

20TH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURE



Greece

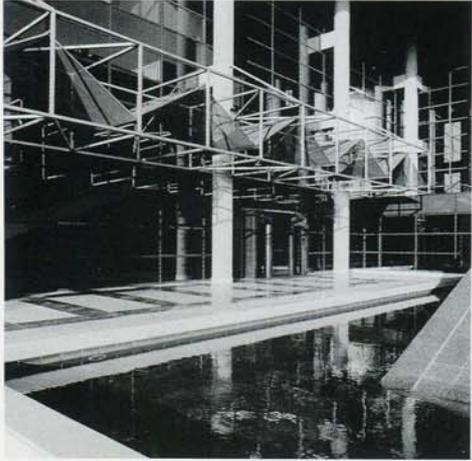
Deutsches Architektur-Museum
Hellenic Institute of Architecture



Glaxo Wellcome Headquarters

Chalandri, Athens, 1992–95

KYRIAKOS KYRIAKIDIS/TAKIS EXARCHOPOULOS/YORGOS APOSTOLAKOS



This building houses the offices of a pharmaceutical company and consists of an underground car park, a ground floor and four upper storeys. Also on the ground level is the free-standing prismatic mass of an 80-seat amphitheatre linked directly, through an enclosed corridor, to the large refreshment room and the main reception area of the building.

The offices are located on two unequal sides of a right-angled triangle, with vertical communications at their apex, while the hypotenuse of the triangle is its façade. Due to the use of a curtain wall of natural blue granite which unifies and dilates the overall mass of the building, this façade conveys a simultaneous impression of solidity and perforation.

Apart from its exceptional level of constructional and technological skill (with glass curtain walls, granite, plain concrete and metal meshes as its principal materials), the building is notable for the harmonious management of its empty and filled areas, which create an impression

of visual permeability and of communication between the various sections and the exterior — with which they interact through an unusual triangular 'atrium'. Another predominant element is an ingenious curtain wall or screen on the elevation — set at a 60 degree angle to the main access route — a semantic device which disrupts the stereometric intransigence of Greek architectural practice. The building is crushed upon the solid granite surface, while at the same time eroding it in its plastic deployment towards the exterior. This gives it a distinctive presence while allowing it to acquire unity in the shaping of mass and converting it into a recognisable image or point of reference because it both communicates with, and is subverted by, the conventional geometrical equilibrium of its surroundings.

A.G.

Lit.:

Design + Art in Greece, 28/1997.

