THE NEW PARADIGM: NON LINEAR ARCHITECTURE

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The Fractal Landform

If FOA, this time like Eisenman, prefers an abstract system to a representational one, then the Israeli architect, Zvi Hecker reverses the preconception with his Jewish school in Berlin. The Heinz-Galinski School creates an extended landform out of explicit metaphors. Snake corridors, mountain stairways, fish-shaped rooms are pulled together with an overall sun-flower geometry. It sounds constricting, even Procrustean, but, on the contrary, the sunflower, with its spiral of movement towards a center can generate a general order, especially, as here, when tied to two other geometrics-the grid and concen-tric circles. The three systems, like Eisenman's tilts, make every room slightly different, or self-similar, and the sunflower spiral results in a very strong pull to the heart of the school (the architect when he saw it from a helicopter, said it looked like a friendly meeting of whales). Some will find this centrality too obvious, the imagery too readable and insistent, but again one is surprised by the generality and abstraction of the grammar.

This small institution for 420 pupils is the first Jewish school to be constructed in Germany for sixty years. Built in the leafy suburbs of Charlottenburg, it literally keeps a low profile—two to three storeys—and threads its sunflower geometry amid the existing trees. The most satisfying aspect is its urbanity. It creates tight curving streets, or walkways, which give a sense of mystery not unlike an historic town, where contingency has created the odd shapes and spaces. Here a restricted palette of grey concrete, silver corrugated metal and white stucco is interwoven with trees. Each of the three colors, as with Eisenman's pink, green, and blue, corresponds with a different geometric system.

This allows contractors to understand and build a complex woven structure and also, of course allows the complexity to be interpreted. The point is generally true of these landform structures.

They depend on systematic logic, both for construction and orientation; not the simple logic of one grid, but three or four systems in tandem. Again, the contrast with Modern architecture is quite obviously that between complexity and simplicity, although it is not an absolute contrast. Here, for instance, simple materials, simple formulae and abstraction have generated the complexity.

Six of the sunflower petals curve counter-clockwise around a circular green and one enters a void where the seventh might have been. This semi-public space, with its subtle mixture of cobbles and grass, metal and stucco, Jewish ruins and concrete, gives a strong sense of identity: the physical counterpart for the strong community life which goes on here.

Part Torah school, part synagogue, part community facility with public meeting rooms, the Heinz-Galinski School has to play an ethnic role in Berlin which is not dissimilar to

Heinz-Galinski-Schule *Jewish Primary* School Berlin

Libeskind's Jewish Extension to the Berlin Museum: it must fit in and yet be unmistakably other.

Several discreet signs, such as a Jewish star, are placed in the background and their presence is felt at the same level as the architectural symbolism; for instance, the plan of the six petals, which is also punched into the concrete. The latter becomes a decorative logo and explanatory map for new visitors. It also suggests the wider intentions of Hecker, which are to produce a cosmic order based on the omnipresent spiral form and in particular, the solar dynamic of the sunflower. He has underlined the paradox of "a wild project that has very precise mathematical construction." "Above all," he notes "is its cosmic relationship of spiral orbits, intersecting one another along precise "mathematical trajectories."' The mixture of an abstract system and a few discrete signs and images is finely balanced.

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Charles Jencks*, Il nuovo paradigma dell'architettura non lineare. (The New Paradigm: Non Linear Architecture),* Lotus International 104, marzo/March 2000