

Basis terminal Galzigbahn, St. Anton am Arlberg / Tyrol / Austria

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Building of a cable car station including side facilities

St. Anton in Tyrol – a village with long tradition in skiing tourism - has a new architectural landmark, starting with the Winter-Season 2006/2007. The village once again proves its open-mindedness for new ways in architecture. After building the 4* hotel Lux Alpinae in 2003 the newly constructed base terminal of Galzigbahn by driendl*architects sets new standards in cable-railway architecture.

Glass, steel, concrete - favoured materials when Georg Driendl expresses his views of an architecture which strongly refuses the fashion of hollow and meaningless aesthetical over-forming.

Sober feedstock, yet sensual in its combination. The form of the new basis station directly evolves out of the transport function it has to achieve. The desire for readability and transparency defines the material choice. Glass reveals technical inner life and previews the trip up to the mountain. Concrete grounds the construction, anchors it into the slope, creates a counterweight and is a carrier of a space truss (organized in triangulated bracing and as filigree as possible) which carries off the weight of the roof; the visible construction of the space truss (with its riggings and the chosen profiles) directly evolves from the prevailing wind- and weather conditions, always standing in attention to defy wind, rain and snow-masses.

Still, the new glass hood above the massive concrete pedestal looks beautiful as it enters the valley with an elegant drive and neither walks a daring architectural tightrope nor is it just a plain home for the technical devices. It's one of those rare situations when architectural developments and technological innovation work hand in hand, where architecture is an equal partner of technology, even its catalyst. driendl*architects achieved obstetrics as their bold sketch acted as a catalyst for the necessary technological frame. The client – Arlberger Bergbahnen AG - has been impressed by the imposing architectural concepts and put gentle pressure on the cable car building company (Doppelmayr) to overcome technical limitations.

The moved architecture paints, skilfully minimalist, the impressive new course of motions of the Galzigbahn. The gondola enters the building and a giant wheel leads it to a point which enables the guests to enter it on ground level. The cabin turns into the opposite direction: the passengers get lifted, together with the gondola, and float above the rural roof-landscape to the Galzig (the mountain), through glassed space. The passenger conquers space through the cable car, starting with the inner, followed by the outer, until spatial limits blur. driendl*architects packed the swung building into a pictogram of the Galzigbahn. Functional architecture as vivid and sensual as it gets.

Specification

Building of a cable car station including side facilities, public spaces in the Storage, logistics, waste management and garage in the cellar.

Client: Arlberger Bergbahnen AG, Boznerplatz 6, 6020 Innsbruck

External construction

The body consists of a massive concrete pedestal which floats into two walls (north and south) and is overarched by a glass construction. This weather protection coat is spanned, self-supporting, over the whole station and needs no contact points - due to a newly constructed supporting structure of round bars, a sort of space truss (organized in triangulated bracing) which carries off the weight of the roof into the steel concrete construction. To make the space truss appear as filigree as possible the strength of the bars has been optimized.

The mass of the concrete pedestal builds the counterweight to the traction cable, because of its increasing angle according to the slope.

The entrance for the guests is situated on the northern wall, where a steel concrete triangle functions as a weather protection. This roof also provides space for advertising inserts.

Due to the transparent coat as well as the shifted office rooms (which have been put into the building before) the architecture of the cable station is in the centre of attention. The glassed hood describes an elegant curve while floating over the massive concrete walls into the valley.

Spatial concept

28 cabins / 24 persons each

The gondola enters the building and a giant wheel leads it to a point which enables the guests to enter it on ground level.

The first column of the suspension cable is integrated into the basis terminal and so guarantees an unhindered panorama view. A rhythmic light tracing supports the dynamical space experience: The passenger leaves the shadowed entrance area, enters the light flooded width of the hall and witnesses an imposing technical play of approaching and leaving gondolas.