Digital Materiality in Architecture

By Fabio Gramazio, Matthias Kohler

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Robots build! At their Program in Architecture and Digital Production at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) Zürich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich), the architects Gramazio & Kohler have installed a research facility that is unique in the world. It is based on a computer-controlled industrial robot that produces construction elements directly from design data. The robot works flexibly with a tremendous range of tools and materials. In this way Gramazio & Kohler probe the exciting potential of digital design, construction, and manufacturing techniques for architecture. Gramazio & Kohler attracted widespread attention with the sWISH Pavilion at the Swiss National Exposition Expo 02 and the new Christmas lighting display on Zurich's Bahnhofstrasse. In their projects they incorporate insights and discoveries from the field of computer-aided production into the architectonic design process, using computers to develop innovative construction techniques and architecture. First structures using robots have already been built. Thus, the much noted Gantenbein vineyard in Fläsch employs facades with individually laid bricks for the first time. This publication places explosive insights, theses, and conclusions from the dialectic between physically experienceable architecture and digital processes up for debate.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Matthias Kohler and Fabio Gramazio are codirectors of the architecture firm Gramazio & Kohler in Zurich. Among their recent works are the sWISH* Pavilion at Expo.02 (for IBM and Swiss Re) and the new Christmas lighting display on Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich.

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