTER THE JURY

COMPETITION EX MACHINA



ATELIER HUANG FALL 2026

Yo hago lo que me da la gana.

After the Jury begins a three-semester studio trilogy by the Media x Design Laboratory examining the architectural competition across three scales and three regimes of collective life: school, housing and city. Each studio will work with an actual competition brief and construct a personal **Competition Ex Machina**, using agentic AI to interrogate the values, exclusions and forms of judgment embedded within it. This autumn, the studio will engage with the open competition for a new school centre and multipurpose hall in Saxon, Valais.

Background

Architectural competitions are theatres of possibility. Behind closed doors, drawings are unfolded, models are turned, alliances are formed, arguments are rehearsed, and futures are selected. A handful of people decide which architecture deserves to exist, and which will remain paper, data, debt, or memory.

In 1957, Jørn Utzon's Design 218 emerged from the competition for the Sydney Opera House. Submitted by a relatively unknown architect, it was described by the jury as controversial in its originality. In 1981, Maya Lin, a twenty-one-year-old architecture student, won the competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. A cut in the earth, a black wall, a nation looking at its own reflection.

The architectural competition is one of the discipline's strangest inventions: a ritual of collective imagination staged as a contest. A nation, a city or a landowner declares a desire.

Hundreds of architects send possible futures. A jury enters a room, one future leaves.

The competition sells a democratic fiction: that anonymous ideas encounter one another on a level field, and that talent can defeat reputation, hierarchy and capital. Switzerland has cultivated this promise with particular intensity. Here, the competition became a cultural engine, a laboratory of public architecture, a ladder for young offices, and a mechanism through which regional sensibilities acquired international force.

Yet the field is exquisitely coded and profoundly unequal. A plan speaks calmly, a model knows how to sit on the table, an image performs radicality while assuring the client that nothing truly dangerous will happen. Hundreds of offices assume the financial risk of producing possibilities so that one institution may select among them. Hope is socialised, risk is privatised, unpaid nights become cultural capital.

The competition transforms labour into prestige, prestige into commissions, commissions into authority, and authority into the power to define what counts as architecture. It is a neoliberal machine for extracting imagination.

Enter AI

Against this backdrop, Artificial intelligence arrives dressed as an assistant. Fast, tireless, compliant and infinitely reproducible, it appears to be the competition economy's ideal worker. AI has seen everything: Palladio and the favela; the Florentine radicals and suburban kitchens; Lina Bo Bardi, corporate campuses, refugee camps, Japanese joints, Belgian

brick, Swiss concrete, Scandinavian moss. It has swallowed the archive. The question is whether AI will reinforce the competition machine or help us subvert it.

In **After the Jury**, we will enter the architectural competition as designers, detectives, workers, impostors and jurors. We will study it as a form of cultural production and as an apparatus for sorting futures. Through historical cases, Swiss competition culture, fieldwork and conversations with architects and jurors, we will examine how judgment becomes architecture, and how preference becomes quality and ultimately power.

Each student will construct a personal **Competition Ex Machina**, an experimental environment in which artificial agents assume the roles of architect, client, critic, engineer, cost planner, citizen, activist and juror. Using LLMS, multimodal models, and Model Context Protocols, we will configure incompatible intelligences and give them access to briefs, regulations, drawings, archives, environmental data and competing systems of value. The agents will collaborate, argue, form alliances, expose contradictions and challenge the assumptions embedded in the brief. One may defend cost, another carbon, another beauty, another the memory of a place.

A School in Saxon

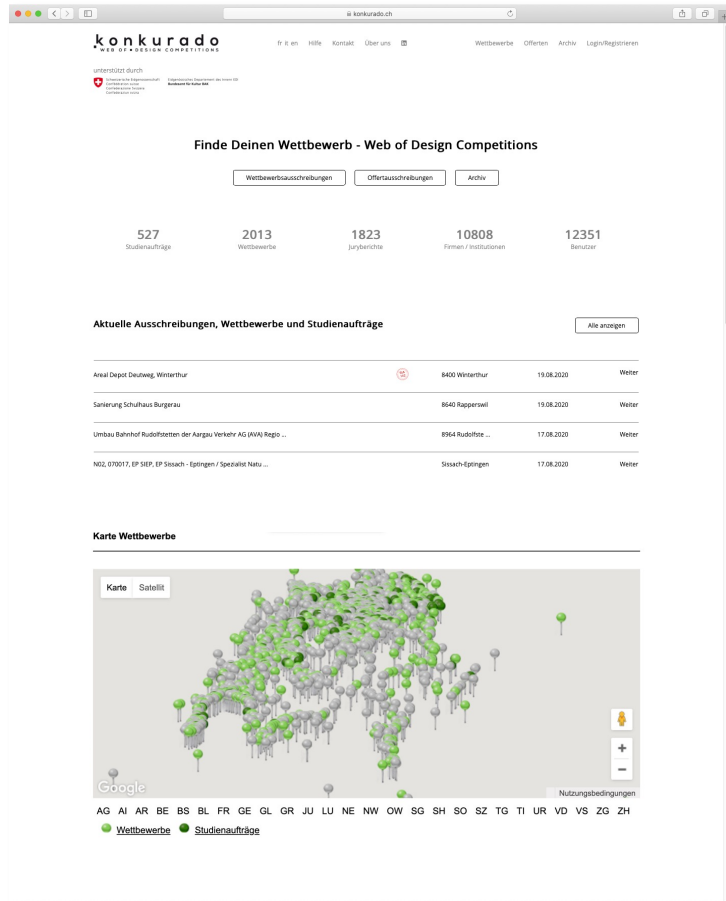
This autumn, the studio will work with an actual open competition for a new school centre in Saxon, Valais. Rapid population growth has saturated the municipality's existing primary school, childcare facilities and UAPE, with temporary classrooms already installed to absorb the shortage. The

competition proposes a new school for 360 pupils in the second primary cycle, on a site behind the former Casino at the western edge of the village.

The project is conceived as more than a school. It combines classrooms and learning spaces with a double sports hall that also serves as a public multipurpose hall, a stage, UAPE facilities and substantial outdoor spaces. The site must also accommodate future public infrastructure, including a swimming pool and a district-heating facility. Central to the competition is the relationship between the new complex, the former Casino and its gardens, and the wider landscape of Saxon. The estimated construction cost for the operation is approximately CHF 29 million.

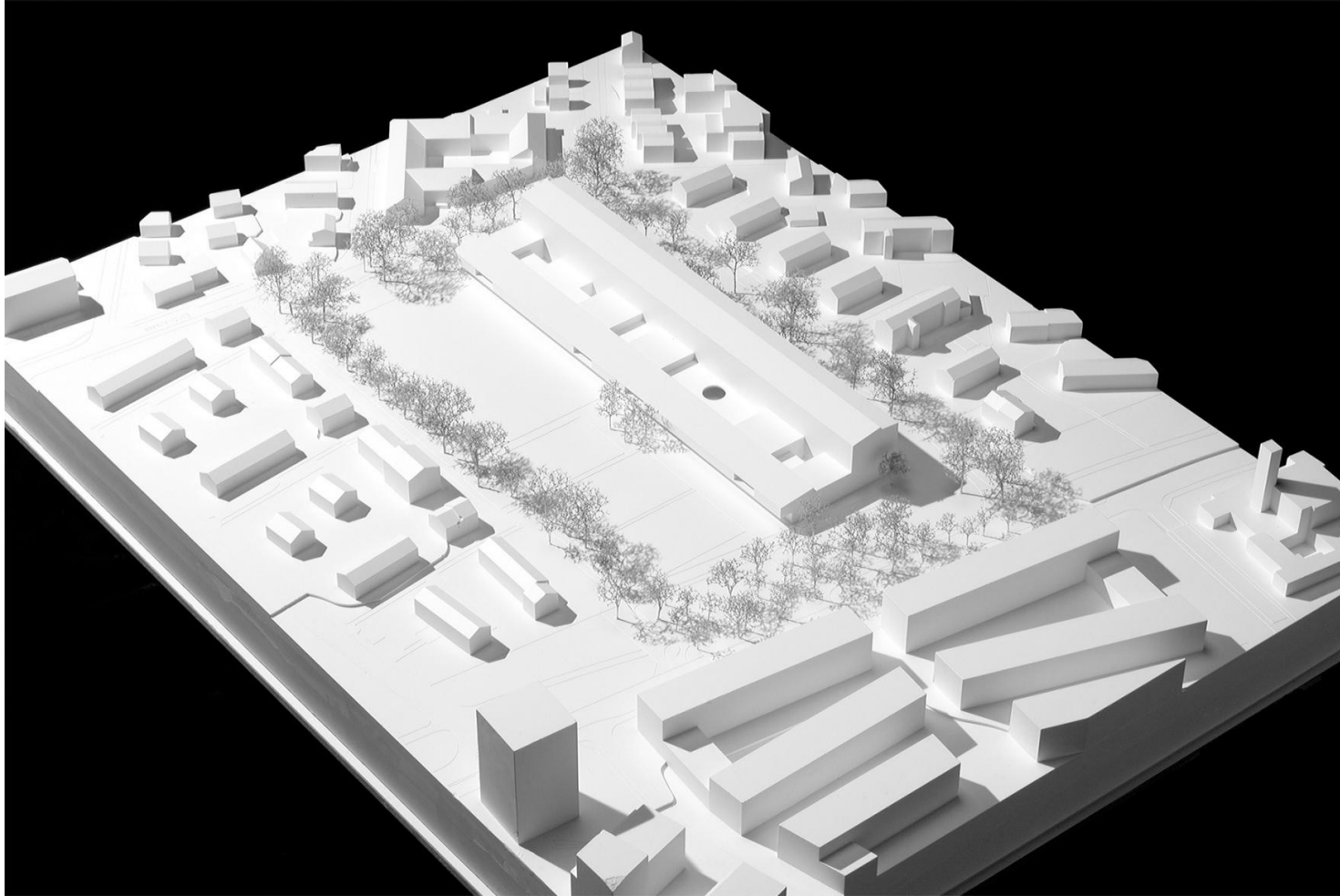
The Saxon brief brings together education, public life, landscape, infrastructure, mobility and energy within a single architectural problem. Students will treat it simultaneously as a prompt, programme, and ideological document, asking what the competition values, what it measures, what it overlooks, and how those criteria might be challenged by other forms of intelligence.

The competition asks us to imagine a future and submit it before midnight. The ambition is to produce, *ex machina*, architecture capable of competing within the system, while constructing the intelligence required to subvert it.

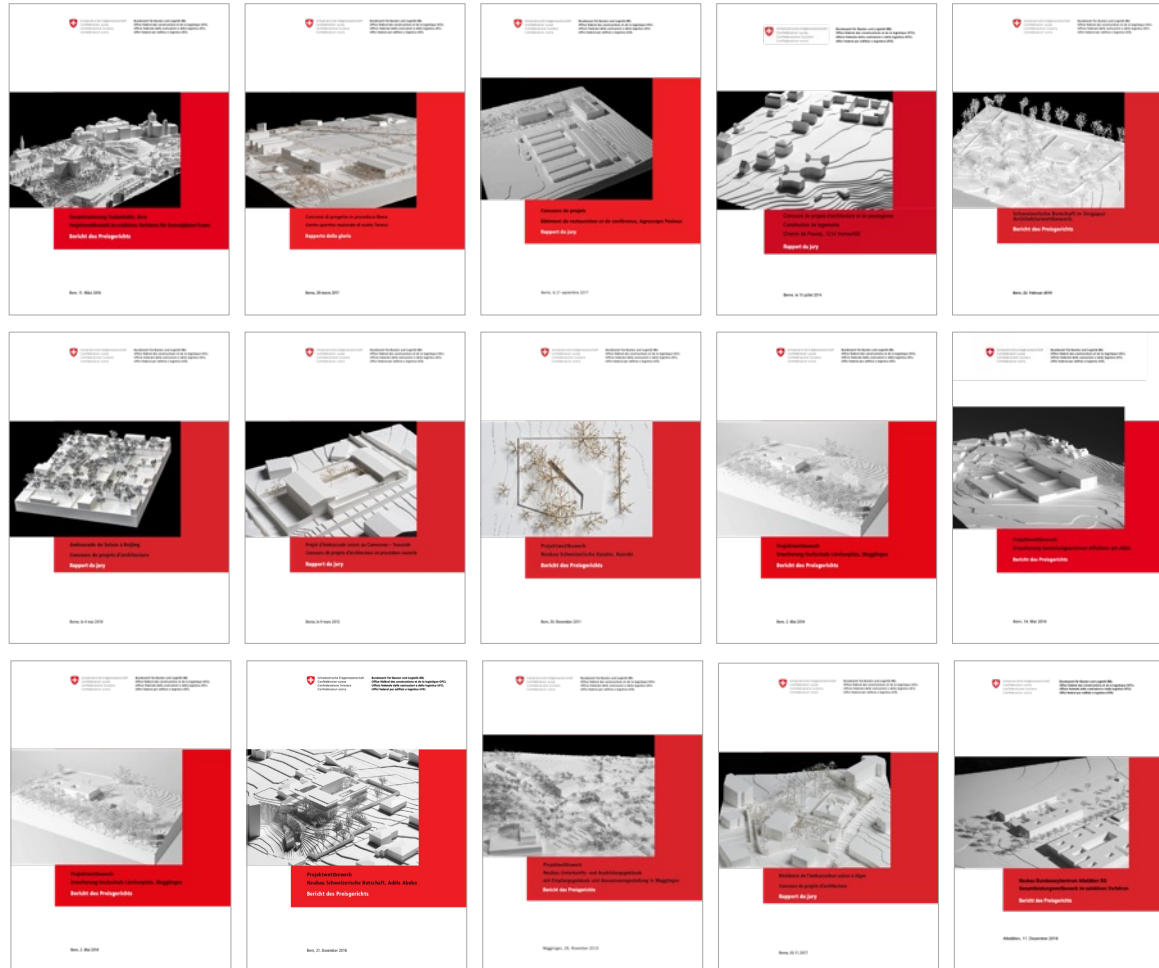


The competition web platform in Switzerland, *Konkurado*

Approximately an archive of 2,000 jury reports are available as sources for dataset creation.



White abstract model with context at 1:500 scale
3rd place winner of the new replacement school complex in Saatlen, Schwamendingen, Zürich.



Jury reports from competitions at the federal level
Well-documented reports of the competition results and jury processes.



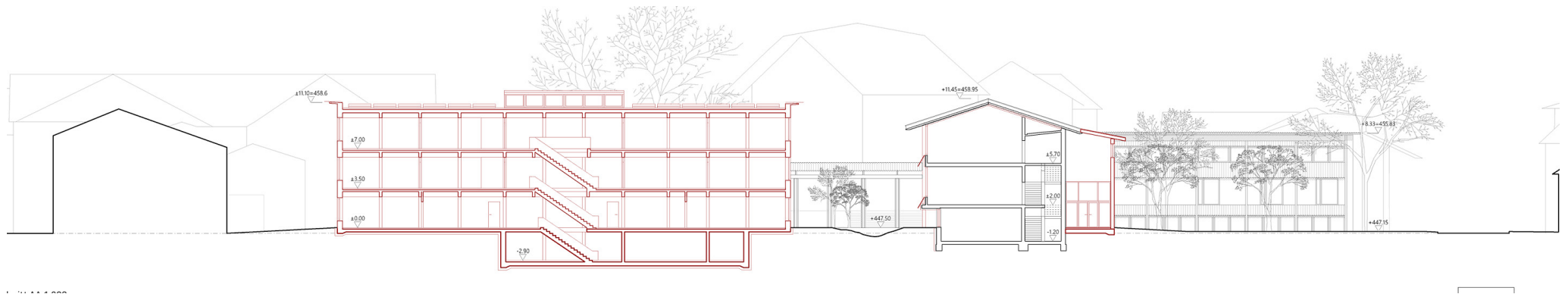
Ordnung SIA 142
The guidelines for architecture and engineering competitions in Switzerland.



Neukonzipierung Primarschule Dorf, Flums, 2026, 1. Rang «Enfilade»
Fiechter & Salzmann Architekten (Source: competitions.espazium.ch)



Neukonzipierung Primarschule Dorf, Flums, 2026, 1. Rang «Enfilade»
Fiechter & Salzmann Architekten (Source: competitions.espazium.ch)





École Primaire Intercommunale de Malley, 2026. 1er rang «Le Virage»
ALIAS architects et DU Studio (Source: competitions.espazium.ch)



École Primaire Intercommunale de Malley, 2026. 1er rang «Le Virage»
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L'école d'Orsonnens, 2014, 1. Rang «Grangecole»
TEd'A & Rapin Saiz (Source: competitions.espazium.ch)



L'école d'Orsonnens, 2014, 1. Rang «Grangecole»
TEd'A & Rapin Saiz (Source: competitions.espazium.ch)



A FARM SCHOOL (GRANGECOLE)

The proposal reads the environment and reinterprets it.

The new school is born on the basis of the traditional farm models of this zone. These farms are characterized by a clear structural order that starts the inside, a honest construction and a neutral volume.

CONSTRUCTION IS FORM

The constructive honesty of the traditional models is also present in the new school building. Each of the constructive elements is expressed formally and independently from the rest.

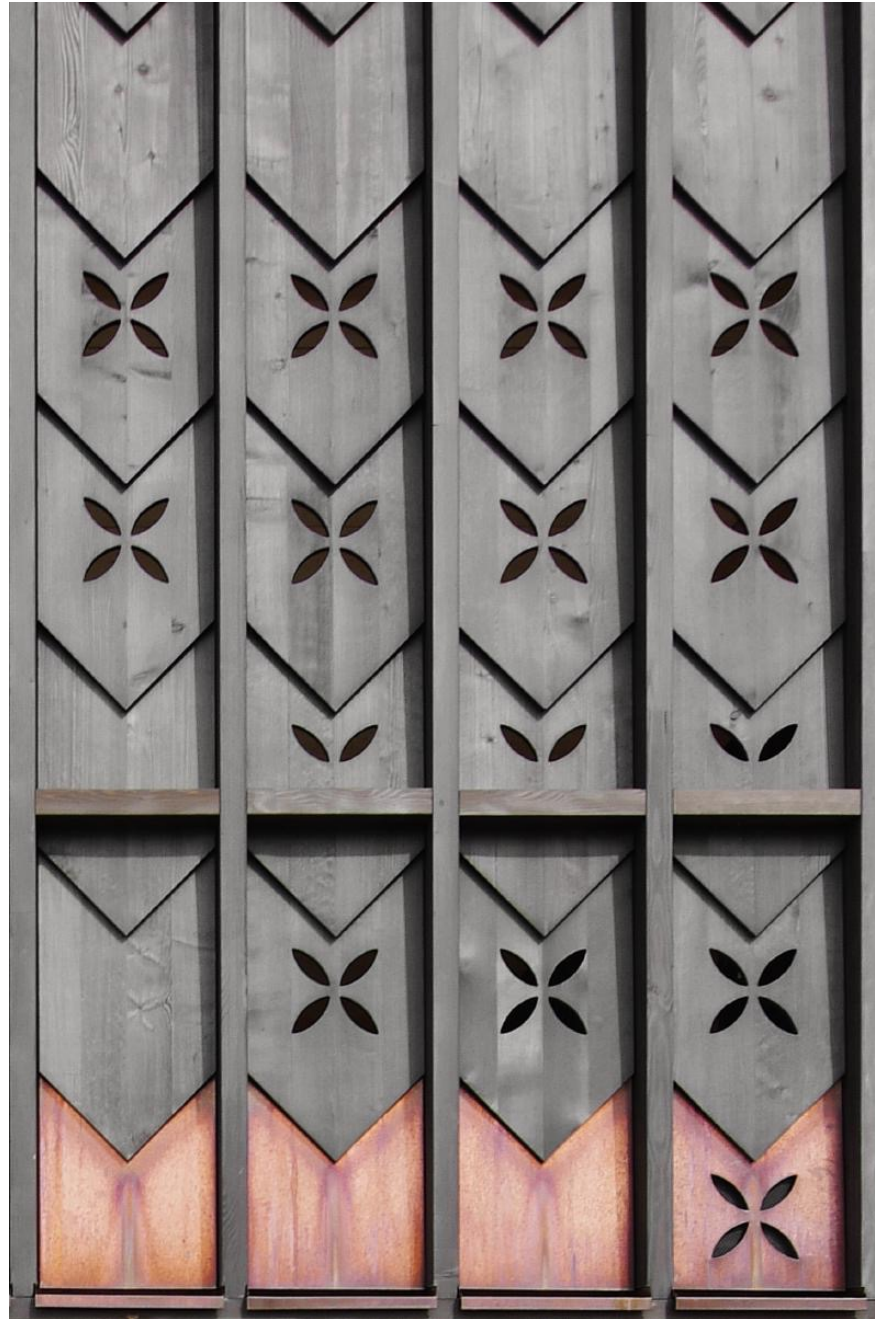


COMPACTNESS AND OUTDOOR NEUTRALITY

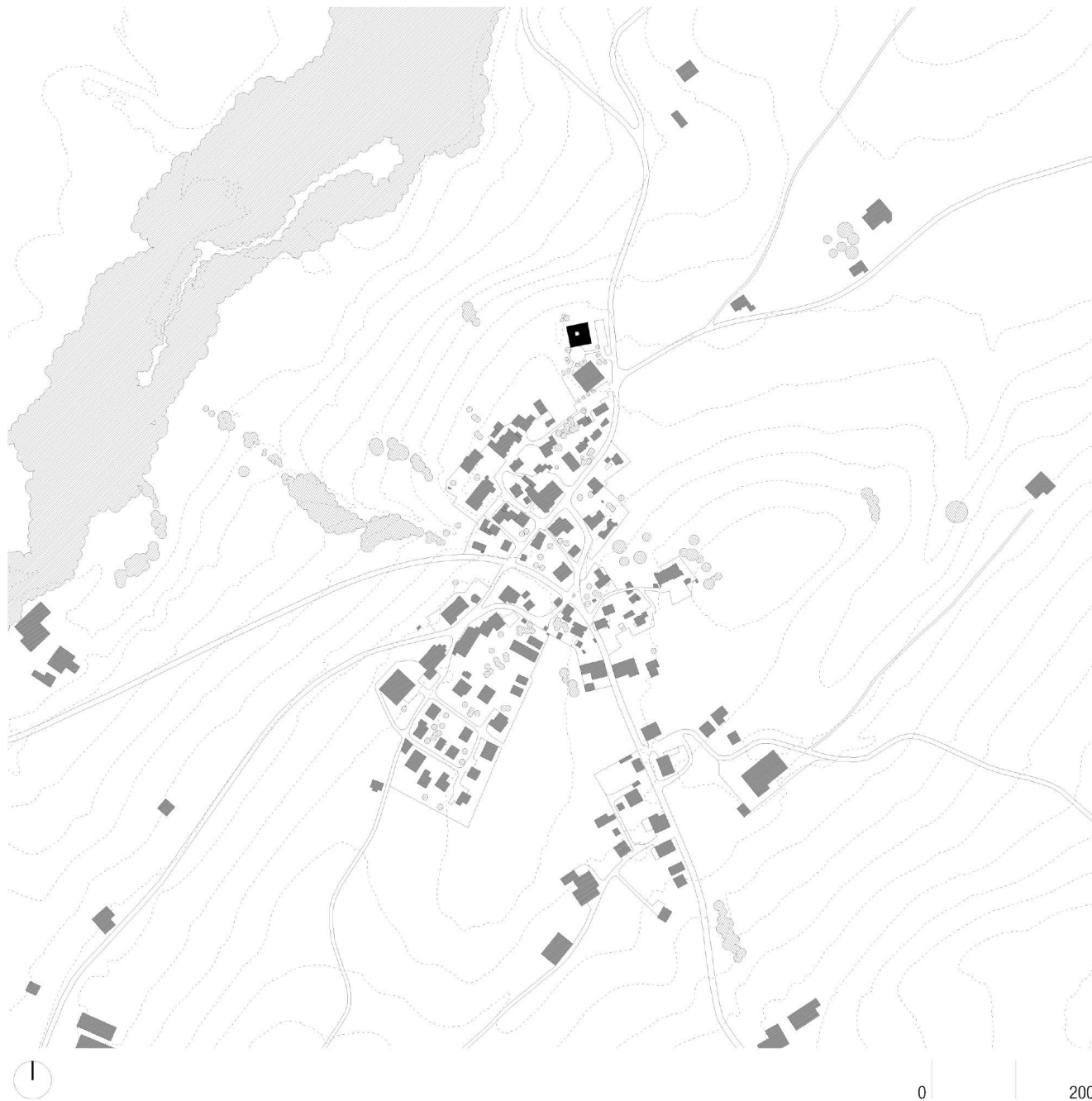
The building compacts on part of the currently occupied by parking area, respecting the line of existing trees inside the plot and without encroaching on the area that is still nature beyond these trees.

INNER WEALTH

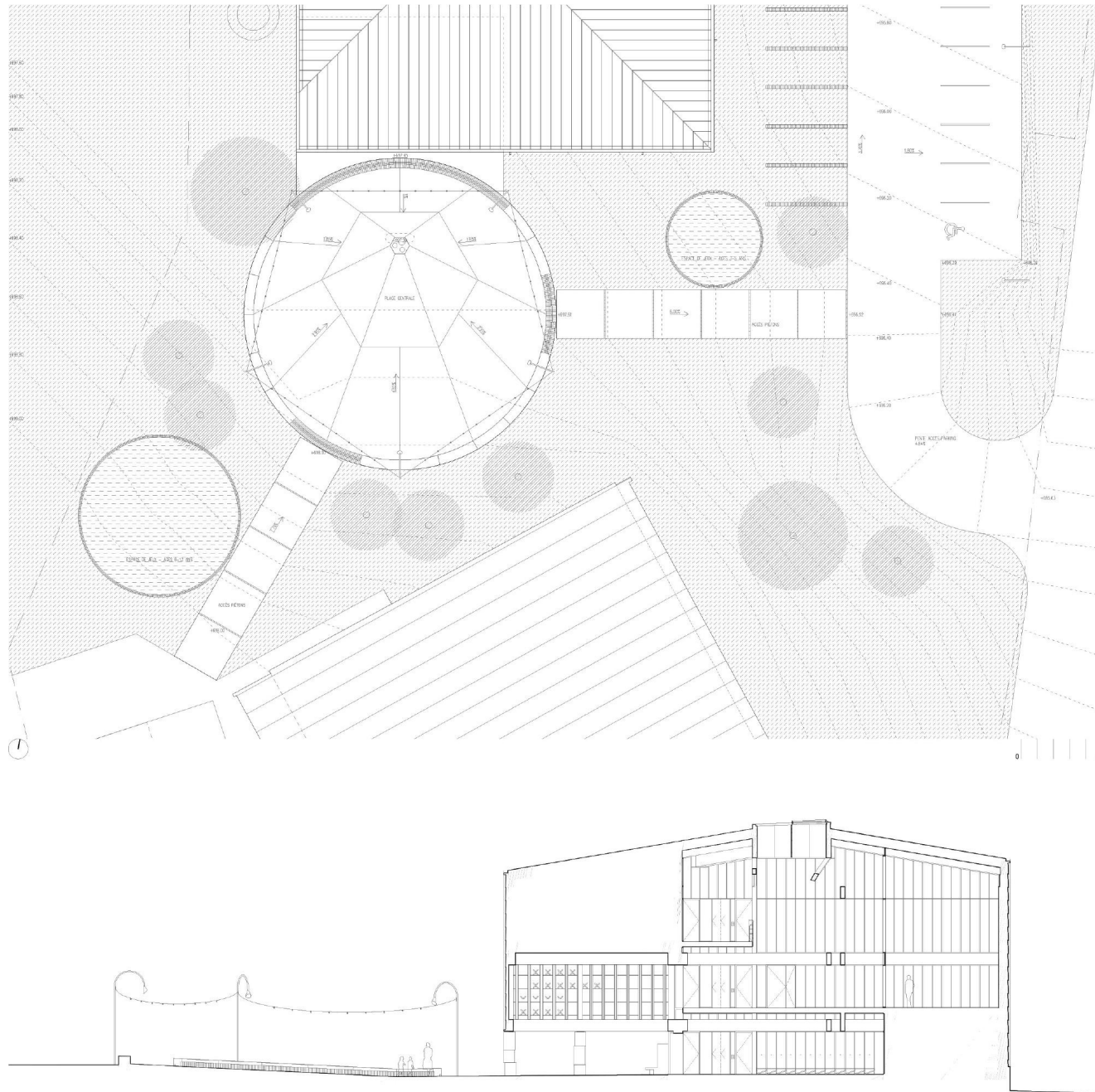
Against the outside neutrality of the volume, the inside of the building is complex. The interior space is vertical and multiplies visual relationships. A central pillar rises sculpturally to the roof, where this is drilled to let in the light.



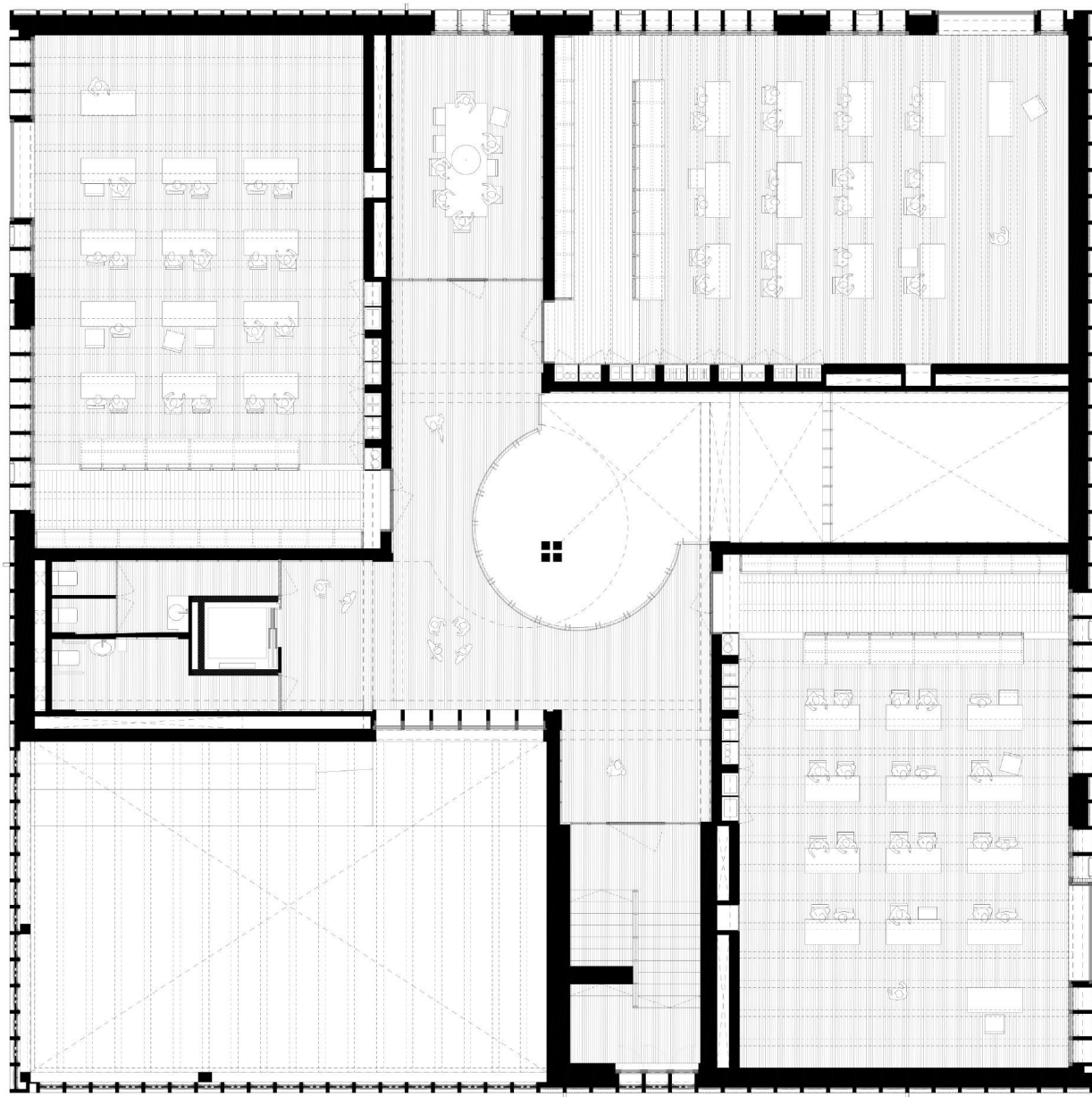
L'école d'Orsonnens, 2014, 1. Rang «Grangecole»
TEd'A & Rapin Saiz (Source: competitions.espazium.ch)



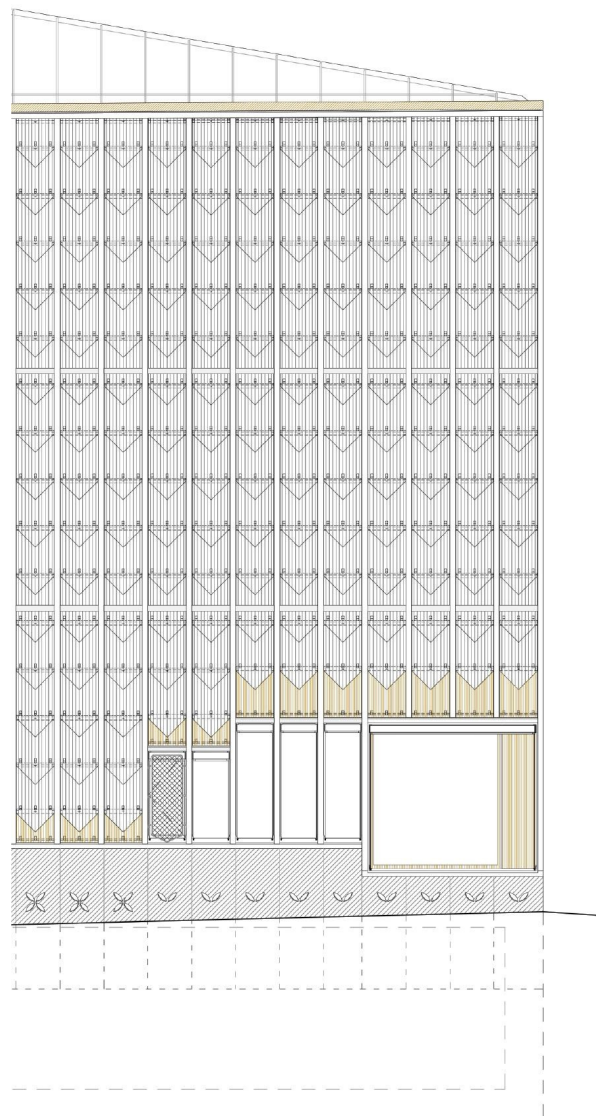
L'école d'Orsonnens, 2014, 1. Rang «Granecole»
Ted'A & Rapin Saiz (Source: competitions.espazium.ch)



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L'école d'Orsonnens, 2014, 1. Rang «Granecole»
 TEd'A & Rapin Saiz (Source: competitions.espazium.ch)



ROOF

- Copper sheet, 0.6 mm
- Separating layer
- Solid spruce wood panel, 27mm
- Wooden slats 80x40mm with ventilation
- Waterproof sheet
- Under roof isolation, 60mm
- Cross insulation in 2 layers, 60 + 160mm
- Vapor barrier
- Three-layer spruce panel, 27mm
- Laminated wood beam 190x360

WOOD BEARING STRUCTURE

- Laminated wood beam 238x1200mm

FAÇADE

- Wooden single, solid wood panel / de panneau de fusite massissa, 24mm, between laminated wood frames, 180x80mm
- Wooden slats, 60x35mm
- Wood butters, 150x27mm
- Windbreak panel
- Wooden batten and mineral wool insulation
- Steam barrier vapour-proof panel
- Technical lath and insulation, 60mm
- Interior finish three-layer spruce panel, 19mm

MIXED WOOD-CONCRETE FLOOR SLAB

- Continuous natural linoleum pavement, 10mm
- Concrete slab, 70mm
- Isolation and floor heating, 30mm
- Reinforced concrete, 80mm
- Waterproofing to prevent drip from concrete
- Acoustic panel, 35 mm
- Laminated wooden beams, 160x340 mm, with connector between beams and concrete

EXTERIOR WINDOWS

- Laminated wood, 490x80 mm
- Exterior frames in pine wood
- Transparent glazing
- Light control blind

GROUND FLOOR CONCRETE SLAB

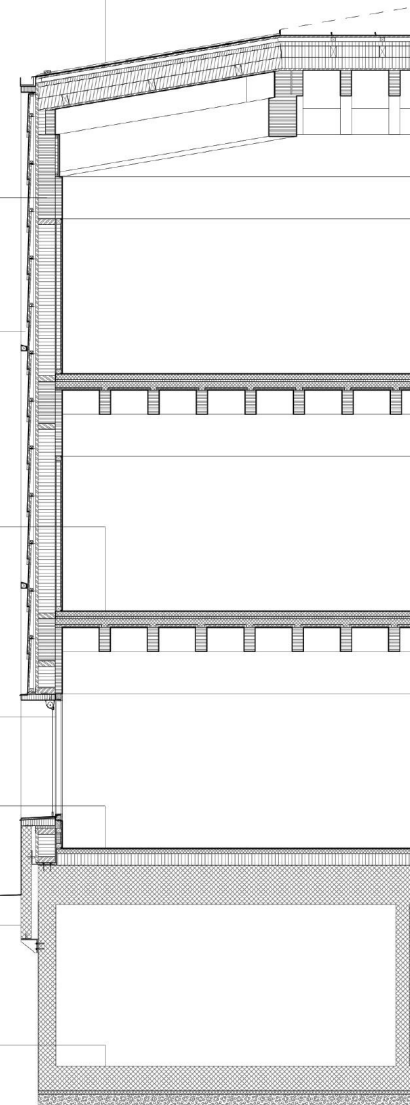
- Continuous natural linoleum pavement, 10mm
- Concrete slab and floor heating, 80mm
- Isolation, 160mm
- Reinforced concrete slab, 560mm

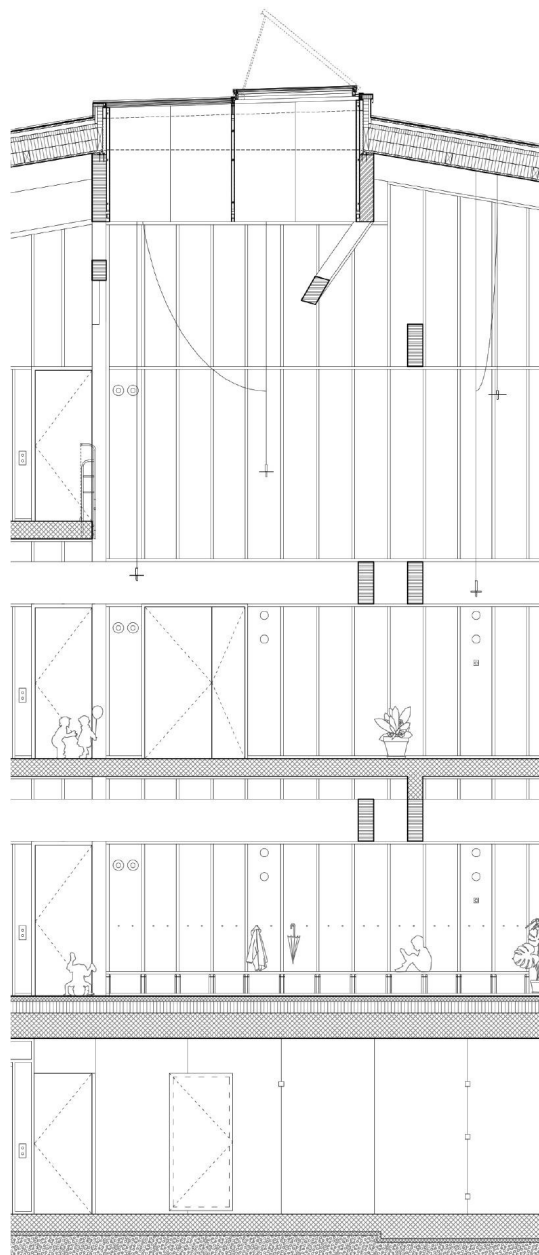
BASEMENT WALL

- Prefabricated concrete panels, 145mm
- Waterproofing
- Reinforced concrete wall, 250mm

BASEMENT SLAB

- Polished reinforced concrete slab, 250/350mm
- Isolation, 50mm
- Gravel, 200mm





BEARING CLOSURE WALL
 -Three-layer spruce panel, 19 mm
 -Wooden lath and insulation, 180 mm
 -Three-layer spruce panel, 27 mm
 -Empty technical space, 285 mm
 -Plasterboard panel, 13 mm
 -Wooden lath and insulation, 100 mm
 -Three-layer spruce panel, 19 mm

WOOD BEARING STRUCTURE
 -Laminated wood beam interior frame
 220x600mm

BEARING CLOSURE WALL WITH CABINET
 -Wooden cabinet
 -Plasterboard panel, 10 mm
 -Wooden lath and insulation, 80 mm
 -Plasterboard panel, 10 mm
 -Acoustic absorber void, 10 mm
 -Plasterboard panel, 13 mm
 -Wooden lath and insulation, 100 mm
 -Three-layer spruce panel, 19 mm

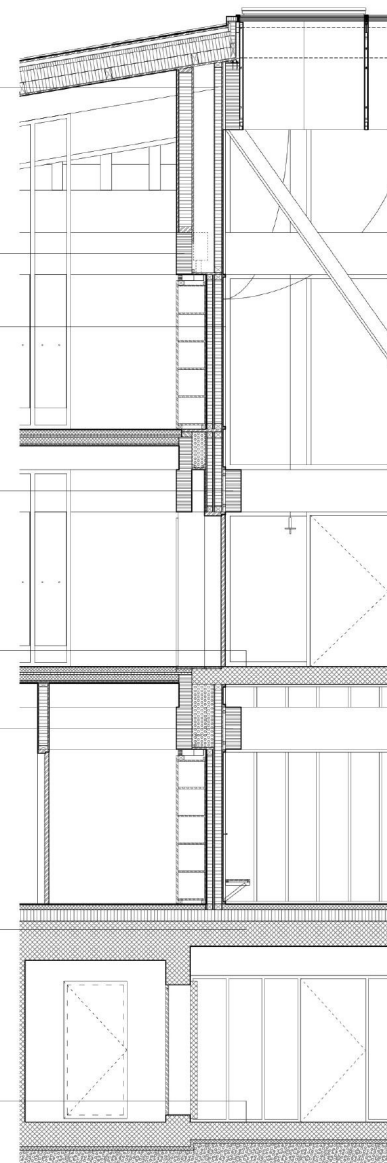
WOOD BEARING STRUCTURE
 -Laminated wood beam interior frame
 220x600mm + 180x460mm
 -Laminated secondary wood beam interior frame
 220x600mm

HALL SLAB
 -Polished reinforced concrete slab, 250mm

WOOD BEARING STRUCTURE
 -Laminated wood beam interior frame
 220x600mm + 180x460mm
 -Laminated secondary wood beam interior frame
 220x600mm

GROUND FLOOR HALL CONCRETE SLAB
 -Polished concrete slab and floor heating, 80mm
 -Insulation, 150mm
 -Reinforced concrete slab, 560mm

SOLERA DEL SÓTANO
 -Polished reinforced concrete slab, 250/350mm
 -Insulation, 50mm
 -Gravel, 200mm





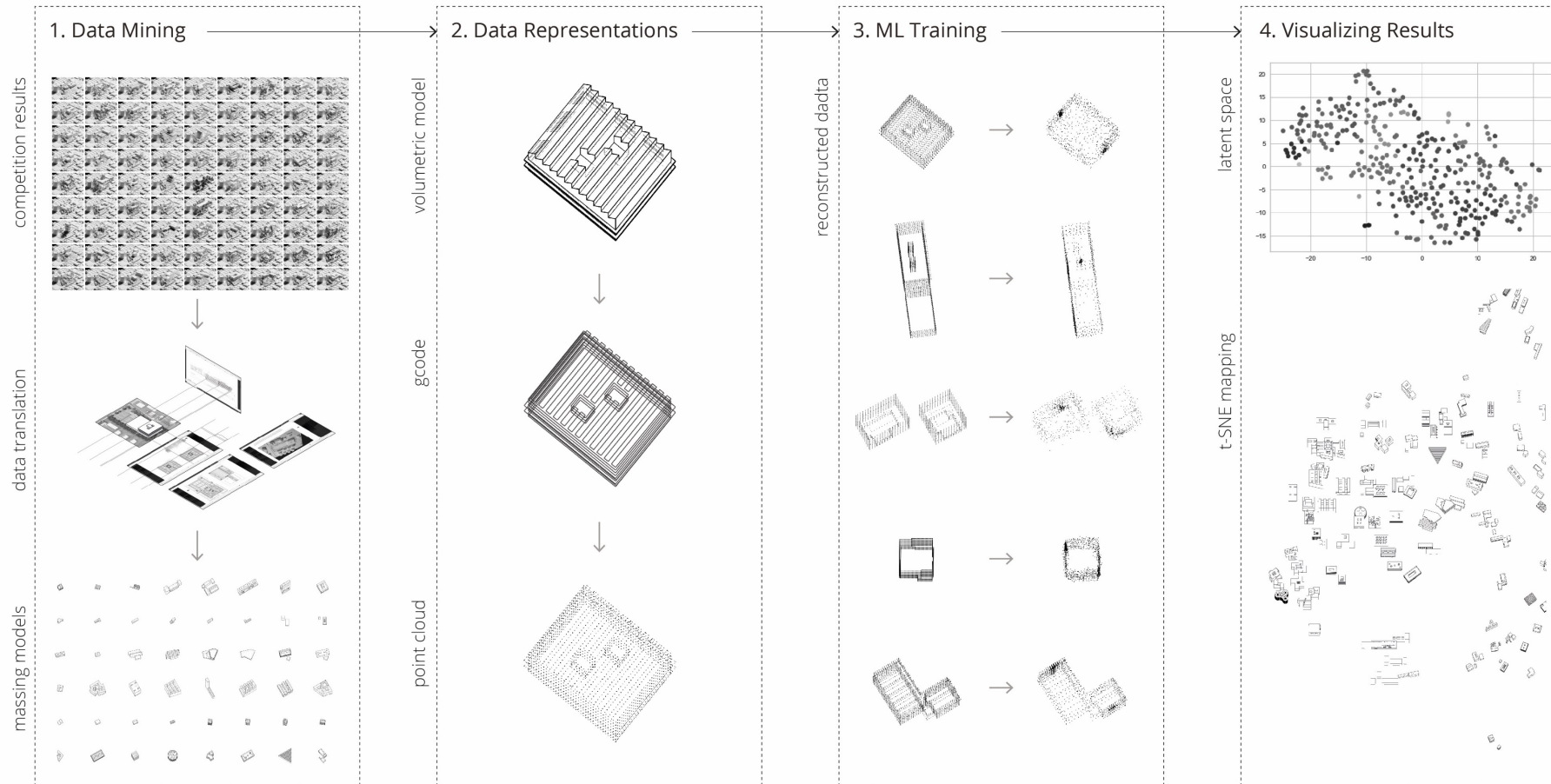
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TEd'A & Rapin Saiz (Source: competitions.espazium.ch)



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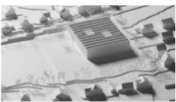
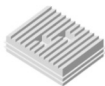
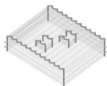
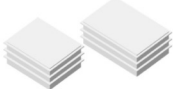
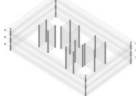
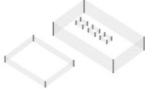
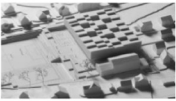
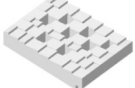
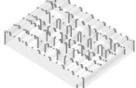
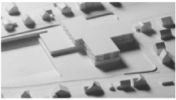


Frederick Chando Kim, 2022

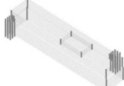
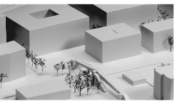
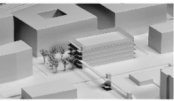
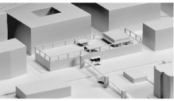
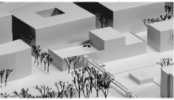
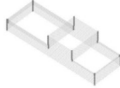
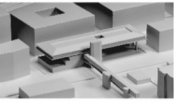
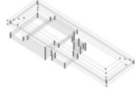
DAA, a proposed method for machine learning of architectural forms

Kim, F. C. (2024). Deep Architectural Form (Publication No. 10368) <https://doi.org/10.5075/epfl-thesis-10368>

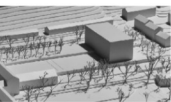
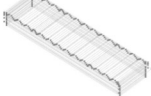
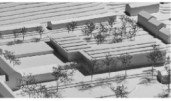
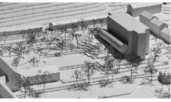
Wettbewerb - Ersatzneubau Sekundarschule Laufen

ranks	massing models	volumetric forms	g-code representations
1. Rang. ATELIER HIMMELSUCHT			
2. Rang. FALX JUMEAUX			
3. Rang. LE GRAND ESCALIER			
4. Rang. Doko			
1. Rundgang. CAMALI			
1. Rundgang. SCHMETTERLUNG			
1. Rundgang. SWAGGY			

Wettbewerb - Schulanlage Allmend Passerelle Haspelsteg

ranks	massing models	volumetric forms	g-code representations
1. Rang. SALTO			
2. Rang. NEIGHBOUR- HOOD			
3. Rang. BALOO			
4. Rang. STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN			
5. Rang. ARGO			
6. Rang. KRUMMELUS			
7. Rang. KING OF THE KONGO			

Wettbewerb - Schulanlage Borrweg

ranks	massing models	volumetric forms	g-code representations
1. Rang. APOLLO			
2. Rang. BLÄTTERWERK			
3. Rang. FRIESENBERG- TERRASSE			
4. Rang. JARDIN DU PARADIS			
5. Rang. VENTO			
6. Rang. VERANDA (1)			
7. Rang. KAPPUS			

Frederick Chando Kim, 2022, Pilot study showing data transformation from massing model to G-code translation
Ranked projects in three different school competitions.
Kim, F. C. (2024). Deep Architectural Form (Publication No. 10368) <https://doi.org/10.5075/epfl-thesis-10368>



Media and Design Laboratory
Final Jury Circular Kyoto, EPFL, Switzerland, 2022.



Media and Design Laboratory
Final Jury Circular Kyoto, EPFL, Switzerland, 2022.

Important Dates

Fall, 2026

Studio Introduction

Sep 07

Forensics (2 weeks)

Sep 07 - Sep 22

Massing 1:500 (2 weeks)

Sep 22 – Oct 5

Typology 1:200 (1 week)

Oct 5 - Oct 12

Midterm Review

Oct 13

Tectonics 1:50 (3 weeks)

Oct 26 - Nov 16

Materiality 1:20 (2 weeks)

Nov 16 - Dec 7

Representation (2 weeks)

Dec 7 – Dec 15

Final Review

Dec 15

The studio theme spans the entire academic year of 2026/27.

Accordingly, there will be continuity between the fall and spring semester, but each semester can be followed independently. Prior AI experience is not required.

Dates are subject to change.

Team

Media x Design Laboratory

Prof. Jeffrey Huang, Luis Pedro de Macedo, Duarte Barbosa Pereira, Alex Sadeghi, Alexandre Vong Srivastava, Zihui Tian, Zebin Chen.

Partners

University of Florida

Prof. Frederick Chando Kim

ETH Zurich

Dr. Mikhael Johanes