

# heterotopia

A heterotopia – the place of “otherness”, is where things are different in comparison to most of other places or to its physical appearance itself. There are different notions and types of heterotopia, but there’s one which is very familiar to the children: the “localized utopia” one. From the outside, and for most people, that’s just an ordinary place. However, within this frame, one can live elsewhere, at another moment in his imagination just by staying simultaneously in the reality. In other words, that place must have another dimension – the dimension of the imaginary, of things that happen and exist in our mind.

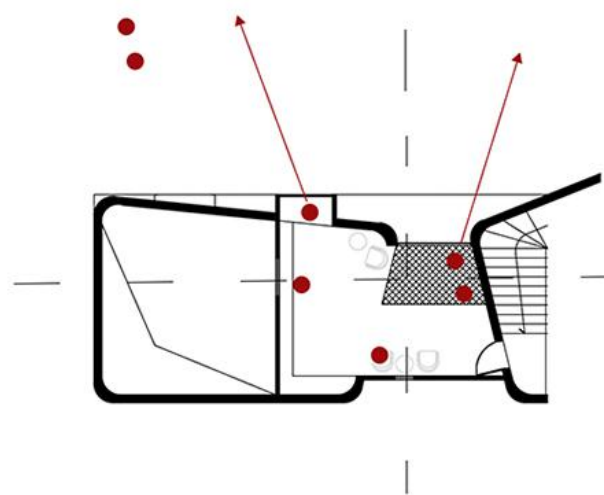
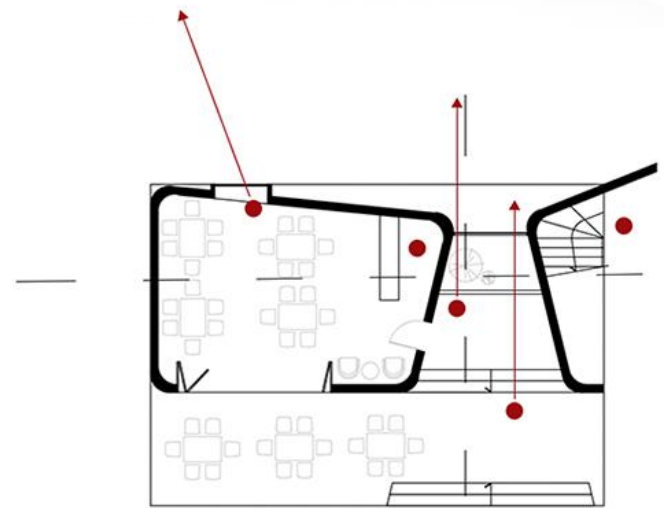
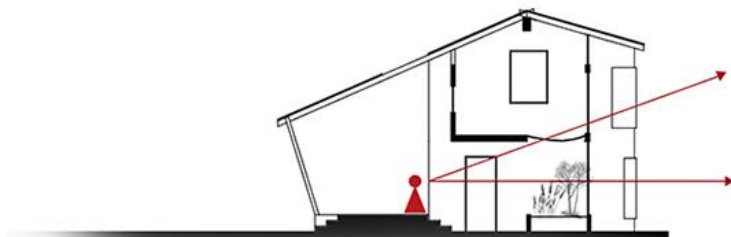
In this project, the canteen for a small primary school on the mountain has all the potentials to be a heterotopia as well. A building that’s not a superficial imitation of the traditional houses nor the white-simple blocks around it, but a joyful and friendly architecture for the children. A place that has more layers of meaning for the children than immediately meet the eye.

The building is conceived firstly in order to remind the kids about the precious landscape of their hometown. The landscape, instead of being wild and omnipresent, now is framed within frameworks in a dramatic and poetic way. When they look out these windows, they will see their hometown in the way which they have never seen before. This image will carve into their mind until they grow up and realize how their hometown used to be in comparison to what it looks like now, so that they know the value of time, about the effects of globalization, and about what people do in this society.

On the practical side, the building is entirely closed in the Northern side to avoid cold winds and rather opened towards East where there are better views and the sunshine in the morning. On the other side, the façade facing the courtyard is covered by a sloping roof which protects the interior from the sun and the rain. Although the building area remains limited (66 sqm), it has a second floor where the little “library” situates, and a covered area in front of it which extends the reception capacity of the canteen.

The first floor is separated into two blocks (one for the canteen, another for the stairs) by a double-height space facing the great window. There’s also a small flower bed where the teachers can teach the children about plants, which gives the pedagogical function for the building. On the second floor, a hanging net covers the void so that the children can lie down and read or play. In brief, the whole volume is a game of views and interconnected joyful spaces but still remains feasible thanks to its simple volumetry and materials.





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