

MARK

ANOTHER
ARCHITECTURE

MISSING
MAKING

MARK #11
DECEMBER 2007 / JANUARY 2008

EUROPE €19.95 / UK £ 14
JAPAN ¥ 3,570 / KOREA 40,000 WON
CANADA \$ 29.50 / USA \$ 24.95

BY THE MAKERS OF
FRAME

AND:
PETER ZUMTHOR: LOST IN RELIGION
CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN WITH ZAHA HADID
SADOMASOCHISTIC ARCHITECTURE

DIVERSITÉ D'HABITATION

ARKPABI

APARTMENTS
MILAN / ITALY

INSPIRED BY RADICAL EXPERIMENTS IN MULTIFAMILY HOUSING IN NORTHERN EUROPE, GIORGIO PALÙ & MICHELE BIANCHI OF ARKPABI HAVE SET A NEW MILESTONE IN THE DULL AND MONOTONOUS URBAN CONTEXT OF MILAN.

TEXT MONICA ZERBONI
PHOTOS MATTEO PIAZZA

There is no apparent relationship between the existing landscape and the condominium that Cremona-based architects Giorgio Palù and Michele Bianchi built on Milan's northern outskirts. 'The presence of anonymous architectures in the district has ultimately benefited our job and set us free of creating something totally different in the streetscape,' they admit. Formerly a dismissed industrial site, the area is presently undergoing a radical redevelopment, with condominiums and service facilities designing a new architectural landscape.

The building, a six-storey apartment complex, occupies an elongated plot of land at the corner of two streets. The complex rises from a rectangular base; a seemingly industrial and

impenetrable wall of stainless steel components. It contains the entrance and the garages, combining home and machine with a simple, rational solution. Most of the 50 housing units are located on the three floors above the base, all designed in different sizes and lay-outs, offering domiciles to an ample range of residents, from singles to families with numerous children. Three 'towers' cut through the block and host the common stairs and elevators. At the top level a second concrete bar rests on pillars, giving the inhabitants of the attic apartments the unusual experience of living in a suspended bridge.

The building, with protruding volumes, wide openings, glass bow-windows and terraces jutting towards the street, easily grabs the attention of passers-by. It can be read as a series of Lego blocks fitted together with intentional randomness and intricacy of details, while the provocative use of primary colours and the combination of light and heavy materials, such as glass, metal and concrete, offer a personal interpretation of contemporary residential architecture.

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