

Press Information

Is architecture only real when it is built?

How fascinating it would be to see architectural designs that were never implemented: *Was wäre wenn/What if* (Christoph Merian Verlag) shows us just that, taking as examples 23 building projects in Switzerland that were never carried out. To do this, the editors Andreas Kofler and Andreas Ruby, in a dialogue with more than 20 architectural institutions from all parts of the country, have made a representative selection from a sheer endless store of projects. Richly illustrated with texts and images, *Was wäre wenn/What if* plays with a one hundred year old idea of a Swiss cultural-architectural landscape, which never existed yet is deeply rooted in the collective subconscious thanks to the high degree of democratic co-determination in the field of architecture and urban planning. This meticulously designed book is a bilingual publication in German and English.

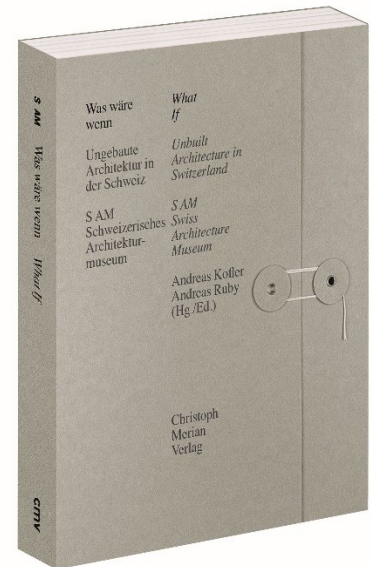
Even designs by Le Corbusier, Mario Botta or Herzog & de Meuron were rejected. Our curiosity is awakened by a map of building projects analogous to the book's chapter structure *Lost, Rejected, Stalled or Changed*. Their number exceeds the number of realised buildings by far. What brilliant ideas may be hidden here? From the extension of the Bundeshaus (Federal Palace) to the reservoir dam, this book shows more than 20 unrealised projects which are still being talked about today.

The question that arises is whether the rejected projects, obviously designed with courage and the heart's blood of the architects, possibly embody the essence of architecture better than the buildings that actually exist. Were the designs too daring perhaps, too utopian? Does direct democracy in Switzerland lead not just to a uniquely co-determined architecture, but also to less innovative force? Or to put it another way: Is the eminent right of co-determination a good building commissioner?

Architecture impinges on the life of every individual. The more intense the public debate about it, the more we all profit from it. In this sense, the ideas and insights gained from the huge store of projects provides valuable stimulus for an audience interested in architecture in Switzerland and beyond regarding the relationship between the conceived and the built.

The visually strong and very inspiring photographs and texts revolve around the highly differentiated concept of family, motivating us to reflect on past, current and possible future models of family life.

Exhibition at S AM Swiss Architecture Museum: 24th November 2023 to 14th April 2024



S AM Swiss Architecture Museum
Andreas Kofler, Andreas Ruby (ed.)
Was wäre wenn/What if
Ungebaute Architektur in der Schweiz/Unbuilt Architecture in Switzerland

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www.merianverlag.ch/presse

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We would like to thank you in advance for sending us a file copy of your review!