

Architectural Coffee Cult-ivation

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Going for a coffee has become a cult deeply rooted into everyday life. Originating from the coffee cultivating countries, exported to and celebrated in the European world, reinvented for the world in Seattle and in the current economic turbulence rumors the Columbian coffee barons are about to buy Starbucks as seeming to full circle. But despite this pop cultural societal relevance, why in the world was a coffee shop selected for ASCA annual presentation in Portland (being close to Seattle!)? This I can obviously not say, but seek to expose why the project was relevant to me, who is specifically interested in "needy building types," and my excitement about this one because of its evolution so contrary to its

business model intention, the cultivated celebration of one of the most legendary "enjoyment foods" on earth. Whereas the product coffee itself is increasingly about quality, purity and authenticity the containing environments are the opposite: shops which are quickly thrown together out of plywood and predominantly laminated on images of literal imagery of zoomed coffee beans.

The reason is of capitalistic origin: not to diminish the profit of a cup of coffee by investing in the interior, considering the sales difference ratio between the ingredients and the sales price being only higher with ice cream. So was it with our client "Kreipe",



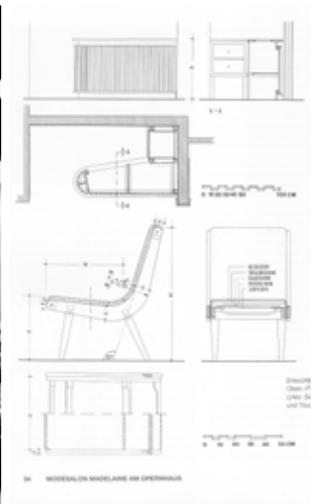
the common literal



the client's first messy try



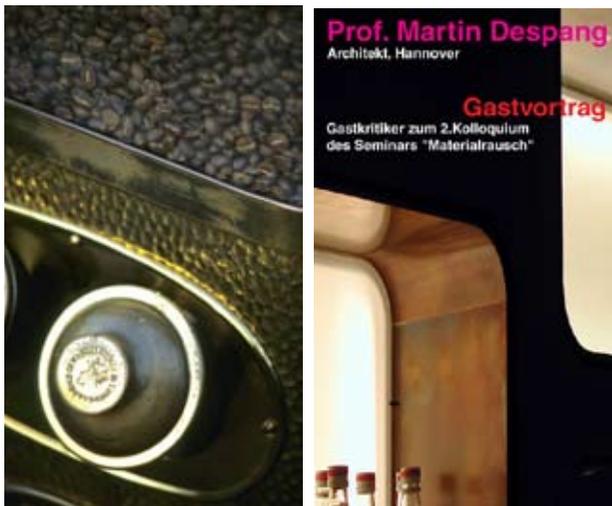
the legendary "Madeleine" , with Lindau furniture





conversion of the "mother house" to retail

the most traditional Hannover cake maker, who had a previous branch location that had been put together by a "design builder," who had been recommended by the sponsoring coffee roaster. This exclusively profit-driven design solution was not at all based upon architectural methodology and with that the result was seen as lacking specific unique character and as being unfortunate by the client who gave us the chance to try and approach differently. Typologically, besides the obvious precedent of the Viennese Coffee shop of the Wagner-arian era, my visit several years ago to Glasgow's Macintosh teahouses and its holistic approach and rigor from concept to finest execution makes any misleading discussion on a distinction between architecture and interior architecture/design design obsolete. In contrast to some sentimentally motivated retrospective design strategies, we were more interested in the analytically generated principles as lessons to interpretatively apply to undoubtedly changed circumstances for this type. Besides this



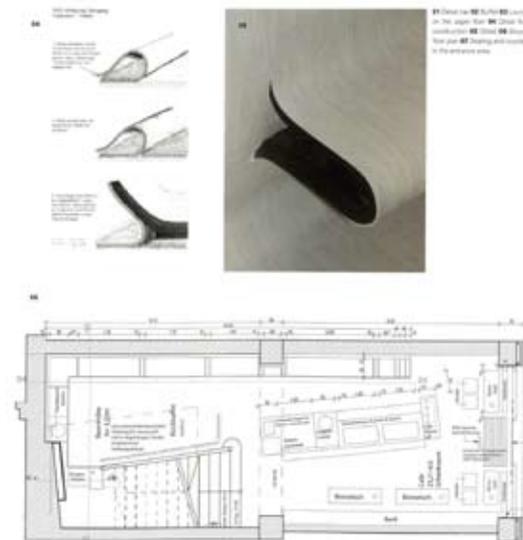
childhood companion

interpretation



"Braun - Pure Plastic"

ground floor macro + micro



more universal typological investigation we next looked into examples of distinct local specificity. In Hannover, "Kreipe", since 1873, is one of the traditional shops which, still, produces fine cakes in the "Bahnhofstrasse" and was selling these along with legendary coffee most recently. The unfortunate and globally symptomatic development of this main street from a formerly local owner business operated space for urban socialization to an anonymous rush-through street aligned by corporate franchise chains motivated Kreipe to seek a new location. The traditional headquarters location was remodelled by us for rent out purposes, in a sense to keep the notion of the tradition with an assemblage of wooden stairs, "Nero Assoluto" stone and a glass garage louver shop-front threshold.

The new location was found opposite of the classicist opera-house and connected to the bank quarter and the main, traditionally more bohemian, "Luisen- and "Theatherstraße," which, in the recent past, had lost their profile since their great times

of the 1950's/60's, which I remembered from my early childhood and trips to our dentist nearby. Whereas dentist visits for kids, especially with the adjacency to chocolate shops, are not necessarily great things to remember, these trips with my mother left a distinct memory of the excitement of vibrant urban modernism. It happened to be and came back to our memory that our new site/space was the location of the "Madeleine", the fanciest department store for women's clothing in town, at that time. It was designed by local legend, architect Friedrich Lindau, whom we were happy to call our friend and who passed away last year at age 91 after a fulfilled life with a very influential impact on Hannover. The "Madeleine" was an at those times a more uncommon "total piece of architectural/art work"



"Braun Pure Plastic" ground floor



"Daab - Plastic Design" cash registration hollow

with Friedrich designing everything down to the light fixtures and furniture, the shop front was a very simple and elegant curved glass front with light accentuated white textile curtains as the only spectacle. The shop has been long gone, and its customers have undoubtedly and coincidentally grown old along with the café "Kreipe", which was now facing the generational turn over to the son Jan Fleissig. His goal, and the task for us, was to not scare away, meaning keep, the inherited clientele and additionally, for him understandably if not more important, to also attract guests of his generation from the late 20's up. From there on, programmatically the strategy was to find a blend of the old with the new, to seek innovation out of tradition. A challenging potential was the space consisting of a narrow, long, and tall ground floor and a contrastingly wide and narrow second floor. Conceptually the guest enters at the beginning of the narrow space aligned by the facilitating elements: counter, rear sideboard and seating benches which are underscoring the spatial effect of pronounced linearity.

As a psychological device to avoid a trapped atmosphere the linear seating-bench and the counter, unlike commonplace, are not self-sufficient elements, but sculpturally modelled out of the bright floor and give illusionary width to the tube-like space. All functional parts such as bag rest or openings for food display, cashier display or tasting samples are additively or subtractively plastered out of the mass. Contrasting a dark rear-sideboard with bright back-lit, carved out hollows forms a space-defining background of the shop unit and contains all preparation and showcasing functions. Materiality was a crucial strategy to cohesively represent the quality of the Kreipe products. Congruent to the produced cakes, which do not cover poor quality under a shiny icing, the materials are pure and left untreated and show their consistence.

The rear sideboard is made of pigmented black MDF, which tells about its substantial heritage with fine texture and brown fibrousnesses. The homogeneity allows improved aging, which in daily use is unavoidable. Bumps and dents show the same "true honest contents" and no shameful, hidden, "fake" core underneath.

Coated with the same material as the counter, the bench-seating and the floor are covered by a 3mm thick layer of cream-white vinyl with self exposed edges.

A further layer is created by 0,7mm thick brass which coats the inner surfaces of the rear-sideboard and bench-tables. The brass, in a soft-edged



"Pageone - Cybercafes"

ground floor details



"Pageone" – analogue and digital communication



Artist Johannes Kaiser bowl inspiration upper floor



"Pageone" – 1.floor lounging event

style, is smoothly rounded with a radius of 80 mm, the use, in the form of sheet metal bands, is as it comes from the manufacturer. The material had been inspired by a salvaged old brass coffee dispenser in my room as child and the love-hate relationship of growing up with each other. Very young I loved and played with it, in architectural school ignored it as being an unmodern antique, and even later began respecting its craft and materiality.

Provocatively, the brass is not clear coated so as to constantly change as being exposed to the steam caused humidity of the coffee making process.

Contrasting is a sensual harmony of softer materials/fabrics, which is inspired by the materialized atmosphere of the 1935 "DDL-airline terminal" in Copenhagen by Architect Vilhelm Lauritzen.

The durable vinyl on the ground floor transforms, in the upper floor lounge area, into a woven structure forming a textile texture which, in reference to artist Johannes Kaiser's bowl, forms a continuously containing space which frames the broadband panoramic view at the opera house. Against a background of a back-lit wall made of domestic textile curtains, sit black Arne Jacobsen "3107" chairs and along the window front Walter Knoll "369" lounge-chairs at oval tables that light up brass floor and ceiling "reflections" create distinct spaces to stay. The generous compliments by both Friedrich, who was able to lounge with us the year before he passed away and Peter Allison [at a visit with architect Sven Martens from gruppeomp architects Rastede/Germany] as the contemporary architectural advocate for a reactive modernism affirmed us of having half way done the intergenerational splits.



"Braun - Pure Plastic" containing 1. floor