

In architecture, metal has had the same connotation since the rise of the material with the Industrial Revolution. It was mainly used for functional, 'industrial' structures such as factories, railway stations and bridges. An association with 'natural' came mainly with wood, stone and brick.

But the image of metal is slowly changing. Firstly, because sustainability is becoming more important for metal producers (just as for the producers of other materials). A large portion of the metal used in construction has been obtained from recycling, and with regard to issues such as isolation (window frames, for example), metal products are also becoming more environmentally friendly.

Secondly, because architects increasingly mould aluminium, copper, steel and zinc in a 'natural' form. Just look at this section, where we see a museum with wavy walls that give rise to the feeling of being at sea, a school with a butterfly-like character, a house that seems to be made of chunks of iron ore and a library reminiscent of a huge mineral crystal. By playing with the natural properties of metal – reflection, gloss, colour, malleability – the material in these projects has a very different appearance. Of course, the metal in many of these buildings plays a major role in the construction, but the constructive showmanship remains increasingly unseen. These examples show that, in the first place, metal has a pronounced sensual quality as well. (KIRSTEN HANNEMA)



## Alchemic facade

■ OBERWENINGEN (CH) — Is it its monolithic form, the greyish colour, or the visible seams on the cladding? Whatever the case

may be, at first glance the facade of these two single-occupancy, detached houses looks as if it has been done in coloured exposed concrete. Only daylight brings to light its real constitution, revealing that it is actually zinc-plated steel.

L3P Architekten preferred metal to concrete in view of two considerations. Firstly, using concrete would have been very complex for the roof area, and secondly, the unusual, asymmetrical forms asked for an extraordinary material

with a wilder, more varied effect. For these reasons they chose galvanized steel, which acquires a patina and changes colour in sunlight.

One of a kind, the facade was developed in collaboration with Swiss metal artist

Thomas Sonderegger, who operated like a modern-day alchemist in his studio. After innumerable experiments and failures – which he and the architects assessed in various lighting conditions – he found a new form of etching.

What the artist's technique exactly entails remains the secret of its creator. For certain is that the image will continue to change; according to different types of light and the time of day, the facade appears dark anthracite, beige,

and even seems to warmly glow in the evenings. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

2 EFH, 2010–2011  
Architect L3P Architekten  
Client Private Sheet  
metal fabrication Thomas Sonderegger, Arbon  
Address Wingert, Oberweningen Info  
www.l3p.ch



## Steel leafage

■ NIJMEGEN (NL) — The buildings that define the 'Hatert' district in the city of Nijmegen are quite uniform: low-rise houses with flat roofs and rectangular forms, most of which were built between 1955 and 1965. Quite apart from this is the new residential building by 24H architecture, which gives the somewhat derelict district a recognizable landmark, and with that a fresh boost.

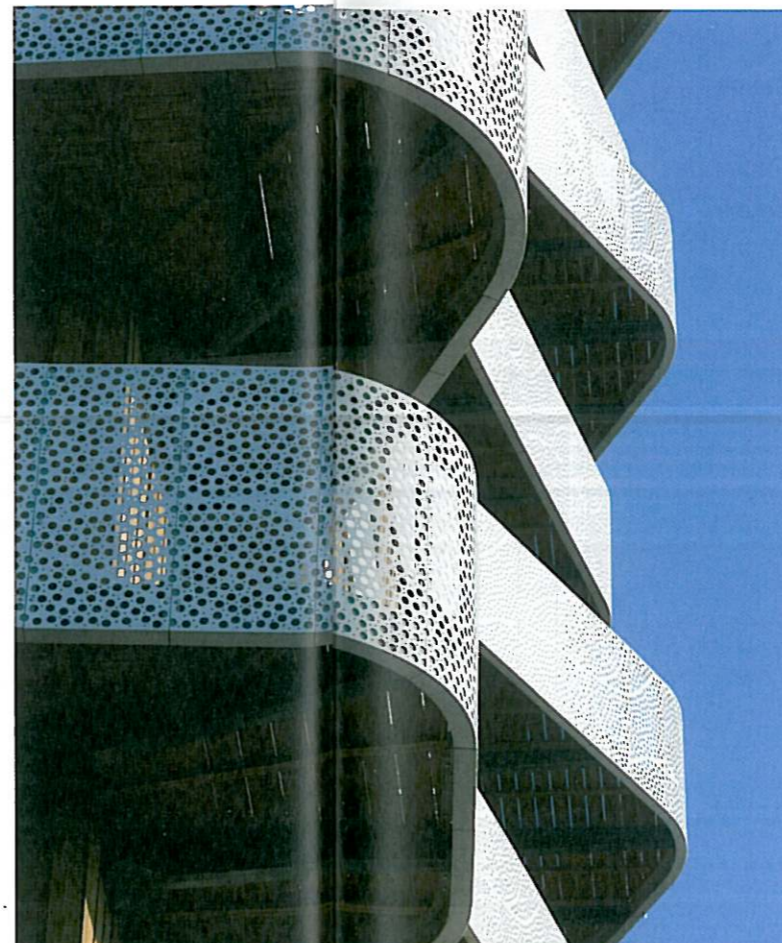
The design echoes the vegetation of the nearby nature reserves: its bulky shape and wooded finish are somewhat reminiscent of a tree trunk, but the architects' source of inspiration becomes really evident with the perforated pattern in the steel balconies, which clearly depicts the pattern of a leaf. In fact, 24H architecture created the motif by

facade, where the perforations are replaced by dots.

The contrasting materials – wood and steel – were chosen not only from an aesthetic standpoint, but also to 'emphasize that the balconies look like petals adhered to the building'. Their variation of form and shape should have an effect as if they 'fan out like the leaves on a branch'. However, some standardization of this free form was necessary to make construction possible.

Once the building reached its planned height, the prefab construction of the balconies were hoisted up and assembled at once, as this would reduce the risk of damaging the wooden floorboards. With the dismantling of the scaffolding, the balconies and wooden flooring were assembled and the balcony panels and aluminium siding were installed. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING  
'HEART OF HATERT' 2011



## Amorphous brass

■ LUND (SE) — It all began with an open international competition in 2004 for a visitors' centre for Lund's cathedral. The winner was Carmen Izquierdo, who is Spanish but lives in Sweden. Then the project was put on hold for a couple of years.

Now that it is accomplished, the programme is bigger (more office space, for example) and the original scheme has been revised – that is, made bolder, especially as far as form is concerned.

The building is unlike any other to be seen in the older parts of the university town of Lund. Most of the buildings there are of stone and date back several centuries. The new addition sets itself apart with a gold-shimmering

At the same time, the building is contextually rooted, filling what for a long time had been a gaping hole in the city next to the old cathedral. Really filling it. Jerked out of context, this building would make a remarkably amorphous impression. Looking out onto three streets, it presents a different face to each of them, as if taking on a persona. It addresses three different situations: one faces the cathedral, with a skylight sticking out, or pointing, toward the house of worship; one to the rear, where the facade folds inwards to form a meeting point; and finally, one to the front, where the entire facade is pulled back to create a spacious, welcoming entrance.

Stepping inside, one meets with a contrast. No longer the warmth of yellow gold but an atmosphere of monastic asceticism, as

concrete floor, where the building is located, the brightly pigmented

This bright, connected with the fundamental, murky building has to be improved, of the rooms, face outward

