

BLACK VILLA

House for an Art Collector

“The world as a sense, independent of the image, of the idea – this is the essence of the content of art. The square is not an image, just as a switch or socket are not the current.”

Kazimir Malevich, 1927

Concept

Black Villa is a castle. Black Villa is a sculpture. Black Villa is an egotist.

It represents its residents' perfect isolation from the world.

The house is a bunker for the arts, a “panic room” for the well-heeled, for art itself.

The building's autonomy reflects on the autonomy of a work of art.

Kazimir Malevich is the godfather of modern art and the starting point of its history. Black Villa is abstract, cold, location-independent, repellent, mystical, attractive, withdrawn – just like the famous painting of the black square. It is at the “centre of the world” and unapproachable like a sanctuary. Like a narcissist, the house observes itself in the water of the pool around it and prefers to ignore its surroundings.

Energetic self-sufficiency by means of photovoltaics and rainwater capture on the flat roof makes its residents independent from outside influences.

Basic elements

The building is a “black box” that incorporates elements of Kazimir Malevich's artistic work: “Square”, “Cross”, “Circle”. The “cross”, slightly twisted around its axis, accentuates its independence from the enclosing building envelope. This element contains “ancillary” spaces (wet rooms, built-in cabinets, storage spaces, building services, ducts). The individual, geometrically exciting spaces emerging between the square building envelope and the “cross” have a slightly baffling effect on the perception of space. The building has no hallways, spaces merge with each other. The spiral staircase (“circle”) penetrates all storeys and is thus the fulcrum: this quadrant contains semi-private spaces (entrance lobby, library).

Black Villa is surrounded by a “moat”, like a castle. The moat, in this case, is a swimming pool in which the residents do laps of honour around the house. Like in a suprematist work of art, the individual elements are in motion: a street penetrates the building and turns into a forecourt with high lockable gates. From here the residents enter a glazed entrance zone. The ground floor is designed to be used as a lounge for spontaneous receptions or as a pool bar. The first floor is a living area with adjoining galleries that can serve as parlours. The second floor is reserved for the residents: it contains bedrooms and a study. The greened roof terrace can be decorated with outdoor sculptures. Here, the “cross” element is visible again: it is used as a plant trough for intensive greening and as a bench. It offers a view of the outside world from which the residents have shielded themselves. The basement contains spaces, for example, for works of video art or for fitness and leisure purposes.

Materiality

The house will be built as a solid structure of reinforced concrete. Its facade is clad in uniform black photovoltaic panels – the materiality is not noticeable here. In the daytime, ribbon windows with black tinted glass lend the building the homogeneous appearance of a closed cube. In the evening, the light shines through the slits and hints at the number of storeys behind. The transparent entrance gates on both ends of the driveway are decorated with ornate golden patterns. This material was picked to indicate the entrance to the otherwise hermetic building. Interior walls and the ceilings of the shell are built of untreated raw concrete. The “cross” is a lightweight structure of white-painted plasterboard that calls to mind the aesthetics of an art gallery. The contrast of the two elements (“square” vs “cross”) is thus also visible in terms of material.