



In 1934 the Zurich architectural historian Sigfried Giedion saw the Neues Bauen movement as standing at what he called a “remarkable crossroads.”¹ Just six years previously, the Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) had been founded in La Sarraz, Switzerland, and Giedion appointed its secretary general. Now, as a committed propagandist of the art and architecture of modernism, Giedion paused for a moment to analyze the state of the movement. He was convinced of modernism’s enduring international triumph, which, in his view, the new political situation in Germany and Russia would not affect in the long term. The crossroads of which Giedion wrote was more specifically pertinent to the question of how the “limited specialist circle” of architects should formulate its “claim on general public interest.”² Giedion’s sober pronouncement was:

The balance—or if one prefers, the inner equilibrium that is essential to a meaningful life—does not depend on the number of inventions or high production figures but on the ability to internalize what has been invented and produced—emotionally, economically, and politically.³

In other words, Giedion was posing the question of the everyday usefulness of 1920s avant-garde ideas. The previous phase of “puritan attitudes” among the avant-garde was flowing, as he saw it, into a new stage of modernism in which not only issues of form and economics but also individual emotional needs and political feasibility would play important roles.⁴

More explicitly but also more polemically formulated was the architect and art historian Peter Meyer’s critique of the avant-garde

in modernism in the years that followed. Meyer (1894–1984) was, along with Giedion, one of the great protagonists but an equally energetic critic of Neues Bauen in Switzerland, and, from 1930, editor of the influential magazine *Das Werk*, organ of the Schweizerischer Werkbund, the Swiss artists’ association. Meyer was quick to distance himself from what he called the “histrionic German emotional *Weltanschauung*” of the Bauhaus and ascribed to its followers a high level of narcissism and remoteness from ordinary life.⁵ The Neues Bauen movement, Meyer held, could survive only if it evolved and if its representatives ceased “preaching to the converted.”⁶ Meyer called for a modernism in which people’s needs for tradition, sentimental attachment, and coziness should also have their place. Neither bleak functionality nor rustic “masquerades and decorative shows” in architecture should be the aim, but rather a lively coexistence and interweaving of a restrained modernism on the one hand and vernacular built form on the other.⁷

Such an appeal reflected a broad-based reorientation of modernism in Switzerland in the 1930s that could finally make it an effective force in the larger society.⁸ Progressive and conservative forces entered into a pragmatic and constructive dialogue that consciously sought to take account of popular needs and preferences, and that became an integral part of Switzerland’s democratic culture.⁹ This essay argues that in this popularization of modernism the designed landscape acquired a central role as mediator between architecture and people, between functional needs and sentimental preferences, and that this is clearly apparent in the development of the public outdoor swimming pool.

Crazy paving paths and luxuriant planting, Letzigraben public baths, Zurich, c. 1952

Nachlass Ammann, gta Archiv (NSL-Archiv), Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, Zurich



1. *Kastenbad* (Belvoir women's baths), Zürichsee, Zurich, c. 1900
Baugeschichtliches Archiv Zürich

2. *Ausdruckstanz* by Mary Wigman, reformist colony of Monte Verità, Lake Maggiore, Ascona, 1913

Photograph Johann Adam Meisenbach; *Monacensia Literaturarchiv und Bibliothek, Munich*

From the *Kastenbad* to the Early Neues Bauen Lido

As early as the end of the nineteenth century, the public outdoor swimming pool had become an indicator of swiftly changing social conventions and ideas about hygiene in Switzerland. The predominant type around 1900 was still the *Kastenbad*, which made use of the country's numerous natural water features, a box fixed to pilings or floats in a river or anchored in a lake and equipped with changing cubicles and with separate facilities for men and women (fig. 1). Lingering at the pool was discouraged; its principal purpose was physical hygiene and brisk swimming. The common characteristic from which these pools derived their name (literally, box pool) was the high wooden wall that for reasons of propriety obscured the view into the pool but conversely prevented any contact with the surrounding landscape.

In the course of the turn-of-the-century movement known as *Lebensreform*, expectations of swimming in the open air also shifted away from the mere washing of the

body.¹⁰ Numerous natural health associations in Switzerland propounded a more wholesome way of life, and in particular teetotalism, vegetarianism, regular outdoor gymnastics, sunbathing, and air baths.¹¹ They followed the precepts of natural healers such as the Swiss Arnold Rikli (1823–1906), also known as the Sunshine Doctor, who treated his patients with fresh air, showers, intensive sunbathing, and a vegetarian diet. Rikli's ideas were enthusiastically taken up at Monte Verità, a reformist colony in the mountains above Lake Maggiore in Italian Switzerland. Nudism and *Ausdruckstanz*, or dance in the open air, were firm features of a new, utopian way of life intended to offer an escape from rampant industrialization and bourgeois society (fig. 2).¹² In the course of this shift in social values the *Kastenbad* came to symbolize a bygone age, unhealthy and both spatially and morally constrictive. Moreover, the relatively few older public baths were quickly insufficient to meet the new enthusiasm for recreational bathing. *Wildes Baden*, or bathing—clothed or unclothed—in unspoiled lakes and rivers, thus grew in





3. Bathing in the wild (*wildes Baden*), Lake Constance, near Arbon, c. 1920

Photograph Max Burkhardt; Museums-gesellschaft Arbon

4. Geiselweid open-air pool, Winterthur, 1911

Winterthurer Bibliotheken, Sondersammlungen

popularity during the first two decades of the twentieth century; enthusiasts relished the socially *dégagé* and unconstrained sojourn in the open countryside (fig. 3). The many lidos that were established in these years, often at those unofficial bathing places, were intended to bring bathing back to “orderly” circumstances and ensure

the separation of the sexes. For many, however, unofficial bathing in natural rivers and lakes was still immensely more pleasurable.¹³

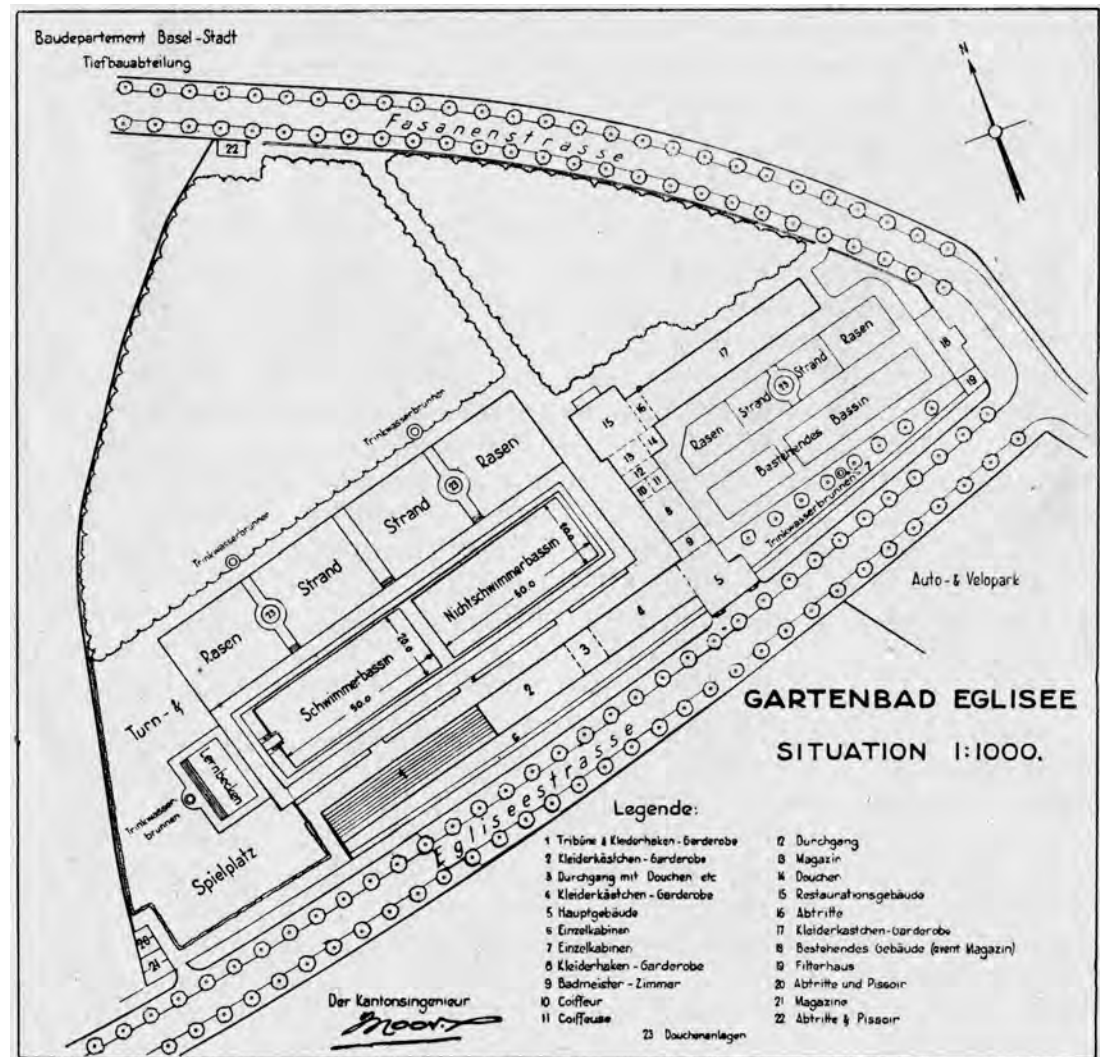
In places lacking such natural features, engineering and technological inventions were applied. But the first baths to use the newly invented water filtration techniques, for example, were still deeply rooted in the nineteenth century in their spatial structures. Geiselweid swimming pool in Winterthur, built in 1910–1911 to designs by architects Rittmeyer & Furrer, was the first reinforced concrete pool with modern filtration technology in Switzerland (fig. 4). The needs of a nascent modern leisure society for extensive recreational areas were only partly gratified with a beachlike *Sandplatz* beside the pool. The newly awakened attraction to the open countryside also had to be subordinated to traditional morals and proprieties: the high fence enclosing the pool, which at first could never be used by men and women together, excluded the outside world completely.

The early Neues Bauen lidos were an initial response to the new public demand for more space for sports and games away from



5. General plan of Gartenbad Eglisee, Basel, 1931

Sanitätsdepartement Basel-Stadt,
ed., Das Gartenbad Eglisee (Basel,
1931), 29



the swimming pool itself. This was clearly expressed at Gartenbad Eglisee in Basel, designed by the city's building inspector Theodor Hünerwadel (1864–1956). It opened in 1931 after two years of planning and construction as the largest and most important example of these early Neues Bauen public baths in Switzerland (figs. 5 and 6).¹⁴ The public bath should be, in the words of Hans Hunziker (1878–1941), lecturer in hygiene at Universität Basel, a “place of physical culture that, along with swimming, offers extensive opportunity to enjoy fresh air and sunshine, that along with a sandy beach has green play areas and sports grounds where people can play and exercise—where happy, healthy people can take pleasure in their

lives.”¹⁵ The name *Gartenbad* indicated that the pool was complemented with generously proportioned sports facilities. Initially, these areas had little to do with a notion of garden design in which the elaborate use of plants played a major role; Gartenbad Eglisee was much more a manifestation of “hygienists’ and technicians’ knowledge and abilities.”¹⁶ In the double right angle of the long, flat-roofed building, everything required at a modern public pool was housed, from sanitary facilities to a restaurant and hairdresser to spectator stands. The building contained pools of various functions and depths: one smaller women’s pool in the east separated from three sports and family pools for both sexes in the west. The pool water was



6. Gartenbad Eglisee, Basel, c. 1932, view across the lawn and beach to the swimmers' and non-swimmers' pools and building containing (left to right) restaurant, changing rooms, entrance hall with tower, changing rooms, spectator stands

Photograph H. Ochs-Walde;
©Basler Denkmalpflege

filtered and chlorinated by the most modern German circulation systems. Next to the two long main pools was a rectangular, bordered sandy area with a sunbathing lawn and large outdoor showers. The adjacent wood to the north was thinned on its southern edge to form groves and otherwise left in its original state.

The distinctive quality of Gartenbad Eglisee was the way in which “it was designed, both outdoors and indoors, as an emphatically functional construction.”¹⁷ The primary task for this project lay in the logistical challenge of operating a public bath for up to five thousand visitors, or sports events with as many as two thousand spectators. The aesthetic of the complex celebrated this functionality, appearing to provide a techni-

cally perfected solution for all the visitor’s needs. Even so, although Eglisee attracted the expected masses of visitors on hot days, it had two drawbacks. One was the forthrightly monumental architectural setting of a public pool for the masses, in which the individual was seen as part of a system. A brochure published for the opening made this clear:

The clothes lockers are consecutively numbered; this runs into four figures.... Visitors wishing to use the communal changing rooms would therefore, in order to spare themselves any inconvenience ... do well to mark the number of their locker very carefully.¹⁸

The other factor was that Eglisee did not fulfill the evidently still widespread yearning for

a more natural setting. For many inhabitants of Basel, nothing could replace bathing in the Rhine, as described in 1944 by Basel writer and painter Johanna Von der Mühl:

[T]he real Basler, man or woman, goes to the new swanky public baths near the Badischer Bahnhof railway station only occasionally. They despise the still water in the artificial pools of Eglisee and stay true in their affection for being carried along by the strong, cold current that seeks its impetuous course below the Pfalz.¹⁹

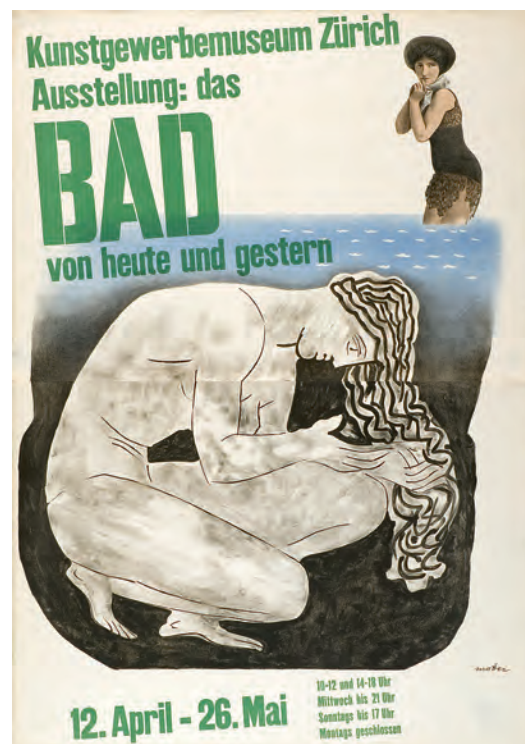
The Invention of the *Parkbad*

The experience gained by planners of early Neues Bauen projects was of substantial significance for the further development of modernism in Switzerland and the subject of public debate. Critical reflection on what had been achieved so far was an important part of various exhibitions staged in Zurich between 1929 and 1935 on the issues of housing settlements, schools, and public baths.²⁰ The exhibition *Das Bad heute und gestern*, which opened in the spring of 1935 at Zurich's Kunstgewerbemuseum,

addressed the construction of public baths as a pressing issue because the city's *Kastenbäder* and public baths were chronically overcrowded (fig. 7). Furthermore, for many residents of the swiftly expanding suburbs of Zurich, the lakes and rivers at the centre of the city were unreasonably distant. The Social Democratic government of "Rotes Zürich" (1928–1949) therefore planned new open-air baths for outlying districts. The moving spirits of the exhibition were Sigfried Giedion and young architects and CIAM founding members trained at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule: Werner Max Moser (1896–1970), Rudolf Steiger (1900–1982), and Max Ernst Haefeli (1901–1971). Many other Werkbund members contributed to the exhibition, among them the Zurich garden architect Gustav Ammann (1885–1955). The exhibition called for public baths that, unlike Gartenbad Eglisee, which solely served the purposes of personal hygiene and sport, provided more places for leisure and relaxation. The exhibition proposed that a visit to a public bath should also be an experience of landscape. Rudolf Steiger set out the idea:

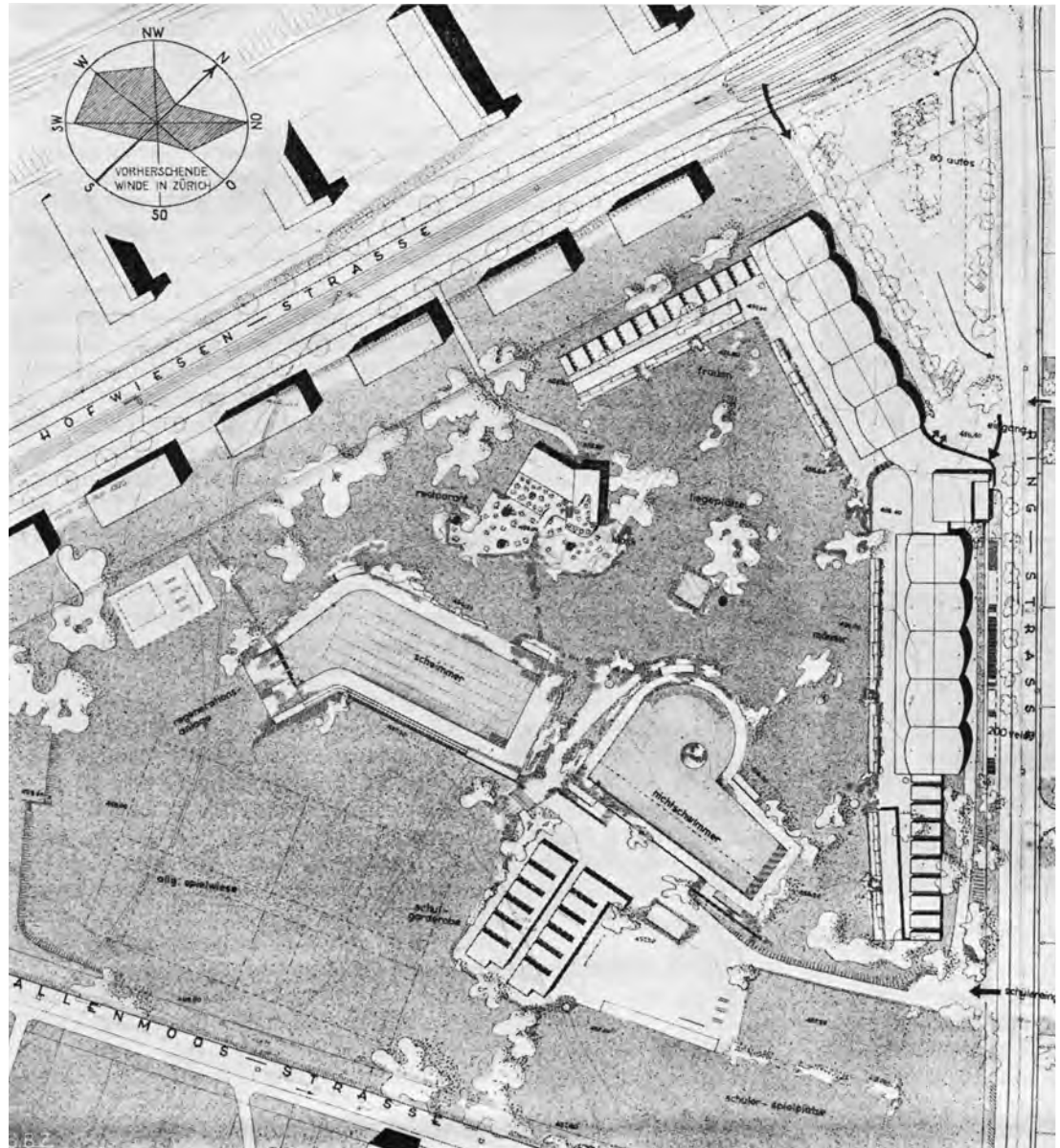
From closed, floating baths to the structurally rigid and geometrically organized family pools of today, there will have to be a further development to informal, loosely arranged facilities with a very strong inclusion of landscape values [*landschaftliche Werte*].²¹

The swift response to these demands was Freibad Allenmoos, the first municipal district baths in the north of Zurich and the prototypical *Parkbad*.²² Just a few months after the exhibition closed its doors, Zurich's city council staged a public pool design competition in which architects Max Ernst Haefeli and Werner Max Moser carried off the laurels for their joint project. The jury particularly commended their design for "striving for informality," which distinguished it markedly from the geometrical organization and layout of comparable facilities (fig. 8).²³ The grounds of the winning project were, however, only schematically represented; what was clear was the



7. Herbert Matter, exhibition poster, *Das Bad heute und gestern*, Kunstgewerbemuseum Zürich, 1935
Museum für Gestaltung, Zürich

8. Max Ernst Haefeli and Werner Max Moser, winning design, Freibad Allenmoos competition, Zurich, 1935
 Schweizerische Bauzeitung 54, no. 21 (1936): 232



architects' intention to set the pools in a broad expanse of lawn and informal shrubbery.

To remedy this weakness in their treatment of the grounds, the winners invited the garden architect Gustav Ammann to rework the project. Ammann was the natural choice for the team; they had cooperated successfully just a few years earlier, in 1930–1932, on the Werkbundsiedlung Neubühl, a Zurich housing settlement. Ammann had not only established a reputation as an enthusiastic experimenter and forward thinker of his profession in Switzerland; he also

called for a consistently informal, “natural” (*natürlich*) design style for gardens, something that made him an ideal partner for the architects who wished to give more weight to landscape values (*landschaftliche Werte*), as Steiger had called them.²⁴

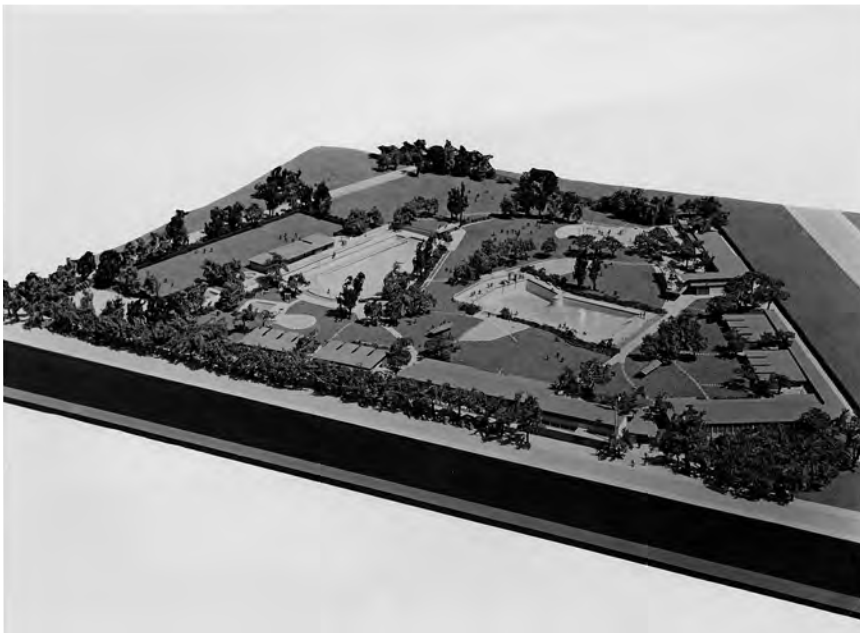
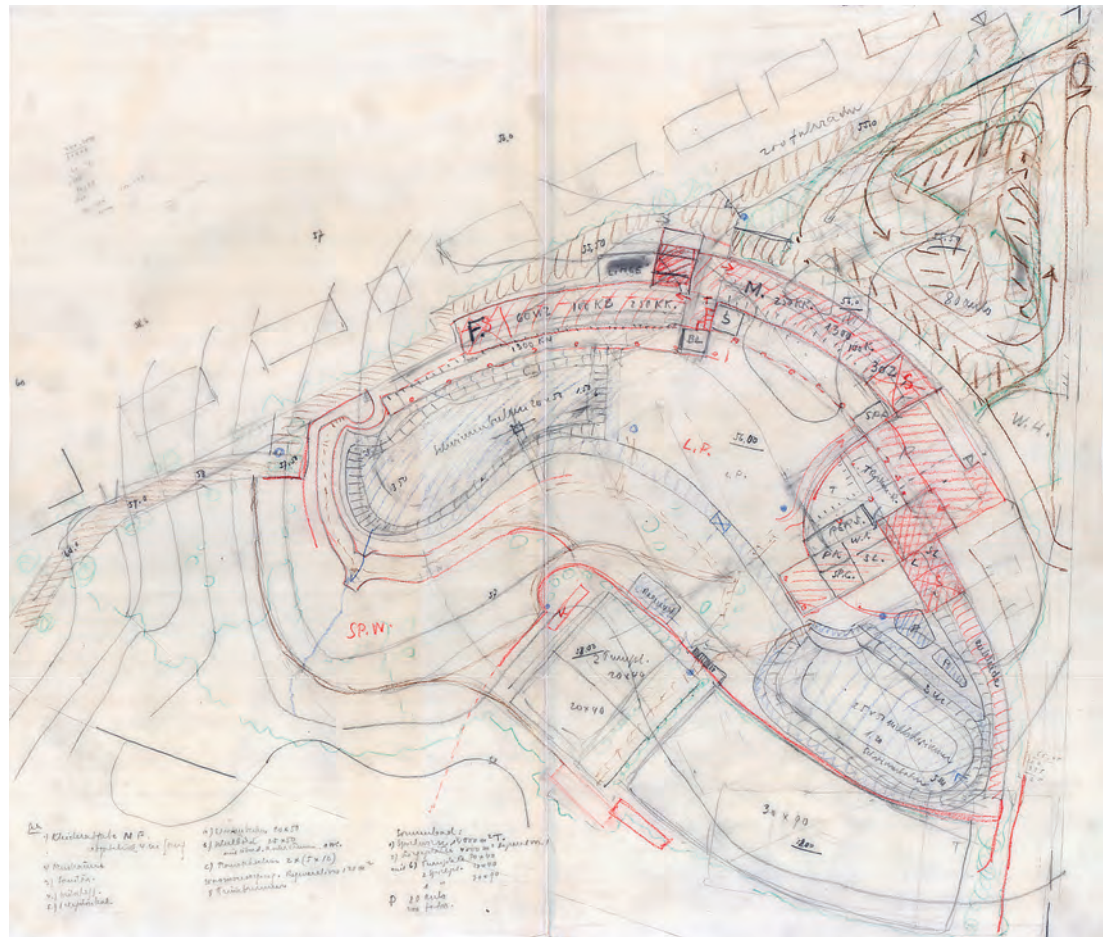
Ammann had in fact entered the design competition with another team, which had finished second. In planning that submission he had advocated an informal, natural design for the grounds but had not been able to overcome the opposition of his architect partners. A surviving sketch plays with the idea

9. Gustav Ammann, topographical sketch plan, Freibad Allenmoos competition, Zurich, 1935

Nachlass Ammann, gta Archiv (NSL-Archiv), Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, Zurich

10. Model of Freibad Allenmoos as built, Zurich, c. 1939

Werk 34, no. 7 (1947): 213



of organically shaped pools set like natural ponds, as low as possible in the terrain (fig. 9). Ammann also embedded the buildings in the gently undulating site and developed them along the contour. This alignment of open-air baths with the existing topography was comparable to that of Haefeli and Moser's winning project, and thus Ammann played an important role in the subsequent reworking of their design. He assumed the entire responsibility for the planning and layout of the grounds, from pathways to landscaping and planting schemes.

After construction delays caused by an economic crisis, Freibad Allenmoos opened in 1939. At its center lay the adults' pool, for swimmers, and the children's pool, for nonswimmers, both of which deviated from the conventional rectangular form, enclosed in abundantly blooming flowerbeds that



11. View across mixed border to nonswimmers' pool, Freibad Allenmoos, Zurich, c. 1945
Baugeschichtliches Archiv Zürich

restricted access to the water to a few points with footbaths. On the lawn around the pools, loosely arranged clumps of trees provided shade while creating separate park spaces and framing the baths and their activities in a picturesque setting (fig. 10).

Public Bath Landscapes: Between Nostalgia and Progressive Convictions

Ammann's planting designs for the *Parkbad* incorporated numerous references to

the open countryside. Nevertheless, it was not a perfect imitation of nature, based on ecologically correct plant societies, that interested him, but rather the "vegetation picture" (*Vegetationsbild*) of the landscape and its free, artistic interpretation.²⁵ For example, he used the moisture-loving poplar as a quotation from riparian vegetation close to the pools while integrating these trees in a mixed border whose numerous ornamental shrubs and herbaceous cultures bloomed throughout the bathing season (fig. 11). Moreover, Ammann's gardenist interpretation of the riverbank landscape found space not only for indigenous species but also for such exotics as Caucasian wingnut and Chinese silvergrass. He used well over a hundred species and varieties of woody plants and an equally rich assortment of herbaceous perennials in the planting design for Freibad Allenmoos, which is popularly known today as Arboretum Zürich-Nord.

Ammann drew his primary inspiration for this form of plant use from the "wild gardening" of the English reform garden²⁶ and particularly the creations of Gertrude Jekyll (1843–1932), whose approach he also discerned and valued in the work of the German herbaceous perennial breeder Karl Foerster (1874–1970). Ammann explained his approach: "Now the new English garden reenters in triumph, with loosely arranged masses of shrubs and flowering herbaceous perennials, with crazy paving paths, drystone masonry overgrown with cushion plants and other motifs."²⁷ Repeatedly and euphorically, Ammann spoke of the "English spectacles" (eyeglasses) that he put on in order to design and which, since the end of the 1920s, had markedly influenced modernist garden architecture in Switzerland.

Above and beyond such garden finesse, the landscape vision in which the *Parkbad* was founded evoked a backward-looking critique of civilization; the new bathing landscape artistically staged a better world that was believed lost. This had been ideal-



12. “Ideal” preindustrial riparian landscape

Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Kulturarbeiten*, vol. 8, *Die Gestaltung der Landschaft durch den Menschen* (Munich, 1916), 240

ized by conservative reformists like Paul Schultze-Naumburg (1869–1949), one of the founders of the Bund Heimatschutz (homeland conservation association) as early as 1901 in his *Kulturarbeiten* (fig. 12). Its leitmotif was the aesthetic configuration of preindustrial natural and cultural landscapes that had apparently been spared the “appalling devastation of our land in all areas of visual culture.”²⁸ During his training, from 1905 to 1911, Ammann was influenced by Schultze-Naumburg’s early writings, and he joined the Zürcher Heimatschutz in 1923; that he was concurrently working successfully with leading architects in the avant-garde of modernism in Switzerland is a clear indication of the broad consensus that reigned in both the traditionalist and the progressive camps with regard to such landscape values.²⁹ In 1939 Peter Meyer traced this consensus to an all-embracing phenomenon of modern society, nourished by a deep sensibility of the loss of tradition and nature: “The exponential industrialization of Europe and intensification of agriculture . . . have lent untouched tracts of land the quality of an exception, of rarity. Beauties that formerly went unnoticed because they were self-

evident have become consciously relished delights.”³⁰

Yet the Freibad Allenmoos landscape was on no account intended as a museum piece, a return to a long-lost world. Rather, it was to reshape suitable images from the past for modern Swiss society. This meant that such landscape images had to be reinterpreted to meet the requirements of urban mass activity and its specific needs for play, sport, and recreation. Functionality and economy were thus the crucial criteria on which not only the buildings but especially the grounds of the *Parkbad* would have to be judged. Notwithstanding the “casual,” park-like design, the baths therefore had a clear system of visitor management by which up to thirty-six hundred bathers were guided, though they may not have been aware of it. The layout determined at which places visitors should change, shower, rest, eat, play ballgames, enter the pools, and swim. As these were family baths, various areas were reserved for adults, young people, and children, separated by loose plantings of trees. At other places, too, the plantings reinforced the functional requirements of the baths’ operations. The blooming herbaceous borders enclosing the pools also included thorny plants and were intended to prevent barefoot visitors from taking the shortest way to the water. Instead the thorns compelled them to walk through one of the footbaths in the gaps between herbaceous beds, to prevent soiling the pool. Nor were considerations of function and economy excluded from the planting plans; to keep the costs of planting and maintenance as low as possible, improved, hardy, and long-blooming varieties were bred, which were adapted to the conditions of the location and could form durable plant groupings.

“Romantic” Modernism

In contrast to the grounds, the architecture of the baths at Freibad Allenmoos offered a self-confident showcase of the new style consistent with the sculptural possibil-

13. Restaurant, Freibad Allenmoos, Zurich, 1939

Nachlass Ammann, gta Archiv (NSL-Archiv), Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, Zurich



ities of reinforced concrete. The restaurant building referred, moreover, to the motif, so popular in modernist architecture, of the ocean liner, complete with railings, which was suited both to the aquatic context and to the wide-ranging enthusiasm of the avant-garde for the aesthetics of machinery (fig. 13). But apart from its display of function and technology, the architecture, when compared to works such as the Gartenbad Eglisee, was notably small-scale and non-monumental, appearing to have been sited around the park landscape in a reserved fashion. The elegant structures were framed by and interspersed with vegetation and were subordinated to the sentimental setting of the grounds. Together with the landscaping, they formed a complementary unity; architecture and park landscape created a common space in which functionality and emotion, enthusiasm for technology and yearning for nature, modernism and tradition were all interwoven. Nature became the substructure within which these contradictions of the age could be resolved harmoniously and, for the public, comprehensibly. Thereby a conception of modern-

ism was manifested that completely refuted the “rejection of nature” that had partly shaped the avant-garde of the 1920s.³¹ In 1938 Werner Max Moser himself characterized the joint achievement at Allenmoos as “romantic” in the best sense of the word. Romanticism, according to Moser, was “in no way the opposite of modern, as Neues Bauen wishes most strongly to take account of, and to express emotional values—through and arising from function.”³² And Gustav Ammann had already propounded six years earlier: “The garden for our times is, then, along with a pure fulfillment of purpose, perhaps also an unfulfilled dream country for many who wish once again to gaze upon blades of grass, leaves, flowers, and fruits.”³³

Inaugurated in 1939, Allenmoos was a tremendous success. At the opening, a reviewer in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* remarked that it had proven possible “to create an integrity of form within which the human being can live in harmony with the physical and spiritual influences of earth and water, air and light.”³⁴ Progressivism allied with sentiment marked this new and particular construct

14. Restaurant pavilion, Letzigraben public baths, Zurich, c. 1952

Nachlass Ammann, gta Archiv (NSL-Archiv), Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, Zurich



of modernism. No less important, the splendor of the flowers must have made a strong contribution to the public bath's popularity. What Giedion had called for in 1934 had finally come to pass: Neues Bauen had—at least as far as public baths were concerned—stepped out of its “limited specialist circle” and been enthusiastically received by the general public.³⁵

Counterworlds for the Individual

Even neutral Switzerland was not spared the trauma of World War II. With Hitler's breach of the Treaty of Versailles in 1936, an invasion by German forces became a conceivable threat, and on the “Schwarzer Tag,” as the country's media called it, of the outbreak of war, September 1, 1939, Switzerland mobilized. Just one year later the Alpine land found itself surrounded by fascist countries and their new provinces, while internal tensions arose between Switzerland's own political extremes.³⁶

Against this background, the role of the *Parkbad* also shifted. Whereas Freibad Allenmoos was above all intended to promote equilibrium between body and spirit, sport and recreation, the subsequent generation of public baths foregrounded the individual's yearning for comfort and security. The baths also served the social organism in the sense that they created jobs and offered an innocuous leisure activity. In an era when cities were regarded as politically unstable, and, by contrast, the countryside and rural Switzerland were viewed as the redoubt of the democratic Swiss Confederation, park baths became a political instrument serving as rural implantations in the city; they offered the diverting, flowery scenery of an unsullied world far from the brutal realities of world war.³⁷

This was especially apparent at Freibad Letzigraben in Zurich, built in 1942–1949 as a joint project by Gustav Ammann and the architect and writer Max Frisch (1911–1991).³⁸ Frisch's strictly functional



15. Crazy paving paths and luxuriant planting, Letzigraben public baths, Zurich, c. 1952

Nachlass Ammann, gta Archiv (NSL-Archiv), Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, Zurich

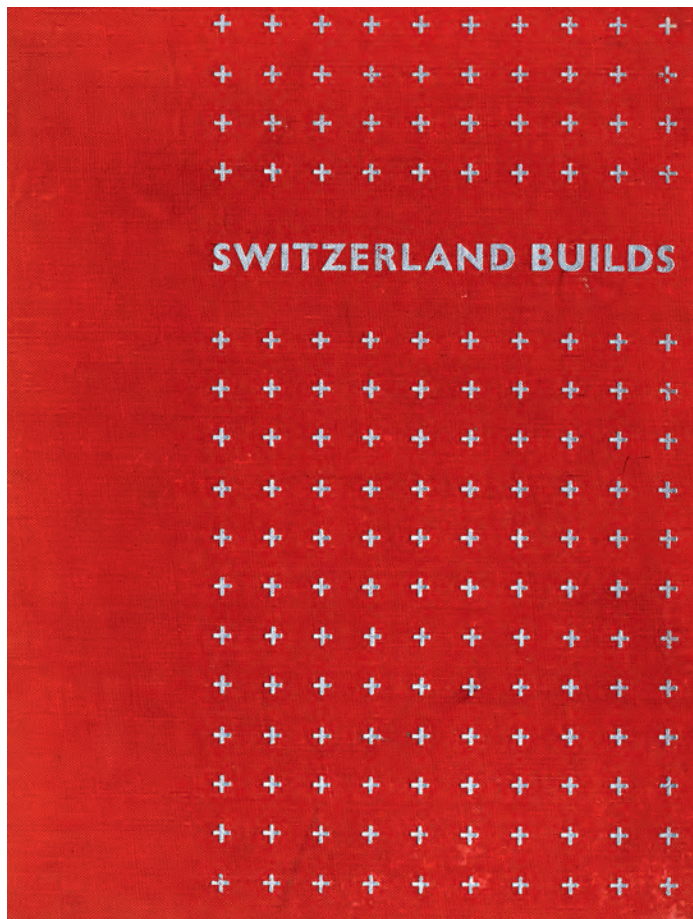
architecture drew its charm from emphatically filigree constructions and whimsical details. Not only did the restaurant pavilion reflect a newly awakened desire for ornamentation that was carried almost seamlessly into the outdoor spaces; new design emphases were apparent in the grounds themselves, laid out for a substantial forty-two hundred visitors a day (fig. 14). Along with an emphatically diverse planting scheme, Freibad Letzigraben differed from Allenmoos in its extensive use of the most varied natural stonework in winding paths of crazy paving, as well as edging and rustic stone walls (fig. 15). The grounds were intended, in their empathically modest proportions, to distract visitors from everyday cares and woes and to offer places of refuge in the midst of the massive communal baths. The decisive criterion in the design of the grounds was a sense of intimacy. Thus the magazine *Das Werk* remarked:

To a far greater extent than at Allenmoos, Letzigraben exemplifies a striving for the greatest possible disaggregation of all the built structures. . . . The numerous, constantly varying garden sections and plant groupings in combination with the architecture, pools and terrac-

ing engender in the visitor a feeling of being, rather than part of a crowd, in an intimate setting.³⁹

The Parkbad in the Postwar Era

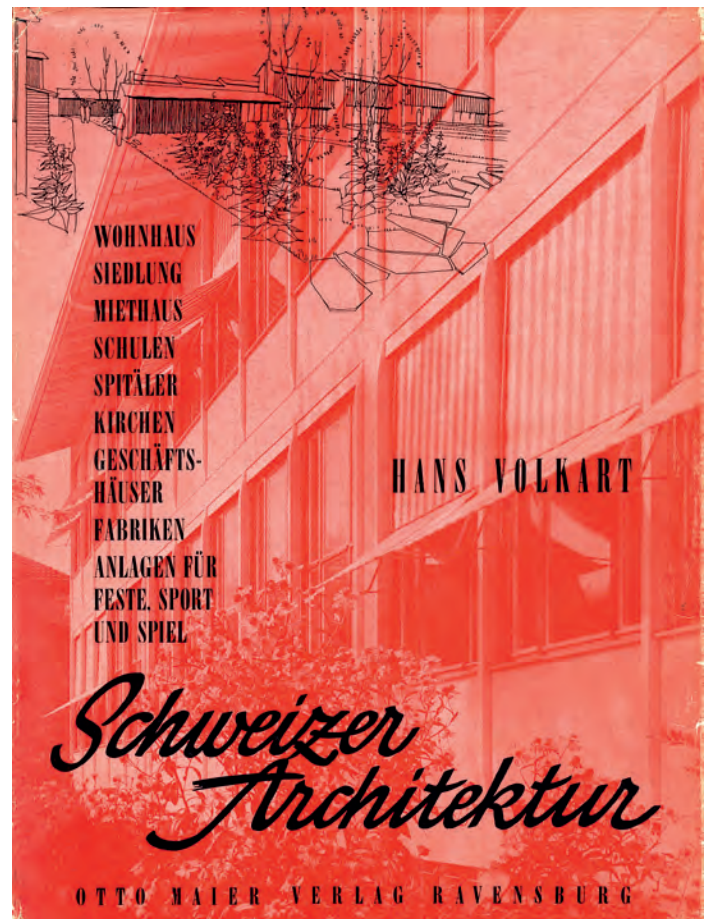
After 1945 Allenmoos and Letzigraben attracted international attention. In a war-ravaged Europe these baths were seen as shining examples illuminating a new dawn of modernism, promising escape from the ruins of everyday life and conveying a feeling of personal comfort and security. In the postwar years, in fact, there was a lively general interest in Swiss city planning, architecture, and landscape architecture, which had been pursued throughout the war because of the country's neutrality and which now offered an abundance of demonstration material for European reconstruction. The *Parkbad* was understood as an integral part of decentralized "organic urban development" (*organischer Städtebau*) with its widely spaced ribbon developments, green corridors, and generously proportioned school grounds. "Helvetia docet," proclaimed German architect Rudolf Schwarz (1897–1961) admiringly on the occasion of an exhibition on Swiss architecture shown in Cologne in 1948. Numerous international publications documented reawakened interest during the postwar era in Swiss architecture and garden design, among them *Switzerland Builds* (1950) by American architect and commentator George Everard Kidder Smith, who offered Parkbad Allenmoos as an exemplar of the high regard for the social value of open-air baths in Switzerland (fig. 16). He wrote that "almost every Swiss town has some sort of outdoor pool."⁴⁰ A further example, presented in *Schweizer Architektur* (1951) by German architect Hans Volkart, elucidated the Swiss "object lesson" through numerous descriptions of projects, including Letzigraben and Allenmoos (fig. 17).⁴¹ Switzerland itself also contributed to the dissemination of *Parkbad* ideas, whether in gardening books, such as *Landscape Gardens*, by Gustav Ammann, or the Swit-



16–19. Exports of Swiss building and garden culture after World War II

16. G. E. Kidder Smith, *Switzerland Builds: Its Native and Modern Architecture* (New York and Stockholm, 1950), cover

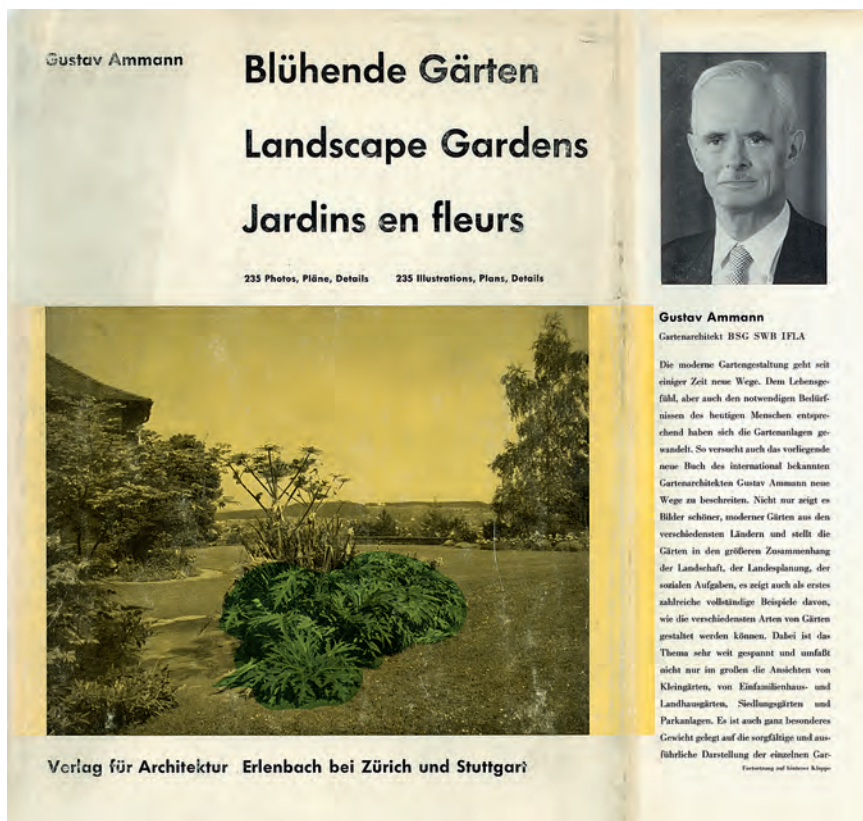
17. Hans Volkart, *Schweizer Architektur: Ein Überblick über das schweizerische Bauschaffen der Gegenwart* (Ravensburg, 1951), cover



Switzerland Planning and Building Exhibition, staged in London in 1946 at the invitation of the Royal Institute of British Architects and subsequently shown in Copenhagen (figs. 18 and 19).⁴² In 1956, when the fifth congress of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) was held in Zurich, it was astonishingly well attended: more than 250 participants from 25 countries gathered impressions of Swiss landscape architecture from the preceding 25 years in lectures and tours. The resounding success of the congress, according to the editorial of the German magazine *Garten und Landschaft*, could also be ascribed to “the congress venue, Zurich, which in the post-war era exercised a particular fascination for garden architects.”⁴³

Sigfried Giedion also contributed to the further dissemination of the *Parkbad*.

Although he reproached Swiss architecture of the 1940s for offering the public too much “coziness” and saw it as “endangered by sentimental trends,” he appeared to welcome thoroughly the same sentimentality in landscape design, and he never fundamentally questioned the *Parkbad* concepts of design and content.⁴⁴ In his documentation of the CIAM 6 congress, which assembled, under the title *A Decade of New Architecture*, a selection of “visionary” constructions designed between 1937 and 1947, he therefore praised Freibad Allenmoos as a felicitous combination of landscape and architecture: “Special care was devoted to the development of the trees and flowers and to the unobtrusive character of the buildings.”⁴⁵ For the new editor of *Das Werk*, Alfred Roth (1903–1998), a former employee of Le Corbusier and



18. Gustav Ammann, *Blühende Gärten / Landscape Gardens / Jardins en fleurs* (Zurich-Erlenbach, 1955), cover

19. *Switzerland Planning and Building Exhibition* (Royal Institute of British Architects; Zurich, 1946), cover



friend of Giedion, Freibad Allenmoos “set the direction for future amenities.”⁴⁶ Roth underlined the “natural” composition of the *Parkbad*:

The character of public baths should, wherever possible, be close to that of a natural park, assimilated organically in the city district, the local prospect or the landscape. Following such considerations, pools too should resemble natural ponds and be liberated from the rigidity of the conventional rectangular shape. Natural features such as elevations in the terrain should be utilized to lend the park as free and lively a form as possible.⁴⁷

Designs resulting from the open-air bathing boom that began after World War II in Switzerland and continued into the 1970s were in their essentials based on Freibad Allenmoos, the prototypical *Parkbad*, although with variations following contemporary taste: for one, the pool shape, which increasingly departed from the natural-pond

model and returned to clear-cut geometrical forms, and for another the renaissance of concrete, which, after wartime shortages, became more readily available at the beginning of the 1950s and superseded stone walls and crazy paving. In Switzerland, this development also brought a long-drawn-out leavetaking from the internationally popular motifs of the Edwardian garden, whose “miles of dreary dry-walling and crazy paving” were so sharply criticized by architect Peter Shephard in his *Modern Gardens* (1953).⁴⁸ What remained unchanged, though, were the picturesque, parklike aesthetic of the plantings and the interpenetration of architecture and landscape. The idea of a municipal open-air bath in a naturalistic setting as it first found a practical form to meet the public’s needs at Freibad Allenmoos was enduringly popular. It was held up as a model of design even in 1959 in the guidelines for green space in local communities published by the Schweizerische Vereinigung

20. Gustav Ammann, garden architect, and Oskar Stock and Hans Suter, architects, Freibad Dübendorf, Dübendorf, 1951, photograph from the late 1950s
Nachlass Ammann, gta Archiv (NSL-Archiv), Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, Zurich



für Landesplanung.⁴⁹ From Dübendorf to Delémont, from Bern to Basel, up and down the country new public baths were built, in Gustav Ammann's words, as "a haven of felicity amid the toil and moil of the workaday world," expressing the great longing

of modern society for a life close to nature (fig. 20).⁵⁰ The widespread popularity of sentimental images of nature was unabated—even though these natural images were highly artificial and functional products.

NOTES

Translated from the German by Mic Hale

I thank Christophe Girot, Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, Zurich, who has generously and energetically supported my research into modernist landscape architecture in Switzerland. My thanks also go to Anette Freytag and Sibylle Hoiman for their constructive criticism.

1. Sigfried Giedion, "Leben und Bauen," in *Sigfried Giedion: Wege in die Öffentlichkeit; Aufsätze und unveröffentlichte Schriften aus den Jahren 1926–1956*, ed. Dorothee Huber (Zurich, 1987), 119. Architectural historians use the term *Neues Bauen* to denote the avant-garde school of modernist architecture between 1918 and 1933 in the German-speaking world. See Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, ed., *Lexikon der Architektur des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern-Ruit, 1998), 263. Neues Bauen architects in Switzerland, however, also applied it to modernist architecture after 1933 (see n. 32 below).
2. Giedion 1987, 119.
3. Giedion 1987, 119.
4. Giedion 1987, 121.
5. Peter Meyer, "Vom Bauhaus Dessau," *Schweizerische Bauzeitung* 45, no. 25 (1927): 334.
6. Peter Meyer, "Die Architektur der Landesausstellungskritische Besprechung," *Das Werk* 26, no. 11 (1939): 322.
7. Peter Meyer, "Situation der Architektur 1940," *Das Werk* 27, no. 9 (1940): 248.
8. Sonja Hildebrand et al., eds., *Haefeli Moser Steiger, die Architekten der Schweizer Moderne* (Zurich, 2007).
9. Michael Koch and Bruno Maurer, "Zauberformeln," in *Architektur im 20. Jahrhundert: Schweiz*, ed. Anna Meseure et al. (Munich, 1998), 35–44.
10. Kai Buchholz et al., eds., *Die Lebensreform: Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900*, vol. 1 (Darmstadt, 2001).
11. Eva Büchi, *Als die Moral Baden ging: Badeleben am schweizerischen Bodensee- und Rheinufer 1850–1950 unter dem Einfluss der Hygiene und der Lebensreform* (Frauenfeld, 2003), 106.
12. Simon Baur, *Ausdruckstanz in der Schweiz: Anregungen, Einflüsse, Auswirkungen in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Wilhelmshaven, 2010); Martin Green, *Mountain of Truth: The Counterculture Begins, Ascona, 1900–1920* (Hannover and London, 1986).
13. Büchi 2003, 65.
14. The design has hitherto been attributed to Hünerwadel's successor, Julius Maurizio (1894–1968); see Dorothee Huber, *Architekturführer Basel: Die Baugeschichte der Stadt und ihrer Umgebung* (Basel, 1993), 285. However, Maurizio first took up his post as Hünerwadel's assistant on November 15, 1929, and the application for a building permit was submitted on January 3, 1929. Furthermore, all the plans for the construction project bear Hünerwadel's signature. I thank Erwin Baumgartner of the city of Basel heritage conservation authority for pointing this out.
15. Hans Hunziker, "Das neue Basler Gartenbad Eglisee," separate offprint of *Technische Hygiene*, nos. 4–5 (1932): 1.
16. Hunziker 1932, 1.
17. Sanitätsdepartement Basel-Stadt, ed., *Das Gartenbad Eglisee* (Basel, 1931), 13.
18. Sanitätsdepartement Basel-Stadt 1931, 39.
19. Johanna Von der Mühl, *Basler Sitten: Herkommen und Brauch im häuslichen Leben einer städtischen Bürgerschaft* (Basel, 1944), 93.
20. These included an exhibition on school buildings, *Der neue Schulbau*, shown in 1932, and one on the Werkbundsiedlung Neubühl housing development (built 1928–1932).
21. Rudolf Steiger, "Das öffentliche Bad," in "Weiterbauen: Zusammengestellt durch die Schweizergruppe der Internationalen Kongresse für Neues Bauen," supplement, *Schweizer Bauzeitung* 2, no. 4 (1935): 27.
22. Alfred Roth, "Freibadeanlagen," *Das Werk* 34, no. 7 (1947): 210.
23. Stadt Zürich, "Bericht des Preisgerichts über den Wettbewerb zur Erlangung von Plänen für eine Freibadeanlage im Allenmoos in Zurich 6/7. Februar 1936," 11, Nachlass Ammann, gta Archiv (NSL-Archiv), Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, Zurich (hereafter abbreviated ETH).
24. Gustav Ammann, "Vom Naturgarten zum natürlichen Garten," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, no. 1674 (September 1, 1929), 1st Sunday edition; Johannes Stoffler, *Gustav Ammann: Landschaften der Moderne in der Schweiz* (Zurich, 2008), 82.
25. Gustav Ammann, "Freibad Allenmoos: Die Grünanlagen," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, no. 1132 (June 22, 1939), evening edition.
26. David Ottewill, *The Edwardian Garden* (New Haven and London, 1989), 5. See also W[illiam] Robinson, *The Wild Garden, or, Our Groves & Shrubberies Made Beautiful by the Naturalization of Hardy Exotic Plants: With a Chapter on the Garden of British Wild Flowers* (London, 1870).
27. Gustav Ammann, "Vom Naturgarten zum natürlichen Garten," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, no. 1674 (September 1, 1929), 1st Sunday edition.
28. Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Kulturarbeiten*, vol. 1 (Munich, 1901), foreword, n.p.; see also Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley, CA, 1990); William H. Rollins, *A Greener Vision of Home: Cultural Politics and Environmental Reform in the German Heimatschutz Movement 1904–1918* (Ann Arbor, 1997).

29. Steiger 1935, 27.
30. Peter Meyer, "Garten, Landschaft, Architektur," *Schweizerische Bauzeitung* 57, no. 18 (1939): 209.
31. Steven A. Mansbach, "Introduction to the Round Table on Avant-Garde and Garden Design," Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, and Garden and Landscape Studies, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC, February 1994, manuscript, quoted in Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, "The Avant-Garde and Garden Architecture in Germany: On a Forgotten Phenomenon of the Weimar Period," *Centropa* 2, no. 2 (2004): 102.
32. Werner Max Moser, lecture manuscript, January 29, 1938, Nachlass Moser, gta Archiv, ETH.
33. Gustav Ammann, "Der zeitgemässe Garten," in "Zeitgemässes Wohnen," supplement to the *Tages-Anzeiger*, Nachlass Ammann, gta Archiv (NSL-Archiv), ETH, Belegbuch 2, 66.
34. Anonymous, "Freibad Allenmoos: Rundgang durch die Anlagen," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, no. 1132 (June 22, 1939), evening edition.
35. Giedion 1987, 119.
36. Jean-François Bergier, ed., *Die Schweiz, der Nationalsozialismus und der Zweite Weltkrieg* (Zurich, 2002).
37. Bergier 2002, 75–78. On the political significance of the landscape, see Stoffler 2008, 126.
38. Johannes Stoffler, "Eine blühende Badelandschaft," in *Freibad Letzigraben: Von Max Frisch und Gustav Ammann*, ed. Ulrich Binder and Pierre Geering (Zurich, 2007), 121–124.
39. Alfred Roth, "Freibad Letzigraben in Zürich," *Das Werk* 37, no. 9 (1950): 274.
40. G. E. Kidder Smith, *Switzerland Builds: Its Native and Modern Architecture* (New York and Stockholm, 1950), 193.
41. Hans Volkart, *Schweizer Architektur: Ein Überblick über das schweizerische Bauschaffen der Gegenwart* (Ravensburg, 1951). The Letzigraben lido is discussed on 214–216.
42. Gustav Ammann, *Blühende Gärten / Landscape Gardens / Jardins en fleurs* (Zurich-Erlenbach, 1955); *Switzerland Planning and Building Exhibition* (Royal Institute of British Architects; Zurich, 1946).
43. Ernst Cramer and Gerda Gollwitzer, "Schweizer Gartengespräch," *Garten und Landschaft* 26, no. 12 (1956): 357.
44. Sigfried Giedion, *A Decade of New Architecture* (Zurich, 1951), 2.
45. Giedion 1951, 155.
46. Roth 1947, 210.
47. Roth 1947, 210.
48. Peter Shephard, *Modern Gardens: Masterworks of International Garden Architecture* (London 1953), 15.
49. Schweizerische Vereinigung für Landesplanung, ed., *Die Grünflächen in den Gemeinden: Richtlinien* (Zurich, 1959).
50. Ammann 1955, 22.

Stoffler, Johannes (2015): Modernism for the People. Swimming Pool
Landscapes in Switzerland. In: O'Malley, Therese und Joachim Wolschke-
Bulmahn (Hg.): Modernism and Landscape Architecture 1890-1940.
Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art. S. 51-70