Roduit House, Chamoson, Switzerland, 2004–5. The original building, constructed in stages since 1814, is made up of three adjacent volumes on different levels. The old stone construction echoes the rocky mountainside, and the renovation project sought to maintain and reinforce this character, while using concrete for the interior renovation. The exterior volume was not changed; the stone facades were preserved and lined with an insulating layer of concrete based on foamed recycled glass (Misapor).

It can be extremely unsettling to look at the Roduit House in Chamoson, Switzerland, by savioz meyer fabrizzi architectes. This is despite the fact that the house is very relaxed, with nothing at all offensive about it. The renovation even appears rather conservative at first glance, and all the details have been carried out perfectly. The unease comes from the fact that the existing house and the new addition are treated with complete parity.

Conventional renovations do not give equal weight to the original structure and the additions. Normally, there are only two ways in which previous structures and new additions can relate: deference or denial. These two positions are polar opposites. One yields the appearance of diametrical opposition, and the other results in close resemblance. For both methods, it is important to show what has been done—that is, to make clear whether deference or denial has prevailed. Accordingly, there is not much concern for the newly completed whole. Such renovation projects are "political" renovations, in the sense that the most important thing for politicians is always to make their stance clear. Is one going along or criticizing? It is crucial that everyone declare a strong opinion right away.

But architects are well aware that, in the final analysis, design is not a question of deference or denial. This is because design is a complex enterprise with aspects of both. Deference and denial are not just part of renovation, they are applicable to all acts of design. Even the construction of a new building involves a pre-existing lot as well as adjacent land and houses. So, all design is renovation.

The more one looks at the house in Chamoson, the harder it is to see whether the stone was already there and the concrete was added, or whether the concrete was there first and the stone was added. It is not a question of deference or denial; this is a world in which we cannot know this with precision. It is a world where everything is already in place. // Kengo Kuma

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Rubble Protection for the Archaeological Ruins of Saint-Maurice Monastery, Saint-Maurice, Switzerland, 2004–9. Created in collaboration with the engineering firm Alpatec, the covering protects the remnants of seven abbeys, built successively on the site since the sixth century, from the impact of weather and the fall of rubble. The ten tons of stones suspended above the site are a reference to the historical impact of the rubble, which has caused tremendous damage over the building's history.

Tracuit Hut, Zinal, Switzerland, 2008–10. This alpine hut, a way station for skiers and mountain climbers, sits on a ridge at an altitude of 10,500 ft. (3,200 m). The south facade is glazed to benefit from passive solar energy and provides sweeping views of the mountainscape. Prefabricated, lightweight wood panels, a material easily transported by helicopter, is used for the construction; the siding consists of panels of synthetic fibers whose sheen evokes the surrounding snow.

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