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One-family house in Riehen (Baselland)

M. Rasser and Tibère Vadi, architects, Basle

The construction problem was to erect a fairly large house (4 rooms, kitchen, bath-room, garage, etc.) at the lowest possible cost.

The building plan for this house having been rejected by the competent housing authorities (end of December 1953), the owner, Mr. Max Sulzer, appealed against their decision, and permission to build was at last granted on March 17, 1954. This experience has induced Mr. M. Sulzer to draw up a statement on this subject with the title (freely translated) "The flat roof or the infringement of the regulations", a statement which we reproduce in the present issue, for the light it throws on the present unfortunate situation:

When, the above-mentioned house-owner writes, one has established the fact that the pseudo-architecture of nearly everything being built today lacks authenticity and when one has decided, on the contrary, to have a house built for oneself in keeping with the spirit of our age, one believes first of all that friends who feel obliged to say: "Watch out! No housing commission will let you get away with it", exaggerate the difficulty. Nevertheless, that's how it is. The postman, the corner grocer, anyone at all, if he remains loyal to the character (nobody inquires which!) of his district, has the right to impose his views and to say to the architect: you do not know what you are about. – To be sure, in the case under discussion, an appeal was lodged, and was granted. But one cannot expect all those who want to build their own house to sacrifice the time and the money – unfortunately necessary – if a common sense approach is to prevail.

Block of flats at Münchenstein (near Basle)

1954, W. Wurster and H. U. Huggel, architects FAS, Basle

This building, the ground plans of which are reproduced in the present issue and give an idea of the general lay-out, is characterized by its south elevation in glass (side view), whereas the lateral elevations are kept intentionally more closed, in case other buildings are placed adjacent to it at a later date.

Block of flats at St-Rémy-lès-Chevreuse near Paris

1953/54, André Wogenscky, architect, Paris

The architect, one of Le Corbusier's collaborators, built this house for himself and for his wife, the sculptor Martha Pan. In addition to other rooms, it comprises a sculptor's studio and a dining-room-bar on the ground floor, with a studio and the bedrooms on the upper floor. It is covered by a roof serving as a sun deck. Except for the children's bedrooms, the rooms form one single area (but divisible as required by partitions). – Contrasted colours and materials; plastic elements on roof and gutters in collaboration with Martha Pan. – Everywhere A. W. has applied the "modulor" of Le Corbusier, achieving in this way a high degree of unified plastic design.

Three one-family houses at Zumikon (Canton of Zurich)

1955, Oskar Burri, architect, Zürich

These three houses, which are staggered, blend unobtrusively with the surrounding countryside. The one built at the highest level of the site comprises a garage for all three houses, in addition to a sculptor's studio (Hugo Imfeld). The other two, one of which is occupied by the architect, have the same lay-out: large living-room with dining nook, 4 bedrooms and 2 work rooms. All the housekeeping installations are on the same floor. Care is taken to have the house lighted by ordinary daylight. – As there is a stand of trees, it has not been necessary to design a formal garden on the surrounding grounds.

Block of flats at Thayngen (Canton of Schaffhausen)

1954/55, Otto Glaes, architect FAS, Zürich

Erected in the midst of a vineyard, this building comprises on the ground floor, an entrance lobby, a game room, etc., and on the upper floor, a large room with dining nook, the bedrooms, the kitchen, a living-room. – Large bay-windows.

65

The mural paintings in the Administrative Building of the Confederation, Berne

86

by Heinz Keller

It is unfortunate that the great competition organized in 1953 with the possibility of commissioning a single artist to paint the five murals on the ground floor and four upper floors of the new Administrative Building (Monbijoustrasse, Berne), has not stimulated in the public nor among painters the interest that such an important project might have and ought to have aroused. Result: the paintings were entrusted to five different artists, each at liberty to choose his theme. Three of them (no doubt on account of the presence of the Customs Administration in the building) chose as theme trade and communications, Alois Carigiet (Grisons) treating it in a realistic manner, Hugin from Solothurn verging, for his part, on allegory, whereas Tschumi from Berne expressed himself in purely symbolic terms. As for Hans Fischer, also from Berne, he has painted animals in the park of the old "Simongut", restricting himself, in so doing, to a simple panel, the composition and colours blending perfectly with the surroundings, while Jean-François Liegme from the Jura has produced a composition suggesting, in a highly chromatic and rhythmic fashion, the four elements. – If circumstances have not allowed the decoration to be carried out by one man, at least the individual results are satisfying, although it should be noted that the mural by Tschumi, which is strongly monumental and was originally intended for the ground floor, has been relegated to the 4th floor.

Three young painters from Bienne

91

by Justus Imfeld

Although neither of them is originally from Bienne, nevertheless, it is in this bilingual town that these three painters, the eldest of whom is not more than 36, have carried on at least some of their art studies. Georges Item, born at Bienne in 1927, although his family was originally from the Grisons, began by studying graphic arts, then discovered colour. The region that has attracted him the most is the Camargue, – its colour alone becoming increasingly dominant – which inspires his horizons of land and water. Has lived at St-Rémy since 1950. Moreover, lithographs and "scratchings". Numerous exhibitions. – Marco Richterich, born at St-Imier in 1929, also studied at Bienne (apprenticeship in lithographic design); was likewise drawn to the South; he is sensitive to the tragic and to the contemplation of things doomed to annihilation, he is an evocative poet drawing his inspiration from the poetry of ruins (the "Sagrada Família" by Gaudí, in Barcelona, has fascinated him). Was also in Tunisia. Now has his studio at Arles. Has already had frequent exhibitions. – J. Lermite, real name Jean-Pierre Schmid, born in 1920 at Le Locle, has, in contrast to the other two artists, sought in his native region (in this case the harsh Jura) a vision of solitude, his canvas "The Dried-up Lake", among others, being evidence of this quest. Solitude also haunts his "Portrait of a Melancholy House", and his painting of Les Baux in Provence. And his most recent work, a kind of trilogy of the clock, the third panel of which, "Watchmaking 55", express the anguish attending the loss of ancient freedoms, annihilated by the industrialization of what was once the noble craft of the proud artisans of the Jura. Has also created stage sets for the theatre. From 1946 to 1954 lived at La Brévine; since then, has lived at Les Bayards (in the Neuchâtel Jura).