

DESIGN IN FOCUS

hinge

Shiny Hair...

A reconditioned salon

Switched On...

Seoul's finest

Mosaic Museum...

Archiving ethnography

Vol. 154

HK\$50

RMB50

S \$10

INCL. GST

US \$8

HINGE MAGAZINE — opening doors on the world of architecture and interiors
24/F, Empire Land Commercial Centre, 81-85 Lockhart Road, Wanchai, HK. www.hinge.hk
For advertising enquiries, call (852) 2520-2468 or simply email hinge@hinge.hk

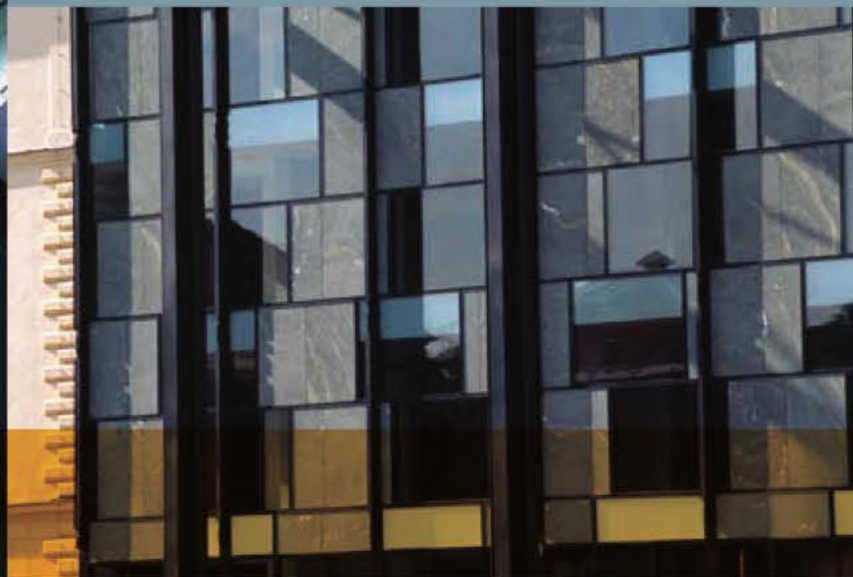
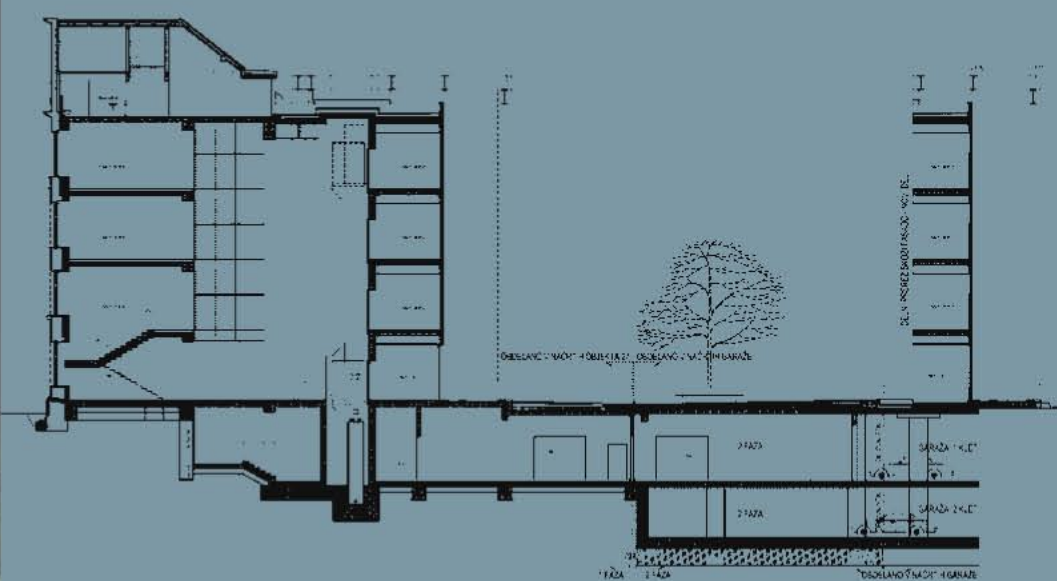
Nest Building...

Designing the Modern Home





This project is a good test case for the reconciliation of different formal languages in a modest-scaled cultural institution. The competition-winning scheme proposed an addition to the shallow-courtyard facade of a neo-classical style former military building, as well as a contemporary forecourt plaza. The 15 million-euro budget was never going to pay for much in the way of volume, but the architects still needed to accommodate five storeys of space, including exhibition areas, shops, information desk, workshops and support functions. The concentration of the mass in a single vertical bar tucked between the end wings of the pre-existing structure was sensible, and yielded a handsomely contemporary composition that simultaneously identifies and unifies both old and new. The facade of the piece, articulated in glass and stone panels, is a pleasing, concise arrangement with a dark tone enhanced by the pale masonry elevations of the surviving building. This skin is actually an outer one, separated from a wood veneer inner lining to allow for a double-shell advantage. The architects have imposed a vaguely random pattern of fenestration and stone panels, underlining the separation of the two layers and lending the facade an element of quiet abstraction.



Slovene Ethnographic Museum - Ljubljana, Slovenia

GROLEGER ARHITEKTI



The new facade is 'hung' on a structure of massive steel masts which give the building a hint of institutional gravitas, lest the glass wall appeared in any way commercial. The masts call for banners announcing special shows at the museum, and tie the building more integrally to the plaza in front, with its water feature, fixed furniture and plantings. There is an almost festive character to the plaza, lightening somewhat the fairly serious aspect of the building. In the evening, the glass facade, lit from within, suggests a lantern in the city, and when events are occurring makes the museum a lively object of interest.

The budget included the restoration of the original structure, which had been abandoned for a period of time. In plan, the addition space reads as clearly in contrast to the antecedent as in elevation, with a large, minimalist special void playing against the ordered rooms of the symmetrical plan. Exhibition material may cross the seams, but they are kept clearly identified in architectural terms. An atrium void is cut open to the basement level below, enhancing the vertical linkage.

Ljubljana is a small city of grand architectural merit, long a favoured stop on architects' 'grand tours'. Thanks in large part to the milestone work of native son architect Joseph Plecnik, it is a city that sets a high bar for design in the public realm (Plecnik completed a number of works at the public scale). But it is also an architectural heritage of mannerism, open as much to the quirky as to the conventional. Controlled experimentation might be a way to describe a formal tradition that has yielded some of Europe's most charming originalities in stone, steel and glass. The SEM may not be groundbreaking in quite the same way, but one can discern the spirit in which its juxtaposed space, materials and surface composition were conceived. In a city such as Paris or London, perhaps, louder contrast would have been required, or none whatsoever, but here, the underplayed approach of the SEM works rather well. Its clues and statements are offered in very quiet tones.

