PETER ZUMTHOR 1998-2001

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Buildings and Projects
Volume 3

Edited by Thomas Durisch

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What I Do

Atelier Zumthor, Haldenstein, Graubünden
Shelter for Roman Archaeological Ruins, Chur, Graubünden
Caplutta Sogn Benedetg, Sumvitg, Graubünden
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Rindermarkt Apartment Building, Zurich
Rothorn Gondola Station, Valbella, Graubünden
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For Charlotta

"是我的自然的

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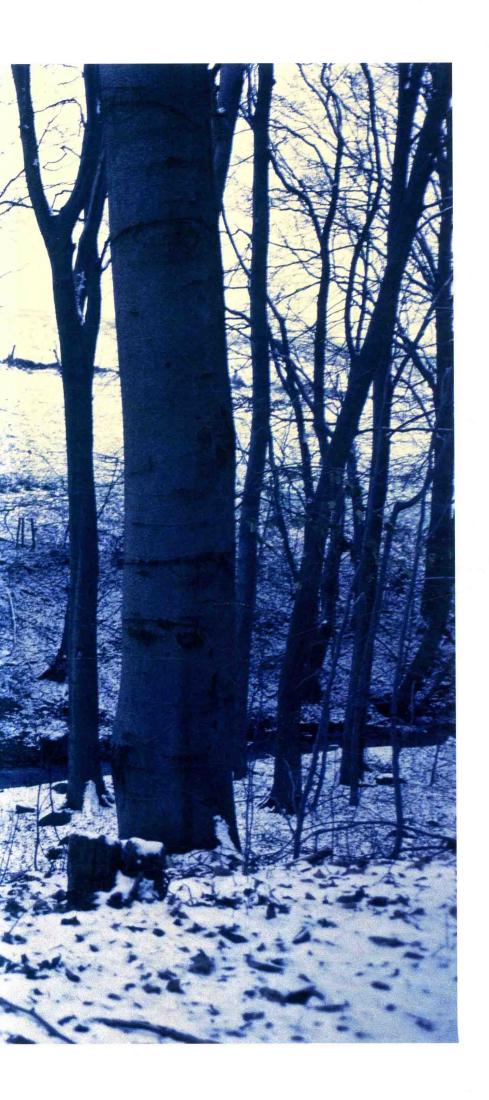
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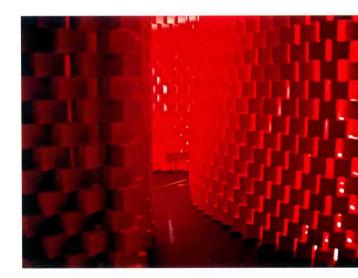
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Poetic Landscape, Bad Salzuflen, Germany 1998–1999

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The Poetic Landscape project opened new spaces for me, new spaces to think about the connection of architecture to landscape and the creation of buildings that serve less a practical purpose than a spiritual need. I tried to design small houses dedicated to the reading of a poem, to the sound of a poem, to the presence of a poem written for a specific place in the landscape. The idea of a Poetic Landscape goes back to Brigitte Labs-Ehlert, director of the Literaturbüro in Detmold. She invited poets to write a poem for a specific place in the landscape and asked me as an architect to react to the places the poets chose with a house for the poem.

The region, the Lippe Uplands, an area east of Bad Salzuflen in North Rhine-Westphalia, barely twenty kilometers long and approximately twelve kilometers wide, plucked almost randomly from a larger landscape whole, was subjected to closer study and interpretation in the course of the literary and architectural work.

Anyone setting out to explore the Lippe Uplands, after the initial familiarization one needs to take in its understated forms of landscape, will soon discover places that are beautiful in their own way. The landscapes are quite literally remarkable, displaying their elements in succinct configurations and condensed images. At the same time, they do not feel so much unique or grand as they do characteristic and typical. What one finds here is a predominantly agricultural landscape, marked by generations of human labor. Here one sees growth through history, intensively worked land, landscapes overgrown or dying off, traces of neglect, decline, and change, as well as the new, both ugly and beautiful.

We searched the body of this landscape following the trail of places picked by the authors and found our own favorite places among them. We wanted to intensify the aura of these places through focused architectural intervention. In their totality, we hoped that these interventions would generate a wide-ranging energy field in the landscape. The various architectural and landscape constellations would coalesce into a new whole: houses meant for specific locations, houses meant in turn for particular poems, all having an impact on each other, a poetic landscape.

And so we devised buildings like large vessels, hollow architectural forms, created to capture the changing intensity of daylight and to foster new

experiences from place to place: buildings made for lingering, reading, and speaking, created and built to trace the sound of the landscape.

The Poetic Landscape was never realized because the county government changed political parties. The stock of architectural images I dreamed of and worked on for this project later found expression in the Bruder Klaus Chapel in Wachendorf in the Eifel.