

St. Moritz – Quo Vadis?



Promotional Poster
Walter Herdeg, 1937

This exhibition by the Academy of Architecture-Università della Svizzera italiana showcases a selection of 130 Diploma projects presenting urban planning studies on the development potential of several key sites in St. Moritz.

This exclusive winter and summer holiday resort, cradle of Alpine winter sports, is undoubtedly one of the world's most celebrated holiday destinations. Its luxurious, sophisticated ambience together with the cutting-edge infrastructure introduced at the end of the 19th century – such as the electrification of hotels, the daring winter sports facilities or the tram linking St. Moritz Dorf to St. Moritz Bad – transformed the traditional Engadine mountain village into a cosmopolitan Alpine city visited by tourists from all over the world. Today this resort lives on thanks to this myth and the pioneering spirit of its founding fathers.

In the immediate post-war period, the increase in second homes and the crisis of the hotel industry gave rise to an “urbanalization” process typical of the Alpine region that threatened the resort's main resource, its magnificent valley landscape. The Federal law on second homes has created the conditions to reconsider this type of development. In some cases, the search for alternative models can lead to a reassessment and reinterpretation of hotels as possibly the richest form of collective living. In fact, the time and opportunity may have come to rethink public spaces.

25 projects designed by the committed future architects reveal the potential of a possible urban development plan for St. Moritz. Both concrete projects and utopian ideas represent new impetus to further develop this resort, which has lost some of its identity in the past decades, to succeed in the ambition blazoned in colourful advertising brochures – in other words, to continue to be one of the leading holiday resorts in the Alps. Maybe the remark once made by the Italian architect Aldo Rossi also applies to St. Moritz: “Architecture is a form of survival developed by humans. It is a way of expressing our fundamental search for happiness”.

Prof. Valentin Bearth
Academy of Architecture
Università della Svizzera italiana



Town Hall
Susanna Morpurgo–Atelier Bearth

The project reclaims Piazza da Scoula, at present degraded to a plain traffic roundabout. The new building, endowed with a large multi-purpose internal space available to the local community, relates the different levels and with its monumental presence gives new prestige to the square.



Concert Hall
Sofia Abrigo–Atelier Olgiati

The project is for a concert hall sited on the boundary between the urban context and the natural lakeside setting. The idea is to create a public terrace, a dark concrete pyramid, which rises from the ground like a stone and serves as the roof of the concert hall beneath, hollowed out of the ground.



Kurhaus
Gion Von Albertini–Atelier Bearth

The project involves demolishing the building that currently houses the baths, and building a new structure designed solely for the spas.



Reithalle
Caroline Cottier–Atelier Boesch

The project seeks to recover the spatial qualities and character of Nicolaus Hartmann's Reithalle, the 1910 building that testifies to the technical skills and architectural culture of his time. Now closed to the public, it is capable of being restored to its original function.



Vertical Parking
Serena Uboldi–Atelier Nunes

The project starts from an analysis of St. Moritz's urban development focused on the St. Moritz Bad area. Here it inserts seven tower car-parks that stack the cars high and free the ground level, so creating a large void that could be converted into public space.



TRAMoritz
Enrica Pastore–Atelier Nunes

The project is based on the close relation between landscape and infrastructure, so typical of Switzerland. It involves creating a new light rail link: a tram that traverses the lakeside plateau, from St. Moritz to Maloja, connecting the valley's main points of interest along its route.



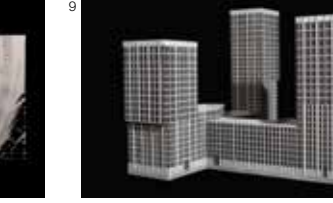
Sailing Club
Andrea Neri–Atelier Kéré

The project for a new yacht club starts from the need to replace the existing undersized facility so as to expand its range of services, while creating a focal point on Lake St. Moritz, with a floating building linked to the shore by a footbridge.



Caviar Park
Carlotta Amistani G.–Atelier Arnaboldi

The project, conceived as part of a large-scale undertaking, seeks to restore the relation between land and water – an element that is present but weakened and fragmented by the canalisation of the rivers – so solving the problem of the near-extinction of some native fish species in the Engadin.



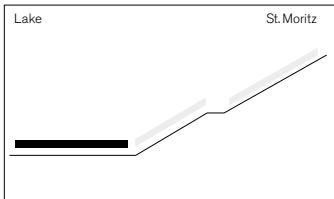
Housing Tower
Federico Brebbia–Atelier Miller

This is a conversion project involving three housing towers in St. Moritz Bad. To give the site a new identity, it morphologically redefines the three existing buildings as a single large one housing one-third of St. Moritz's resident population.



Seeblick
Maria Urbajte–Atelier Miller

Most permanent residents of St. Moritz currently live in low-quality apartment blocks, far from the luxurious centre. There is a need to re-establish the identity of the people for whom this tourist resort is their home. I propose to replace the run-down rental complex on the lakefront with new homes.



Students Projects
1–10



Public Circus
Rocco Vitali–Atelier Kéré

St. Moritz is a half-and-half place: between nature and artifice, hotels and Engadine houses, tourists and citizens. The project site is Ludains Inn: gateway to the city and a central node. A public site. The project provides infrastructure. A multi-purpose platform on three floors: a car park, a cascade of columns, a roof.



New Medical Center
Letizia Fuerer–Atelier Bearth

At the southern entrance to St. Moritz a park follows the direction of the valley and opens towards the lake. Its initial situation has been lost and the original void should be re-established, so that the park stands out in contrast with the forest. The project – a long and narrow building – is set on the border between these two conditions.



Museo Segantini
Luciana Cuciován–Atelier Boesch

The project envisages an extension to the Segantini Museum. It strengthens the character of the original building by dealing with the problems of routing, functioning and lack of space, left unresolved even by the recent extension.



Park & Ride
Eleonora Grilli–Atelier Grafton

The new building aims to accentuate the act of arrival in the town by establishing a dialogue with the Grand Hotel Kempinsky and its huge dimension, presenting itself as the gateway to St. Moritz Bad and densifying the urban fabric.



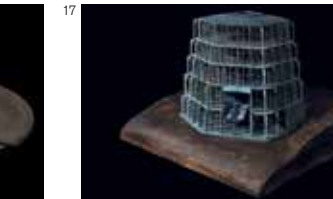
Residence Kulm
Yasmine Ciorabai–Atelier Sergison

The Grand Hotel Kulm consists of traditional family hotel rooms and extensions connected through the basement floor. The project, a rectangular-shaped tower slightly rotated, is located on the premises of the hotel and proposes an additional building of hotel suites, a restaurant and a lobby.



Opera Festival
Davide Contran–Atelier Grafton

The aim of the project is to define the relationship between St. Moritz's built-up area and the public space of the lake. The building proposed, a large structure anchored to the lake bed, appears as a huge basin, an arena whose stage is visible from the city's main hotels



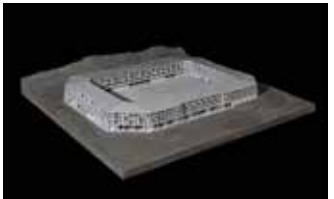
Olympia Museum
Matteo Frangi–Atelier Angonese

The project aims to make Corviglia the functional centre of the St. Moritz skiing area, with a building that will replace all the existing ones, embodying their various functions, so eliminating the disorder of the present situation and asserting its iconic presence.



Between City and Forest
Lajdi Sulaj–Atelier Olgiati

The project proposes to demolish the Club Med of St. Moritz and replace it on the same site with a building having the same number of rooms but of better quality and complying with the city's strict building standards.



Arena
Alessio Crespi–Atelier Angonese

The project for a Hotel & Sports Centre on the former Stahlbad site at St. Moritz Bad offers an architectural typology combining, in a highly functional way, spaces devoted to sports (soccer fields, basketball, volleyball and tennis courts, gyms...) with the hotel spaces.



Centro di accoglienza
Alberto Caddeo–Atelier Botta

The project, a refugee reception centre, consists of two elements: the ground floor with the common spaces for the refugees' activities, and a large roof running around a rectangular perimeter, in which there are two floors with housing.



Apple Store
Mateusz Zaluska–Atelier Olgiati

The project, an Apple Store, is a showroom meant to express the technology company's ambitions. The whole store is an architectural installation inspired by a crystal. It uses huge glass panes to create the impression of being in an infinitely reflecting, dense environment, completely different from its surroundings.



Osservatorio
Francesca Facchini–Atelier Bonnet

The project's aim is to suggest a new way of observing the mountains, more intimate and precise, focusing on certain specific details of the Alpine panorama. Set in St. Moritz Dorf, in a privileged position by its view over the surrounding landscape, the observatory is firmly placed in the lakeside setting.



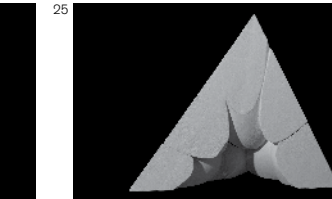
Memento Homo
Pedro Saraiva–Atelier Nunes

By the end of the Engadine line where glaciers once lived, a landslide sets place in St. Moritz. Two anchor points, a 350 m tensioned cable and a line of 75 white poles are positioned perpendicular to the movement in order to measure it: the poles move, and line stays fixed, as time passes.



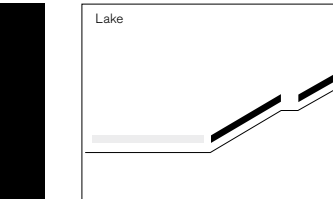
Mountain Plaza
Olesya Vodenicharska–Atelier A. Mateus

Placed as an extension to a prominent mountain ridge of Spuonda, this project challenges the perception of the verticality of St. Moritz. A square defines a spot in the midst of a boundless landscape, and the piazza at its centre establishes a new line of the horizon that allows a view of the surrounding mountains.



Museo delle Alpi
Verena Argenti–Atelier Aires Mateus

The project explores the vertical boundary concept through a project on the top of Piz Nair. Here the proposal for a Museum of the Alps takes the form of a pyramid, geometrising the profile of the ridge at its highest point: a powerful sign, but creating a dialogue with St. Moritz and the setting.



Student Projects
11–25



Manuel,
Francisco
Aires Mateus



Walter
Angonese



Valentin
Bearth



Michele
Arnaboldi



Martin
Boesch



Frédéric
Bonnet



Mario
Botta



Shelley
McNamara,
Yvonne
Farrel
Grafton



Dièbédo
Francis
Kéré



Quintus
Miller



João
Nunes,
João
Gomes



Valerio
Olgiati



Jonathan
Sergison



Ruggero
Tropeano

photo © Alberto Canepa

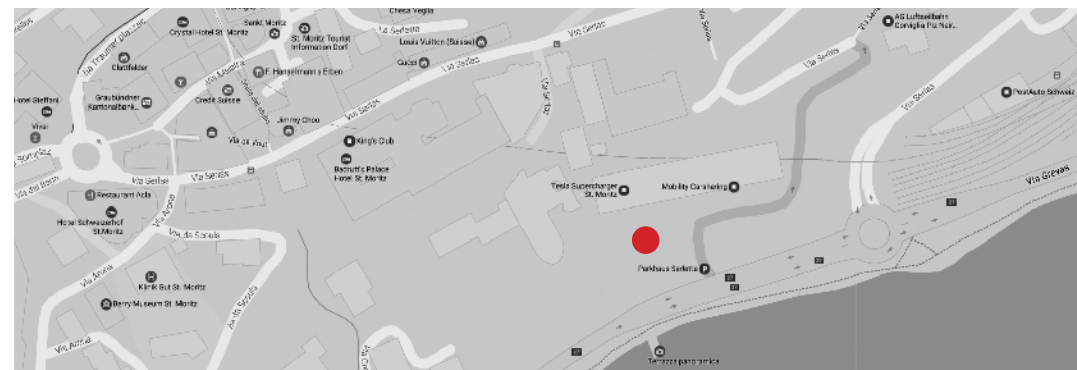


The Academy of Architecture is a young institution, and that is precisely where its strength lies. It was founded in 1996 and, in just a few years, its innovative teaching model, the intuition to place the Academy within a wider cultural centre and the selection of its faculty and staff allowed for its countless rewards and increasing successes. The School, born in parallel to the developing USI university in Lugano, was created outside the confines of any pre-existing institution, enhancing its freedom and supporting the uniqueness of its teaching method and ideology which has allowed it to measure itself with new social and professional scenarios connected with the contemporary architectural culture. The design debate of the 1950s was centred around issues of post-war modernisation, in the 1970s it was dominated by ideological ferments (as well as the energy crisis), while since the 1990s it has been reflecting upon the phenomenon of globalisation whose repercussions are very present and relevant in everyone's daily life, directly influencing the structure of architectural design itself.

These scenarios confirm the far-sighted vision of the Academy's founders, architects Mario Botta and Lio Galfetti in particular, who sensed the urgent need to once again respond to the changes brought on by globalisation, updating and strengthening the humanistic profile of the

architect, a trait so dear to the best Modernist traditions. Our School of Architecture was thus founded to keep alive the principle, dear to Modern Movement masters, that an architect's ability to design must extend "from the spoon to the city" (to cite the famous dictum of the avant-garde), making it our very own. In Mendrisio, we have reviewed this concept, elaborating our own conception of a "Territorial Architect", one who is able to apply disciplinary culture to a whole range of different scales, ranging from the single architectural construction to the broadest configuration of the space in which we live. This explains why the Academy refuses to take part in the dismemberment of the architectural culture into countless fragmented specialisations. We propose instead a wide vision open and critical, always projected well beyond ordinary and specific technical expertise. Needless to say, an in-depth knowledge of the discipline remains essential as demonstrated by the stress given to design, still conceived as an absolutely crucial and irreplaceable part of learning. We are however convinced that concentrating on technical training alone not only leads to cultural impoverishment, but even to professional failure for future generations of architects. Architecture is a visionary practice, constantly striving for the future improvement of the physical world we live in. That is why, notwithstanding its visionary nature, the principle of reality is not the least forgotten. If anything, the restrictions of physical reality, just as those of complex social conditions and operational obstacles, which we know get in the way of the practice of architecture, are challenged by the freedom of imagination, transforming them into focal points and great material for the evolution and uniqueness of the project. This is why our School teaches students how to enrich their technical expertise with the strength of their own imagination, as architecture is the art of the possible.

Marc Collomb
Dean
Academy of Architecture, USI



Parkhaus Serletta opened in St. Moritz in 2004. It is more than just a modern, multi-storey car park. Visitors and locals can use its escalators to travel comfortably between the town and the lake, and it features a viewing platform on the lakeside that attracts scores of snap-happy tourists. Last but not least, the Parkhaus also makes a cultural contribution to St. Moritz in the form of the St. Moritz Design Gallery, which runs the length of its escalators.

31 glass cabinets
Along the pedestrian walkway from Badrutt's Palace Hotel down to the lake there are 31 large illuminated glass cabinets that host a series of temporary exhibitions featuring valuable posters and photographs. It is a kind of 24/7 art gallery, entertaining passers-by with a variety of different themes.

1 million visitors every year
The St. Moritz Design Gallery's inaugural exhibition opened on 18 December 2004. Its theme was 75 years of the St. Moritz brand. "It was difficult at first, as there was no administrative body behind the Design Gallery. Later we had to introduce strict guidelines, because we were overwhelmed by the number of exhibition enquiries," explains Martin Berthod. Parkhaus Serletta's glass cabinets are much loved and for good reason, as Berthod reveals: "In the gallery's second year, the former tourist board director Peter Danuser commissioned a study into the frequency of pedestrians along the St. Moritz Design Gallery: one million visitors every year."

Opening
16 June, 6:00 p.m.

Exhibition
17 June – 8 December 2017
Open 24/24 h
Free entrance

Informations
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www.design-gallery.ch

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