

20 Years Euregional Prize for Architecture

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Wohnpolitik, EU Residenz Brüssel

Participant info

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Project info

From the beginning the European Project was incremental and focused on understatement. Well aware of the fragility of the new alliance after WWII, Europe was expanding slowly but steadily, while remaining nearly invisible. Like a mythical Ghost, Europe was acting through national institutions, to claim its political power. Although it wasn't hiding the strong Requirement to protect national identity and sovereignty, lead to a Europe that is out of the public focus. Europe's power is the alternative concept to US-American ideas of power that express themselves in big visions, highly symbolic declarations and military strength.

The residence for the new European President has to embrace this thematic context. The site is in the direct neighbourhood to the European Parliament in Brussels on the corner of housing bloc. On the lot, which is one floor level above the street is a small Park. The whole premises are enclosed by a wall. The small housing bloc reaches into the new European Quarter with much larger buildings. The Park is like an Island between the neighbouring buildings.

The central idea of the residence forms in the light of this thematic and urban context. The building spreads underneath the surface of the park. Only the openings for the entrance and natural light cut through site. The existing trees define the boundary area of the building layout. The building divides up into two parallel strands. The sequences of the private and representative spaces organize themselves along the two strands and around nine inner courtyards. The reduced and raw spaces have a sacral and meditative atmosphere. The play of light and darkness, volume and material make the spaces come to life. On the outside the park hides the buildings almost completely while creating a transition between the scale of the housing bloc and the European Quarter.

