

Curved, mimetic reflection

■ **SIERRE (CH)** — A glass pavilion in a park: what could be more commonplace in terms of transparency, and what could be more archetypal as an architectural project? From the orangeries that graced palaces and mansions in the 18th and 19th centuries, through to the pavilions of the numerous 20th-century World's Fairs, the theme of the glass pavilion remains a fascinating design exercise for architects. It is every architect's dream to attempt to equal, or indeed surpass, the Barcelona Pavilion which remains the absolute benchmark. The extension to the Hôtel de la Poste designed by Savioz Meyer Fabrizzi has risen to the challenge set by successive generations of architects.

Situated in the town of Sierre, the Hôtel de la Poste is a historical building dating back to the 18th century and boasting fifteen newly refurbished hotel rooms. Adjoining the hotel as a restaurant space, the new glass pavilion

stretches out between the trees of the neighbouring park. The transparency of the glass is used to accentuate the contrast between the solidity of the existing building and the lightness of the contemporary extension, but that was not the architects' only reason for choosing glass.

Glass is also a neutral material that allows room for the expression of form. A form that bends, contracts and dilates. The pavilion takes shape. It extends its curves to slide among the trees and reflects the organic forms of the surrounding vegetation. Rather than an absence of material, glass is used here as a material that integrates the object with its environment through a subtle play of reflections. This is glass as camouflage. The pavilion plays a mimetic game in which form and the image of the form are in dialogue: it is not just a pavilion in a park but part of the fabric of the park. (MANUEL BIELER)

HÔTEL DE LA POSTE, 2005–2007

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