New memorial garden at International Committee of the Red Cross headquarters

Year: 2023
Location: Switzerland
Program: Health

Status: Competition
Type:
Structure: Timber Structure

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To the east of the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross, a sphere of glass emerges from a slope planted with trees. This sphere symbolises our planet. To simplify the structure, instead of a perfect sphere, it is made up of a combination of hexagonal and pentagonal planes, like a football. To increase the rigidity of the whole structure, diagonals were inserted into each of these planes to connect the vertices, creating a pattern of hexagrams and pentagrams. These geometric figures are found in the composition of many national flags, including those of the USA, China and Israel. Since its inception, the Red Cross has lost many of its members in the course of its humanitarian mission, falling victim to conflicts between states around the world. This facility is a place to remember those members who lost their lives in the course of their mission. The proposal is to reconstruct a globe symbolising world peace by juxtaposing geometric figures that represent each country. Timber, the only renewable natural material, was chosen for the structure because of the desire to give this monument an environmental

dimension that relates to the sustainability of the planet. At the centre of the space is a 7.5 m diameter globe fixed to a rotating axis. The globe is made of numerous glass bricks, which themselves rotate slowly. Each brick is etched to form a map of the world as a whole, and the names of the victims are inscribed where they disappeared. Visitors ascend a gentle slope to the top, where their view suddenly opens up to Lake Geneva, distant landscapes and a panoramic view of the sky, reaffirming their place on the planet.