

Swiss Pavilion for ARCO, Madrid, Spain
2b architectes
Competition 2002 - Realization 2003



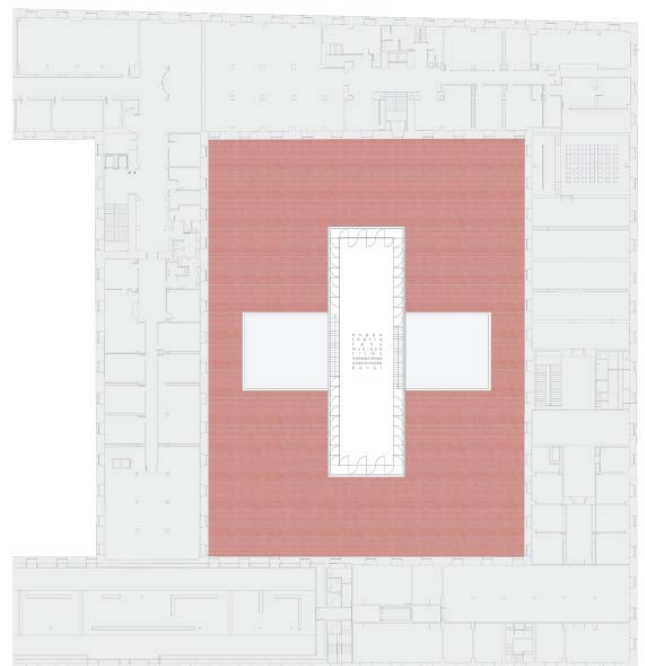
situation plan

As a variation on the theme of the Swiss box, this project superimposes two of them in such a way as to suggest the powerful, universal symbol of the cross of Switzerland. The shape of it is not dictated by any formal equation, but is merely the outcome of its terms of reference.

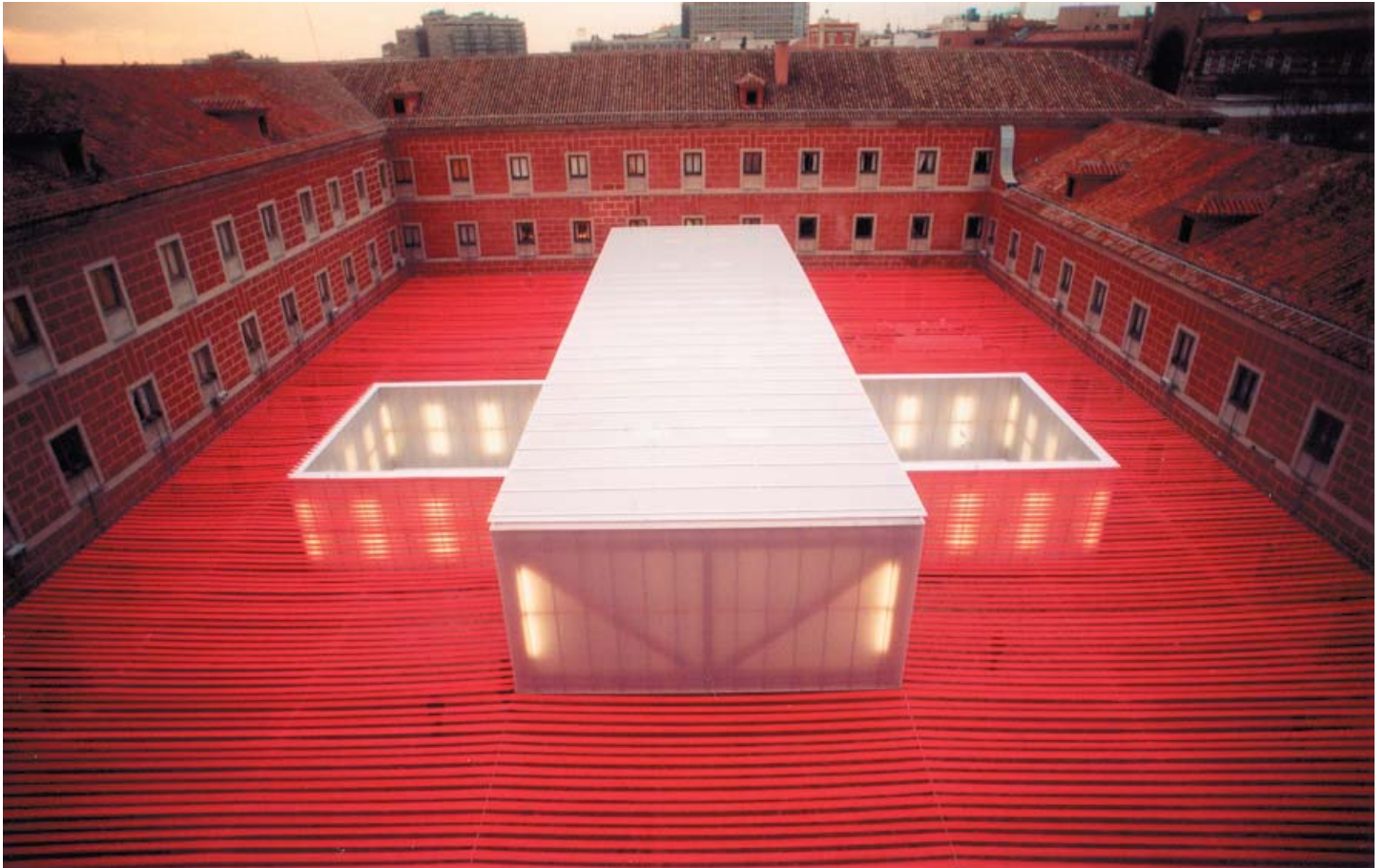
By its use of the two national colours of Switzerland, the project lends additional force to the functional and spatial contrasts that are already present at the Conde Duque. Emphasized and reinforced by canvas shade, the red facades of the distributive courtyard plunge the visitor into a festive ambience which pervades and includes the entire space; indeed it is omnipresent, unifying the materials and the occupants, the courtyard and the pavilion. Once inside the pavilion, the non-colour of white is everywhere, which by its very neutrality provides a mainstay for the work as a whole.

The abstract and artificial spaces inside the pavilion are isolated from their context, with patios providing two outside chambers that are open to the sky. The box containing the exhibition area is above ground level, providing a calm space well clear of the canvas and the general hubbub of the courtyard. With its moveable interior partitions, it can supply 'white box' or 'light box' installations as desired. At night the relationship is reversed when the box lights up and becomes a huge lantern, illuminating the animated courtyard of the Conde Duque through its canvas sides.

Canvas and acrylic glass are the two basic materials for this project. Freely used to provide shade in squares and streets throughout Spain, canvas conveys a sense of festivity and transience. At once abstract and material, the opal acrylic plaques make it possible to close everything up whilst still allowing the light to penetrate. All kinds of possibilities are suggested by their veiled translucence, enticing the visitor to go and see what lies within...



plan first floor



exterior (DRA)



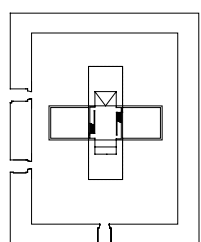
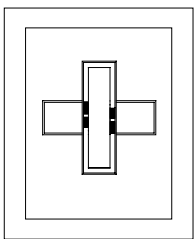
exhibition space (LRL)



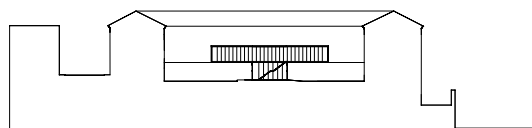
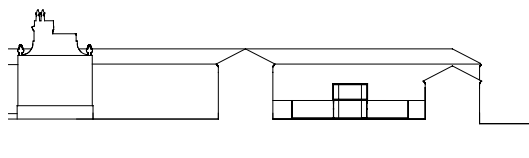
exterior (2b)



nightview (DRA)



floor plans



sections



patio (2b)

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