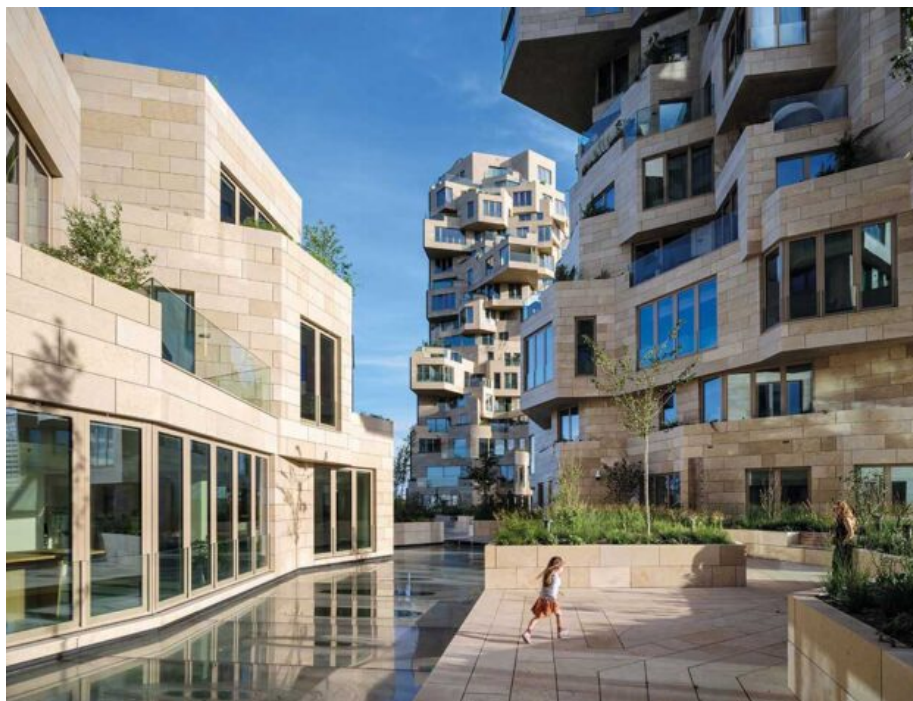


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PROJECTS

6 April 2023

The fine art of deconstruction

Luca MF Fabris

At Amsterdam Zuidas, MVRDV's latest engineering marvel. A dynamic mass of stone composed of a multitude of projecting blocks

Few studios of design in the world can boast as intense a relationship with the press as MVRDV. Writers with a passion for research have brought out a large number of volumes giving depth and coherence to both its myths of postmodern contemporaneity and its provocative ideas informed by scientific methods, able to dispel any implicit irony. Almost thirty years after its founding, the firm run by Winy Maas, Jacob van Rijs and Nathalie de Vries is entering its full maturity with renewed vitality, putting into practice many

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Built at Amsterdam Zuidas, the complex called Valley is an organic and mineral system that promotes biodiversity by interconnecting functions and spatial organization in an innovative hybrid approach, consciously laying claim to the new positive value associated with this adjective, which is more and more widely used along with terms like sustainability and resilience. The Rotterdam-based practice, intervening on the narrow lot located on the edge of a football pitch set in an urban fabric without qualities, has practically deconstructed an enormous parallelepiped, bringing out from the mass a skyscraper with three towers (67, 81 and 100 m in height). From the towers jut out in all directions structures, resembling deranged crystals that eschew every rule of chemistry, that turn out to be flats, embellished with a string of terraces, green roofs and large windows contained in a skin of stone. This mass of porous stone stands on a giant base clad with panels of mirrored glass that, with its calm rhythm, brings the whole thing back within an orderly urbanity, ready to hold a dialogue with its surroundings. Forming a break between the two elements, a system of public spaces located between the fourth and fifth floors and accessible by two staircases that seem to hollow out the rock to create a genuine piece of woodland at the disposal of the community.



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Grow Together



View of the internal means of ascent. (ph. Ossip van Duivenbode)

The division of the built volume provides for offices and commercial premises that open onto the street front, as well as onto the great gallery illuminated from above that runs the length of the building, like a karstic river; from the sixth floor upwards, a multitude of flats, each different from the next, that give way, on the tallest tower, to a panoramic lounge bar. MVRDV's mastery in the moulding of material lies in its ability to shift attention away from its distinctive use of technology (elements suspended with a metal framework hooked on to the primary structure of reinforced concrete) and modelling (parametrization of the stone facings, all of different dimensions; software developed in-house for the verification of natural lighting and the configuration of the flats) and focus it on the succession of open, public, semi-public and private spaces that runs like a valley between mountains of stone. In a country with no hills.

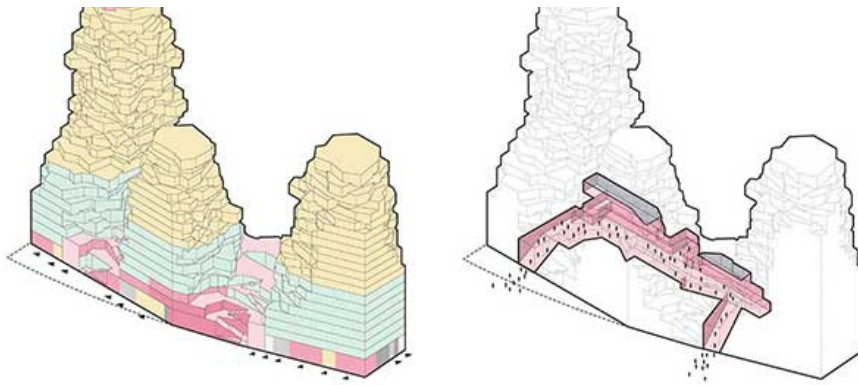
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■ Housing; ■ Offices; ■ Valley; ■ Retail; ■ Culture; ■ Parking; ■ Bicycl parking; ■ Technology

Isometric diagrams of the complex with indication of the different functions housed and the system of covered internal passageways that occupy the heart of the building.

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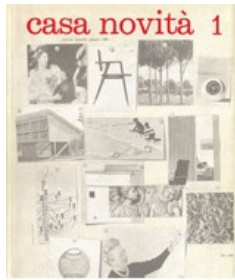
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