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The Use and Handling of Raw Masonry

74

by *Hans Walt*

For some years there has been a growing revival in Switzerland of the use of raw masonry as a construction material and architectural element. This has come about because of a re-discovered taste for the material as such and of a new pleasure in structure and natural colour. As can be seen in the old examples in Italy and Holland, its employment is only legitimate if a more sculptural character is given to the wall without any attempt being made to decorate its surfaces. In this respect, the new experiments of Alvar Aalto are of the greatest interest. In order to use brick correctly, it is absolutely essential to have a thorough knowledge of the material and its methods of treatment. H. W., expert in brickwork and tilemaking, provides a summary review of this problem.

New Possibilities in Timber Construction

80

by *Gaudenz Risch*

New chemical processes and static calculations give wood construction enhanced possibilities of rational realisation. Construction using nails, beams with slender or T-form reinforcements with glued boards permit the covering of huge areas. The use of veneers has also been attempted. The illustrations show the various uses made of timber construction by engineers, and at the same time demonstrate that the great importance which is now being attached to it is as much economic as architectural.

Plastic Materials

86

by *Alfred Altherr and Silvia Hess*

Occasioned in the first place by the necessity for artificial substitutes for natural materials, the production of synthetic substances—the so-called plastic materials—has made amazing strides since about 1930—so much so that American experts already reckon that by about 2000 A.D. all our traditional materials will have ceased to be used. In contrast to the artificial materials that were used in the past (glass, metal, alloys, etc.), plastic materials developed by modern science (in this sense of the word, the first effort was made as far back as 1828 with artificial resin) stem from organic chemistry and are characterised by a polymeric structure of giant molecules. One can differentiate the duroplastic materials whose shape, once determined, remains stable; the thermoplastic materials whose shape alters in a pre-determined fashion according to temperature variation; and finally, those of long-term elasticity. In addition to artificial fibres (nylon, etc.) plastic materials are more and more employed in everyday articles and in construction, as well as in medicine and surgery. From a formal point of view, it is necessary that the initial error of attempting to imitate materials which were being replaced be shunned; instead, as much initiative should be shown in their employment as science and technology have shown in the creation of these new substances.

Plan for a Community Hall, Indoor Swimming-bath, and a Multi-storey Building at Bienne

92

Architect: *Max Schlup, FAS/SIA, Bienne*

Projected plan: lobby, hall (1400 or 900 seats), with an additional smaller hall (300 seats), indoor swimming pools, and a building to house all the offices of the municipal administration. There will be a broad flexibility in the combinations which are possible. Total volume: 91,000 cu.m.

Plan for an Exhibition and Sports Hall in Berne

94

Architects: *Frey and Egger, P. Indermühle, H. and G. Reinhard, W. Schwaar, Berne. Engineers: Emch and Berger, Hartenbach and Wenger, Berne*

This plan is designed to cover all forms of events: sport meetings, exhibitions, conferences, dramatic performances, etc. Planned to hold 15,000 at first, it will later hold 20,000. The cost of the whole construction will be about 7,107,000 francs.

The "Stadhalle" of Vienna

96

1956/1958, Architect: *Prof. Roland Rainer, Vienna*

In this huge building two aspects stand out: 1. the place chosen, which, being Vienna, must because of its historic character inevitably create great difficulties when such deliberately original architecture is in question; 2. the period of construction—our own. Quite intentionally, the architect has taken pains to leave structure and material clearly apparent, as well as to plan each of the halls independently. The sunken

roof of the main hall should be noticed—this was possibly the consequence of a desire to create an intimate atmosphere, but in this case the value of the effect is arguable.

The Role of Materials in Modern Sculpture

101

by *Werner Hofmann*

In 1902 Edmond Claris published a work in Paris entitled "On Impressionism in Sculpture" in which Rodin and Medardo Rosso collaborated; in it these two men were shown as liberators from the influence of academism. The basic idea of the book was that the material employed by the artist was of no importance. The reaction to this concept has marked all the vital sculpture of the 20th century, from the work of Maillol to the sublimated materiality of Brancusi in the first stage; in the second, with the "manifesto" of Boccioni, the futurists, Dada, constructivism, any material is declared to be as valid as any other; and in the third stage, that of today, the artist works with a vast range of materials without any postulate or slogan to guide him. Abstract art, by definition, suppresses the concept of object, but the material to be handled, henceforth, becomes the reality which serves him as a point of departure.

The Material Compositions of Rolf Nesch

106

by *Hans-Friedrich Geist*

Born in Württemberg in 1893, Rolf Nesch, who was at first a designer and painter, turned eventually to etching after being encouraged by Kirchner. This was a new field for him in so far as he had to discover the beauty inherent in the nature of a metal relief and prints. After he went to Norway in 1933, he continued to work along the same lines and it was thus that his "plates" which exist for their own sake came into being. These are the "material compositions" which form the subject of an important exhibition recently organised in Hamburg. It cannot be denied that these pictures in relief stem from Schwitters, but with Nesch there is no attempt to astonish the spectator or to exploit the absurd.

The Guggenheim International Award 1958

108

by *Heinz Keller*

In America in 1958 two international prizes were awarded: that of the Carnegie Institute (Pittsburgh) and that of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation (New York). The latter prize has been in existence since 1956 and is given every two years. In 1956, the first prize of 10,000 dollars was awarded to the Englishman Ben Nicholson (*1894), and in 1958 to the Spaniard Joan Miró (*1893) for his ceramic murals "Day" and "Night" in the UNESCO building in Paris. The national section award juries affiliated to the Guggenheim Foundation have the right to present five candidates from their respective countries, and to grant to one of these a national section award of 1000 dollars. As at Venice, abstract art in the Carnegie and Guggenheim prizes has pride of place. It is to be hoped that the different juries in the future will decide more definitely whether to consecrate or to encourage. If they do, the informative value of the prizes will be markedly enhanced.