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Coppery block

VILLACH (AT) — Back in 2007, Austria's seventh-largest city held a competition to replace an ageing, circular sports hall. Dietger Wissounig Architects emerged with the awarded concept, and construction on the highly energy-efficient building, which includes geothermal pre-heating of supply air and a heat recovery ventilation system, was begun in the summer of 2012.

Completed after just thirteen months, the now orthogonal volume of the new St. Martin sports hall features a gleaming copper facade of folded perforated metal sheets that wrap the building like a semi-transparent veil. Standing out against the black background of the base wall, the vertically positioned copper sheets add a

distinct public character to the three-storey hall, enveloping it completely save for long glass fronts that interrupt the facade on the upper floor at the north-east side and on the ground floor at the south-east side. The latter enables views into the building from the adjacent schoolyard.

Although the sports hall comprises three storeys, the whole has been lowered four metres below street level in order to create direct underground access to the affiliated school. This also ensures that the imposing building of almost twelve metres in height conforms to the surrounding area's urban development plan. Positioned roughly parallel to the street, the elongated structure and

its landscaping serve as a buffer between passing traffic and an outdoor sports ground situated to its rear. More readily observable at night, owing to the strip of windows that glow alluringly behind it, is a mid-level maintenance walkway that overhangs the main entrance and the glass frontage, covered with copper sheets congruous to the rest of the building's cladding.

As if counterbalancing the rich appearance of its coppery facade, light colours prevail in the sports hall's interior. The gym features oak-panelled floor and walls, while all other surfaces – even the floors – are creamy white. (DUTTON R. HAUHART)

ST. MARTIN SPORTS HALL, 2011–2013

Architect Dietger Wissounig Architekten Client Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the City of Villach Address St. Martin's Street, Villach Info www.wissounig.com



Colourful crown

ÖRNSKÖLDSVIK (SE) — To call Ting1 striking is actually an understatement. Like a multicoloured parasite, the design by Gert Wingårdh sprouts from an underlying concrete building that has stood there since the 1960s. Soaring above the unobtrusive hues of low-rise buildings on the archipelago, the new apartment complex with its many protruding balconies looks a bit like a cubist lighthouse, and would not seem out of place in an early 20th-century avant-garde painting.

The tower's evocative appearance might best be explained by the project's initiator, Niklas Nyberg, who is the son of a painter and a local builder, and 'a

colourful character in every way', according to Wingårdh. He collects expressionist-style art by painter Bengt Lindström (1925–2008), an internationally recognized artist with roots in the area.

Nyberg bought the concrete building, which was once a courthouse and now serves as the foundation for Ting1, with the intention of constructing a tall apartment building atop the exposed bedrock visible in the building's atrium. Indirectly, he approached Wingårdh, who immediately saw something in the combination of raw concrete and a colourful crown. Inspired by Lindström's paintings, Wingårdh based his design for the facade

on a similar range of bright green, red, yellow and white.

To implement this, he chose glazed ceramic tiles with eight project-specific colours. A special coating baked onto the glaze at high temperature should prevent the colour from fading over time. The coating ensures that rainwater is not repelled, but instead spreads to form a thin film on the surface, thereby seeping through dirt and creating a self-washing effect. Every passing shower thus becomes an eco-friendly cleaning operation, free of charge. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

TING1 APARTMENT COMPLEX, 2012–2013

Architect Wingårdh Arkitektkontor AB Client Nybergs AB and Svensk Fastighetsutveckling Ceramic tiles Agrobuchthal Address Köpmangatan 13 and 30, Örnsköldsvik Info www.wingardhs.se

