



KINDERGARTEN NIEDEROLANG

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The building for a kindergarten in Valdaora di Sotto, South Tyrol, illustrates the local mesh of tradition, contemporary life and nature within the slowly grown village structure. This third kindergarten designed by feld72 aligns itself to the setting without being subordinate to it. Subtly placed, the structure responds to the predominant presence of the parish church with its cemetery chapel and the elementary school in the village center. The timber building is surrounded by a solid wall, as if it were sitting in a case. Together they form a hideaway.



Boundaries and fences determine the village fabric. It is a settlement of clear-cut edges separating private and public space. The kindergarten as an architectural intervention plays with the



boundaries' diverse intensities by setting them within its multiform enclosure. This results in an exciting contextual merger with a prevailing element of the built environment. The surrounding wall creates distinct spatial edges within the village as a whole.



The unity of building and courtyard is embedded in the traditional context and grants the kindergarten the architectural conditions for both security and freedom. Set along the northern boundary of the property, the compact building leaves space for a sunny garden. The outdoor space for the children is optically and functionally separated from the road by the structure.



The wall's materiality and volume are varied as it changes from garden fence to boundary wall in an interpretation and an elaboration of the existing conditions. Inside the courtyard, it is entirely wood and embraces the garden in a friendly gesture. Covered, weather-protected areas are set up along the entrance path toward the building. The treatment of the wall as an architectural element unfolds in a playful way; architecture and playground fuse. The traditional element of fencing gains complexity and quality – it shelters, frames, invites play, and offers insights and viewpoints. The building itself remains defined yet diverse.





A uniform materiality telegraphs simplicity. The plastered brickwork and wood prevalent inside the kindergarten create identity and a sense of belonging. A warm and easy atmosphere is generated in the interiors thanks to the subtly complex use of local timber. For the children, the group rooms represent the starting point for their daily explorations. The rooms are designed to be unpretentious and calm, providing space for individual growth. Small areas for retreat are offered by the large window recess or the accessible partition furniture leading to the coatroom. The assembly room and multi-function rooms can be used either in connection or individually. On both levels, the suggested spatial concept allows for attractive variations in the educational approach. Here, a place for children and the village community serves as an interface for tradition and modernity. Familiarity and exceptionality find a home together in Valdaora di Sotto.





