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Théâtre de Carouge and Salle des Fêtes in Carouge, Canton Geneva

Exceptionally thin glazing with Forster profile systems

The small town of Carouge near Geneva, south of the River Arve, is considered a hip artists' and trendy suburb of the canton's capital. At the heart of this creative melting pot is the municipal theatre, which is renowned throughout French-speaking Switzerland and was originally founded in 1958 by a few actors. However, the venue of the "Théâtre de Carouge", built in 1972, no longer met the technical or normative requirements, prompting the town to plan a new building. After an architectural competition and subsequent referendum, the theatre was built and a directly adjacent function hall was renovated. The new building is characterised by façades with a mineral look made of Dutch bricks. In contrast, insulating glass elements from Forster Profilsysteme AG provide a visually appealing juxtaposition of transparency and finesse, both from the outside and the inside.

The winner of the competition launched by the town of Carouge in 2012 was the design by the architectural firm Pont12 based near Lausanne. For the new building replacing the theatre, the design was based on an assembly of stacked cubes, which, thanks to the largely closed clinker façades, represents a contemporary reference to the dense, historical development of the surrounding area. One of the challenges was the very cramped site and the complex space allocation plan that had to be integrated. The building project also had to stand up to the reviewing authority of the citizens in 2017, who were, however, almost two-thirds in favour of its realisation. After a construction period of three years, the theatre and the renovated community hall were completed in 2021, allowing the venue to be put into operation in early 2022.

Stages, function hall and esplanade

The cultural building complex now comprises five roughly defined units. On the one hand, three new stages have been created, which can accommodate audiences of 135, 150 and up to 468 people in the large theatre hall. On the other hand, the neighbouring function hall, as a renovated building, constitutes a separate group of rooms. As a connecting element and interface to the public space, a new forecourt forms the prestigious entrance to the buildings. In addition to the stage equipment and ancillary rooms for the event halls, the new building contains costume and scenery workshops including a carpentry and metalworking shop. It also houses the rooms for administration, direction, catering, offices, meetings, as well as accommodation for guest artists and storage rooms.

Design finesse

The architects at Pont12 paid particular attention to the seamless integration of the existing building into the structural design. The renovation of the adjacent function hall also included the complete glazing of the access elements, which now contrast with the otherwise solid building shell in the form of slim strips. The building shell is clad with light beige, elongated clinker bricks, which have a

naturally rustic surface and give the impression of having been shaped by hand. In some areas of the façade, such as above the entrance, perforated brick walls break up the solidity.

High-tech glazing that combines aesthetics and functionality

What stands out in the building's appearance is the harmonious combination of its minerality and transparency. The latter is achieved through the targeted use of glass surfaces on the façade, in the recesses and in the entrances. The glazing in the reception area, for example, which separates the foyer from the public esplanade, for example, where performances take place, thus ensures a smooth transition between the interior and exterior of the theatre. On the ground floor, Forster unico doors and fixed glazing ensure perfect thermal insulation for the building. The dark brown, powder coating almost makes the slender steel profiles disappear, leaving the ensemble with a discreet, delicate and luminous aesthetic.

Automatic hinged doors which open onto the main foyer and sound-insulating glazing complete the high-performance glazing package. The Forster unico profile system was also chosen for the entrances to the terraces on the first floor of the new building as well as for all the sliding glass elements in the function hall. This principle lends harmony and coherence to the project.

To ensure perfect partitioning in terms of fire protection, the architects and safety officers opted for Forster fuego light EI30 fire doors and fixed glazing. These fully glazed elements, which have no jambs, combine safety between the risk workshops with a high fire risk, the various rooms and foyers in the new building. The Forster presto E30 system also provides protection on the escape routes. The fine glazing emphasizes the transparency and openness of the interior design, which all contribute to the aesthetic and functional enhancement of this new cultural complex built in the centre of Carouge.

Project information

Products:	Thermally insulating doors, fixed glazing and façade elements forster unico Interior fire doors and fixed glazing forster fuego light EI30 Doors and fixed glazing with forster presto E30
Architecture:	PONT12 Architectes SA, Chavannes-près-Renens (CH)
Metal construction:	AAV Contractors SA, Plan-les-Ouates (CH)
Client:	Municipality of Carouge (Canton of Geneva, CH)
Photography:	Damian Poffet

Forster Profilsysteme – steel is our nature

Forster Profile Systems Ltd develops and manufactures safe, energy-efficient solutions in steel and stainless steel for doors, windows and façades. Forster is partner for complex objects and offers individual consulting and local project support around the world. The products and system solutions from Forster for the building shell and interior applications meet the most stringent requirements and standards, with heat insulation and safety features such as fire protection, burglary resistance and bullet resistance. The portfolio is rounded off by accessories and comprehensive services for customers and business partners in architecture, planning and the construction industry.

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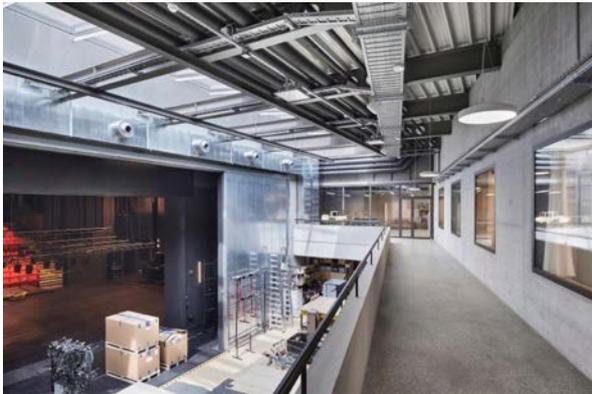


The new building of nested cubs of the Théâtre de Carouge impresses with its strong mineral façade of Dutch bricks, which is softened by generous glass surfaces.

Photos: © Damian Poffet



An aesthetic and technical link between the existing building and the new construction. The doors and fixed glazing were realised with the Forster unico steel profile system, both in the theatre building (left in the photo on the left) and in the adjacent function hall. Photos: © Damian Poffet



Transparency and fire protection in the foyers and corridors are ensured by glass partitions and doors with Forster fuego light E130 as well as fixed glazing and fire-retardant doors with Forster presto E30. Photos: © Damian Poffet