

Tim Stoop

The Intimacy of Intensive Places

presence of place in the villages of the Lower Engadine

25 | 04 | 2022

Research Paper

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“If we deal with them, we understand them, appreciate them - they become part of our lives. Today however, we often see them as no more than objects that we have at our command. [...] I remember when the relationship between people and nature was instant and direct. But even if we can't return to the old times we need to rediscover something of this interdependency between nature and people.”

Gion A. Caminada
The Vrin Project, 1998, 48min



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I'd want to express my gratitude to Mieke Vink, my research tutor, for her support and kindness in allowing me to pursue my passions, as well as Peter Koorstra and Jan van de Voort for their knowledge and understanding during the design process.

Furthermore, I thank my parents from the bottom of my heart for their everlasting encouragement during my studies. Without their aid it would not have been possible.

A thank you goes out to my friends with who I shared the last 7 years with. They have been an continuous support and drive to strive higher.

Lastly, I would like to thank my hosts in Switzerland who were so generous to offer me a place to stay and invite me in their village.

Preface

The greatest of all arts, music, can evoke deep emotions and memories. It has the power to transfer the listener to a different world. The first few notes of Brahms *allegro amabile* (op.120) instantly brings one in a state of presence, whereas Mahler's fifth symphony's *adagietto* or Wagner's *Lohengrin* prelude slowly invites the audience in a trance of reverie. It's something that touches and engulfs the soul each time it enters the inner ear. Pieces that are an assemblage of rhythms, tensions and proportions form a certain expression. To listen to and be embossed by such expressions of life is something that we do every day. We listen to music, read books, watch movies, go to museums and immerse ourselves with culture from all over the world. All of these things combined make us who and what we are. They serve as incubators for new ideas. When you work in the creative field, everything you do is connected to who you are, therefore making you a part of the past. A thread of cultural life populated by objects, things or human activities that explain us where we came from and how we can move forward. Culture is thinking about the world, looking closely, asking questions, listening and comprehending.

From a personal fascination that grounded itself during a working period in Switzerland in 20'-21' the idea arose to observe the villages in the valley of the Lower Engadine in Switzerland. A specific fascination and deep love for these organic but simultaneously traditional places manifested itself focussing on the perspectives of craft, material and an overall attitude towards life. This research intends to identify which values are embedded in these rural Alpine settlements, understand how they were formed and fathom how the local architectural typology works in order to find out why the presence embedded in these places is so strong.

My personal experiences with these places made me realise that architecture has the power to arouse deep emotions and feelings. It might not be on the same level as music can be, but by investigating and describing the qualities of these place I believe that it can give us an insight into the hidden poetical side of these places. This physical journey accompanied by personal anecdotes, drawings and models allows one to travel into a physical place hidden away deep within the Swiss Alps to introduce new feelings and emotions to our personal world. This work is a translation of a fascination throughout new experiences, personal conversations, insights and knowledge that formed the basis for my graduation design.

Tim Stoop

April 25th 2022

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Introduction

Despite its tiny size and lack of ideal building land, Switzerland is diverse in terms of architectural styles, locales, and customs. In the Alpine region, I had the most intense emotions and feelings. A distinct sensation may be felt in the communities nestled between the mountains. The presence of the mountains allow for a certain slowness of life that is being detained by the surrounding landscape. These communities have, of course, caught up with contemporary technology, but they still have a strong sense of place and history. How goods are produced is still extremely local and bound to its direct context.¹ This beauty of this 'contemporary locality' can be of great value for creatives interested in making places from within; buildings that are grounded in their surroundings which reflect an understanding of the genius loci, craftsmanship and material presence. A quality of building culture we appear to be slowly losing.

The image of mountains has always been strongly associated with the identity of Switzerland. More than 60% of its territory is formed by the traditional Alpine landscape,² but by no means are all Alpine villages over-flooded with tradition, craftsmanship and the sense of materiality. On the contrary. More and more places are losing their unique sense of beauty and are starting to look alike. Many old settlements have been demolished and replaced with new housing units. A trend seen all over Switzerland. Whilst travelling from Basel to Chur over Zurich, the similarity in building types and houses is staggering. The major study of Switzerland carried out by the ETH Studio Basel ten years ago described a large portion of the Swiss Alpine region as 'Fallow lands'. These are zones of decline and gradual recession largely due to emigration.³ The small Alpine villages in the Lower Engadine also fall in this categorisation. On the one hand, they are known for their sense of timelessness, traditions and locally produced products. On the other hand, they are changing: "extensive alpine farming, empty houses and barns, fewer and fewer people able to make a living in the village. [...] Tourism that swallows up and changes the old farming structures. It is now the will of the community to protect their architecturally intact village while also promoting sensible developments to enhance the life and work of the people."⁴

During my stay in Ardez in October 2021, I was invited to a local bar. Inside there was a round table with 5 people sitting and speaking Romansch, the local language. After introducing myself they figured out that I wasn't from the city: "Du bist keine Zürcher oder? [...] gut, weil die mag ich nicht so gerne". I was speaking with Lüzzi Koch, a local retired farmer. He explained how also Ardez is struggling with keeping its identity and traditions. All lot of peasant dwellers want to renovate their houses but lack the money. Therefore they are forced to sell their houses, often to people from the city, often rich people from Zürich who transform the old stables to modern holiday homes. Consequently, the local inhabitants, like Lüzzi himself, build new houses on the edge of the village. These new houses are in accordance with new building

regulations and often lack a relationship with the existing village. This tendency characterises not only Ardez, but many villages in the valley. When I ask Lüzzi what he thinks that the village will look like in 10 years he finds it difficult to answer. “Hopefully it still has some life in it and will look like it does now” he says. Just preserving the life within these villages is not a matter of course. Another example is the village of Tschlin which is heavily reliant on its production of local specialities and partially on tourism. There’s only one hotel owned by a local Tschliner. My host in Tschlin, Conrad Horber, mentioned how the locals are not welcome in this hotel. “The owner doesn’t want us in there. Not for a meal, nor for a drink. It’s not strange that his business is not that successful he says with a laugh”. Where the bar in Ardez felt very local to me, this story of the hotel in Tschlin is a good example on how the village is slowly losing its sense of locality that it so desperately needs to survive.

The danger is that these last traditional Alpine villages will be going down in time. They could meet a similar faith as all the other villages in which traditional building culture has been torn down like in the upper parts of Switzerland. Once removed it will be very difficult to bring something back. As a foreigner I fell in love with this feeling of slowness. A feeling that is lost in so many places in Europe but is still present in the Lower Engadine. However, preserving these villages like museums is also not the solution. If we let that happen, all culture will be deprived of any chances for development.⁵ That is, the villages have always been heavily influenced by change, re-development and conversions. During a lecture at the Fundaziun Nairs on the 21st of October 2021 Gion Caminada explained how there was a pre-aesthetic time in these villages. “In that time, nobody cared what it looked like in the way we architects do today. Then came the aesthetic time. That destroyed a lot. I think we now have to take a leap forward to a post-aesthetic time and dock on to this pre-aesthetic time, which was about the basic phenomena of tradition of ‘Baukultur’”.

This research addresses the described phenomenon of losing identity by looking at the villages of the Lower Engadine. Although they are still being strong places now, they also are under pressure.

1. Caminada, G. A., & Aicher, F. (2018).

2. Eda.admin.ch. (2021).

3. Diener, R., & Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule in Zürich. (2006). p. 930

4. Zumthor, P. (2002). p.48

5. Scheidegger & Spiess. (2014). The Vrin Project, 1998.

Problem statement &

Research questions

The small villages of the Lower Engadine struggle with their identity. Local inhabitants who lived their entire lives in the village in which they grew up are no longer able to live in their houses: the price of renovation has gone up drastically, forcing them to sell their old homes to people from outside the valley for an exorbitant price. These new dwellers unfortunately do not start to live in these villages, but rather use them as holiday homes for only a few weeks during the year. The local inhabitants start to build new houses at the edges of the village since new regulations prohibit to build close to the old village structures, making these new houses appear incoherent, loose objects with no direct relation to the old village. Simultaneously, the ever-growing surge of (winter) tourism demands more holiday housing and large ski-lifts. A tourism that swallows up and changes the old structures of these settlements. Luckily, the lower villages of the Engadine valley are not completely overrun by this phenomenon yet. These communities today have a strong desire to preserve their architecturally intact village while also advocating reasonable development that would improve the quality of life and work for the people who live there.

One could say that the domestic residents who brought the life and the beauty of these places are literally pushed to the side in new, soulless houses, while the village structure is being drained from its life. The adverse prospect is that these villages become preserved museums for mass-tourism without any possibilities for further organic development. It is exactly this romantic amoebic essence that the village always was and what made it strong.

The aim of this project is to research and understand these villages from the perspective of craft and the development of the act of building in close connection with the landscape and its history. The main goal is to identify which values are embedded in these rural Alpine settlements and how they are formed, prior to attempt to add new objects to these existing structures.

How does craftsmanship and the sense of materiality influence the embedded architectural qualities of eight Alpine villages in Lower Engadine to create a strong presence of place?

In what way is the physical history stored in the villages and its natural surroundings?

How are the villages organised? What are the defining archetypes and how do they work?

What materials are being used in the built process, what are their characters and how are they applied?

Methodology

Repetition can sometimes have a negative connotation; words like dullness, non-variety and dreariness can be associated. While for some situations the negative connotation of this word might be deserved, it can also hold a positive denotation. The Austrian writer Peter Handke once said “*Durch die Wiederholung das Gleiche lernt man am meisten*”⁶ which translates roughly to ‘Through the repetition of the alike, one learns the most’. This is a highly architectural thought! Notions of Japanese carpenters perfecting their craft by repeating the same task, for example chiseling and planing the top surface of a piece of wood every day come to mind. Repetition can generate a wealth of spiritual experience and knowledge. “*Doing something repeatedly can become agonizing yet this is essential to learning a trade. Repetition shines brightest and allows to see what’s changing.*”⁷ When aware of this phenomenon, and when one is able to withstand the possible agony of repetition, the differences between objects on a very subtle scale can become visible. The close reading of the place is an act of reading the embedded history of the place and is therefore an act of repetitional observation. By repeating very precise observations for each village one can start to understand their core. The small differences of each village can subsequently be compared to learn what the type is and how it functions. The methodology of repetition is embedded throughout the whole research. During the site visits and in the creating of maps, drawings and models the notion of repeating came forward.

In order to get to the essence of these villages, a two-fold observational research method has been adapted. Firstly, there was the experiential field analysis of the villages. This section can be seen as the largest portion of the overall research and contains the foundations for further design studies. It holds various site related experiments regarding the experience of place, built objects as well as interviews with local craftsmen. These methods will be elaborated upon. Secondly, there was the historical and theoretical background studies that elaborate on the themes which accompany the field-analysis. This contains literature studies and other consulting of online sources. Rather than the general approach of researching a site historically before visiting it, the field analysis was conducted first. To aid in the focussing of the field experiments a hypothesis was made that consisted of four ‘pillars’ which were to be believed to hold the essence of a presence of place based on the first two encounters with two villages. The four pillars were: Materials, Building Techniques, Landscape and Dorfkörper. The assumption was that these pillars together form an overall respect towards the nature, the tradition, the history and the locality of these places. These aspects were put to the test with an open mind, allowed to change given the possibility for unforeseen discoveries and surprises.

6. Lassalle-Haus. (2021).

7. Caminada, G. A., & Aicher, F. (2018). p. 77

For the field research the following set of criteria was defined to create a selection of villages that would be researched. The village:

- is located in the Lower Engadine, Switzerland.
- is positioned in the main valley or parallel to the river Inn.
- has less than a thousand inhabitants.
- has a church or chapel

From this, a list of eight villages surfaced which were visited and researched: Susch, Lavin, Guarda, Ardez, Ftan, Tarasp, Vnà and Tschlin. To introduce the factor of slowness it was important to stay a certain amount of time in each village to absorb its presence. Two nights per village resulting in 18 days of walking, dwelling, documenting and reflecting in the valley: a phenomenological field research. Due to the physical qualities of the places, the research outcomes would speak a similar physical language: a language of photographs, drawings and physical models. With the form of the outcomes in mind the following list of research themes was constructed which will be elaborated upon in the following pages.

Landscape and churches

Large physical models that research the flow in the landscape Additional physical models of archetypical elements with a direct landscape oriented connection.

Type

An extensive set of photographs where typological fragments are portrayed next to one another in order to capture the essence and differences from each individual typology.

Craftsmen

Interviews with local craftsmen and creatives focussing on the relation with the surroundings, the mountain life and the notion of craft itself.

Textures

Textural qualities in applied materials, building methods and colours taken directly from the materials themselves by means of photography and on-site 'texture-mapping'.

Pavement

Analysis of old street patterns by means of redrawing and therefore discovering possible motifs and figures. The drawings show how landscape and life are connected.

Sounds

A study of similarities and minimal differences between sounds produced by the same element under different conditions in different places: stones, water, wind, church bells and life.

Landscape and churches

To understand the prominent presence of the landscape, large physical models have been made that research the flow of the landscape. Additionally they have proven to be a concrete base to perform all other research from. Other physical models of churches that have a direct connection to this landscape are 3D printed and put in this landscape model. The subtle differences between churches and mountains are researched.

Type

What do these villages look like?

When I try to imagine, memories come to mind. On my trip through Ardez three days before New year the snow had taken control over the Alpine settlement. Thick snow. Dense and sticky. Covering every small element and generalising each detail. Only the houses could cope with the surrounding whiteness. The plaster looked even more yellow than it normally does on a bright cloudless day. One could vaguely make up contours of benches; they were having their winter sleep. One starts to wonder how the village can cope under a long time with the snow. Time seems to slow down, life logically following.

The images that make up these characteristics are in multiplicity. Each one of them has its own beauty. Its own story and history. Sometimes left alone and untouched since the start. Other times influenced by man, both peasant and city-dweller. Each element is unique and adds with their uniqueness to the story of the whole. In these photo's, scattered throughout the research, the loose elements, material fragments or frontal stories are captured and reassembled. These, sometimes enigmatic, fragments work associatively, allowing us to create the image of the village for ourselves. The history, the stories and the unknown. What happened here? What happened there? Remarkable observations or accidental discoveries. They stay with us so that we can conjure our own, unique views and imaginations.

The following list of elements have been photographed:
Engadiner Hauses, Reformed church, Water fountains, Entrance doors, Sgraffito decorations, Bay window, Benches, Plaster colours, Snow protection roof beams, Water slots in the street, Dry wood storage, Stucco/wall texture, Cut-off facade corners, Spacing between houses and Basement windows.

Craftsmen

Who are these people and what do they do?

The villages of Lower Engadine are well known for their local traditions and excellent handwork and specialities. A number of interviews are conducted with local craftsmen ranging from carpenters, metalworkers, plasterers, architects and other locals. Within these interviews, the relation to the surroundings and the mountain life has been a prominent topic. Also the craft itself that is performed was further discussed.

Textures

I look at how they are.

Walls, floors, roofs, rain pipes, Sgraffito, wood, steps. I look at them. How their colour changes depending on the light of the day. How the subtle highlights in the material show themselves. How shadows glance over the surfaces. How the contours of stones in the plastered walls are still barely visible. How the wood has four different colours and grains depending on the orientation. How the stones in the floor are rounded off. How the plaster is falling off the walls and showing the holes behind it. How the stones are stacked in the drywalls that solve the different height levels. How the steps at the front door are rounded off. How copper rain pipes are oxidizing.

Different elements from the village were being photographed and 'textured' with the uses of chalk paper and charcoal. This was done for each and every village. The digital image was afterwards enhanced and edited to be in black and white.

Pavement

The sloping landscape enters deep into the village's core. The Engadiner houses buried into the slope, streets curving in between them and following the curves of the earth. The pavement used by dwellers, tourist, cars, horses and in the past carts form an important infrastructure for the village. When traversing on these paths their beauty comes forward. Different types of stones in different patterns are used to form a magnificent play. They indicate a certain hierarchy of use. The craftsmanship with which they are laid is something special when closely observed.

The aim was to analyse these old patterns by means of redrawing and therefore discovering possible motifs and figures. An important element incorporated was how the pavement follows the landscape and therefore isn't just a flat surface. It acts differently. It has a direct connection with its natural surroundings.

Sounds

Natural elements were perceived at a given moment and its sounds were recorded. The similarities and minimal differences between sounds produced by the same elements under different conditions in different places.

Pavement

Sounds recorded while walking. Focussing on the different pavings: grass, gravel, asphalt, stone, sand, dirt. The way in which the sounds resonate between the walls was a special feeling captured in these recordings.

Ambient

Collection of soundscapes of each village during a normal day: the traversing of people, cars and additional actions.

Church bells

Set of eight different church bells ringing at 12:00 accompanied by the reverberation from its and other bells within the valley.

Water fountains

Water coming out of the mountain being guided through a system of pipes into public water fountains. The sounds of water coming out of the pipe and hitting the body of water being collected in the basin below is captured for each water fountain in every village.

Intermediate reflection on methodology

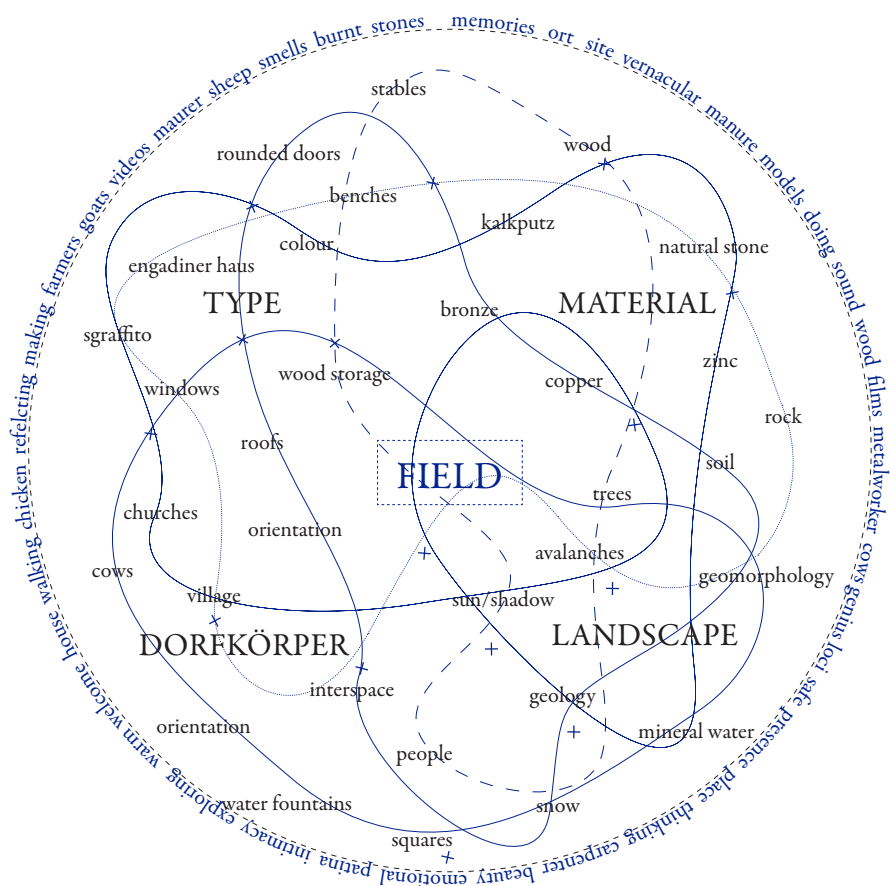
The choice to do the field analysis directly after the pitch and not wait until after the P1 was due to the prospect of possible snow in November in the valley. The precisely defined methods were therefore a necessity to be able to go to Switzerland on Sunday the 10th of October. For this trip a list with villages and corresponding sleeping places was organized to give support and structure for the upcoming 2,5 weeks.

The methodology of an intensive observation where one stays two nights in the same village and afterwards continues to the next by foot worked out well. The first arrival was more or less always the same in which a first impression and thought of the overall 'Dorfkörper' was formed. Afterwards the predetermined experiments were conducted, many of which were successful, but some were adapted on site because they were too artificial and abstract to use in the further research. Documenting thoughts via writing and recording and tracing walking routes together with the positions of water fountains after each day came natural. The repetition of actions became more and more easy as time went by. However, the repetition became also more tedious, physically and mentally painful at times as described previously by the notion of agony by Gion Caminada. In the end it was about finding a balance of things. Getting a structure in conducting the methods that also allowed for divergences at times made the process go smoother and most importantly more pleasant. There will probably always be a discrepancy between thought-out methods and the actual methods when in the field. A liberating thought, since it allows for more freedom and less assumptions or dogma's.

The research diagram to the right shows the thought process for the remainder of the project after returning from the field trip. The research process from idea to an eventual design is a line, but not a linear one. Rather, it's entangled, one that flows through and alongside the four pillars as described before. The lines connect different aspects from each pillar and where they cross each other interesting studies can occur. The line also goes through the centrally positioned 'Field Analysis' and draws from the memories and experiences of that visit.

The time spent between P1 and P2 researching the different aspects from the field research touch the words written next to the four pillars. More or less, every topic has been touched. Some more extensive than others. The amount of research done is vast. To get a complete view of the villages before setting up a design assignment, this was necessary to get a comprehensive grasping of the places.

Right: Research diagram
10/2021. Tim Stoop



Definitions

In 'on the path to building' Gion A. Caminada describes his youth in relation to place and spirit. He describes how, at that time, the life of his native village of Vrin was organised and functioned as a holistic entity in space and time. How the farmers interacted with nature, the landscape, the place, animals and minerals could be seen as one continuity.⁸ Nowadays this direct experience with nature is still present, but less tangible and more abstract in the form of mechanization and globalisation. The increasing heterogeneity of our society described by Valerio Olgiati adds to this image of a world in which "increasingly fewer guidelines and rules exist that are common to most of us. Today, institutions no longer exist that possess the strength to put together or even just hold together our society - as the church or state did in the past."⁹ This non-ideological world in which people, place and things are disenchanting from each other and "where current life can be seen as an epoch of all-encompassing disenchantment, in which the only enchantment is, perhaps, the common disenchantment"⁹, is a striking contradiction when compared to the youthful image delineated by Caminada in his conversation with Florian Aicher. The latter argues that our life in the here and now isn't intense enough and lacks a certain presence. "Either we romanticize the past or we are enthralled by visions of the future."¹⁰ He pleads for an intense present. One in which the past doesn't solidify or is preserved like a museum, where the future isn't just a huge technological promise, and where the present doesn't just coast by. Rather, it can be a world in which the proven, the tradition, is used anew in the present. In the words of Bruno Latour: "the tradition finds itself effectively revived, twisted askew to get it to bring forth the present once more."¹¹ The local, architectural tradition in particular, can become contemporary if used with great care. It's not about turning the local against globalization, rather it's about reinforcing the existing, or as Gustav Mahler says: "Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire." Caminada argues that in places with a strong presence, human bodies resonate with their environment. Through physical and sensory experiences in space, one can become aware of the presence no matter how mute, hidden or mysterious they might appear at first glance.¹² Places whose presence are self-evident.

This sensory experiences of space, place and becoming aware of the presence of a place is continued upon by Juhani Pallasmaa. He states that when we enter a space, the space enters us. This experience is essentially an exchange and fusion of the object and the subject.¹³ Experiences like this are also described, and arguably created, by Peter Zumthor and Caminada. Spaces one would enter and where one begins to feel one could stay for a while, not just passing through.¹⁴ In these thoughts lay deep feelings of great intensity of experiencing a space, place or a

8. Caminada, G. A., & Aicher, F. (2018). p. 60.

9. Olgiati, V., Breitschmid, M. (2018). p. 20.

8. Caminada, G. A., & Aicher, F. (2018). p. 60.

11. Latour, B. (2013). p. 77

12. Caminada, G. A., & Aicher, F. (2018).

13. Böhme, G., et al. (2014).

14. Zumthor, P. (2006).

15. Pallasmaa, J. (2018). p. 35.

16. Zumthor, P. (2010). p. 33.

17. Caminada, G. A., & Aicher, F. (2018). p.70-71

landscape. The experience of such places is often heavily influenced by a similar strong presence of materiality. "The dominant atmospheric feature of a place may well be an acoustical character, a smell, or even especially pleasant or unpleasant weather."¹⁵ In his works Zumthor tries to let the place speak. By introducing a bodily and human sense, that has to do with proximity and distance, he makes a relationship between man and place. "Good architecture should receive the human visitor, should enable him to experience it and live in it, but it should not constantly talk at him."¹⁶ In a way, Caminada describes the same sense of intimacy as Zumthor whilst looking at the village. "Spaces and distances are defined by activities. [...] Transitions between private, semi-public, and public are completely informal. There is a constant transition between density and distance."¹⁷

The notions of these precedents were the starting point for the research project. These views have already been researched before the start of the graduation studio in parts of the bachelor and master. For this research this framework is taken as a basis on which personal findings and fieldwork is being projected. The subsequent parts of this thesis are divided into four parts: 'The Swiss Alps', 'The Engadine valley', 'The presence in the villages' and a final conclusion titled 'The village as a body'.

'The Swiss Alps' gives a brief overview on the geography and history of the Alpine landscape seen through the eyes of the first explorers, romantic painters and technological advancements. It not only describes how the Swiss Alpine got formed and controlled over time but also addresses the current issues of these areas and introduces the vernacular building type for the area of the research.

In 'The Engadine valley' the focus is laid on a specific valley in the South-east of Switzerland: the Engadine. The general layout and the approach for the site visit is further explained. It furthermore provides the first initial findings and notions that surfaced after the site visit. It forms the basis for part three.

This third part 'The presence in the villages' looks into a specific part of the Engadine valley namely the western part of the Lower Engadine. This area holds six distinctive villages which were researched on site by means of photographing and descriptions and afterwards through drawings and physical models.

The conclusion describes how from these findings the village can be seen as a body in which each part has a separate function, but in which all elements work together to create one strong whole. Afterwards, the results are opened up for discussing for a wider audience questioning their value in a larger context and suggestions are made for a follow-up study. Finally, the reflection looks back on the process of research, the most striking aspects and the positioning of the researcher.

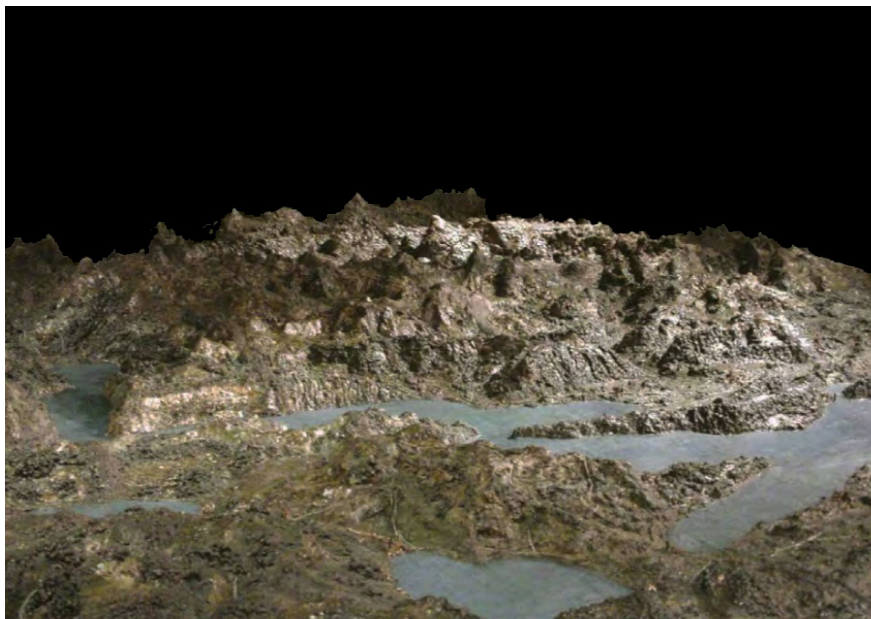
Part I

The Swiss Alps



1.1 Geography and history

The mountains and Switzerland, something one could hardly imagine as separate entities. The Alps make up more than 60% of the territory of the country (41.285 km²), but only 11% of Switzerland's population lives in these regions. Because of their location in the heart of Europe, the Alps have always been populated and have played an important role in the historical and geopolitical development of the country. The oldest traces of civilization date back to the Ice Age, but it is around the Bronze Age that settlements started to blossom. These first forms of human development were home to settlers staying in one place rather than the hunter-gatherers, travelling from spot to spot. Their primary occupation lay in the field of agriculture and cattle breeding in spite of the fact that the availability of agricultural land in the Alps is limited. A variety of products was produced which resulted in a development of commercial exchanges between the valleys initially, but later also with other regions in the country. The north-south trade in Switzerland was rapidly developing resulting in the Alps being in the heart of the first major trade routes of the European continent. From the Middle Ages to the 20th century, they continued to flourish and industry developed simultaneously. At first, mainly raw materials were harvested, transformed and used for new applications. The arrival of this new industry, resulting in an increase of craftspeople resulted in a new commercial dynamic that would scatter throughout Switzerland and the entire Alpine region. The Alps are nowadays still an important factor in the country's economic positioning. The Central Plateau (the flat area between the Jura mountains and the Swiss Alps) is the country's economic center, but still holds a close connection and dependency on

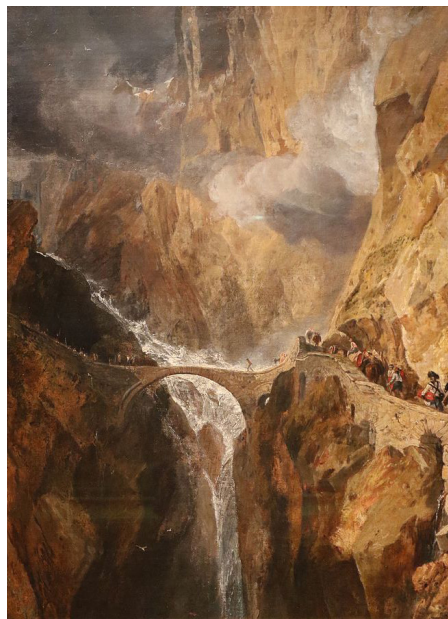


Above: Franz Ludwig Pfyster, 'Relief der Urchweiz', 1762-1786
Left: Joseph Mallord William Turner, 'The Devil's Bridge, St Gotthard Pass', 1803

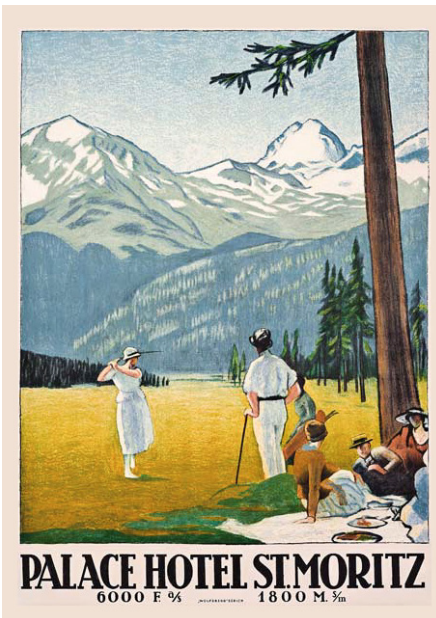
the mountains. Motorways, tunnels and railways connect the two areas with one another.

The image of its sheer, steep rock faces, bare surfaces and the little to no coverage make it that the mountains appear hostile and unsuitable for life, but this is not the case. Many species and animals and plants have adapted themselves to the hard environment of the mountains. For us humans, this hostile image of the Alps changed in the 18th century, when the once dangerous and evil perceived landscape turned into a sublime beauty. Travellers, painters, poets, scientists and people of nobility began to survey the Alps, rediscovering the mountains. The Alps became very popular amongst the aristocracy. In 1781 Jean Benjamin Laborde wrote: "The Swiss do not need to build English gardens, their whole country is composed of only one, the most magnificent that one can imagine".¹⁸

This new view on the mountains also came from authors and painters like Albert de Haller, Salomon Gessner, Joseph Mallord William Turner, or Giovanni Segantini. Due to this redefined image of the mountains following newly stated criteria on the topics of beauty, myths, epics and legends Switzerland was able to forge its identity that would bring the first tourists to the mountains. In the beginning only the wealthiest classes or scientists financed by the nobility were able to afford expeditions of this kind. Moreover, the trips were taken in summer, when paths and mountain passes were relatively accessible, not covered by snow. The industrial revolution of the 19th century introduced the development of tunnels



18. Walter François (1990), p.39.



(like the Gotthard tunnel in 1882), train stations- and tracks connecting Switzerland internally, but also with the rest of the European territory. This impulse of connectivity further attacked the idea that nature stands above man. Man conquering nature gave way to nature being a source of material: stone, minerals, wood and water. Regions that were previously isolated due to their topography were now opened up to the world. At the inauguration of the Gotthard railway tunnel in 1882 Swiss President Simeon Bavier said: “A triumph of art and science, a monument to work and diligence! The barrier which divided nations has fallen, the Swiss Alps have been breached. Countries have moved closer to each other, the world market is open.”¹⁹

Together with the conquest of the Matterhorn in 1865, the highest peak in Switzerland, the Swiss had conquered the mountains. Where the train was initially used for the shipping of goods and products, now it would allow for the transportation of more people who would like to visit the country. With this, Alpine tourism in the form of large resorts for therapeutic institutions that cherish the mountain air, the altitude, sunshine and the mineral rich mountain spring water was born. One of the earliest examples is the Drinking hall -Büvett- in Tarasp. As early as 1533 the Swiss physician and alchemist Paracelsus described how more than 20 springs bubbled from the rocks in Scuol-Tarasp. In 1843 a simple drinking hall was built en-capsuling some of the springs for guests to enjoy the healing qualities of the mineral water. The drinking hall was connected

Above: Emil Cardinaux, Palace Hotel St. Moritz, 1922

with the spa house -Kurhaus- in Tarasp in 1864. Steam pumps lead the water directly into the bathing facilities of the spa house.²⁰ The following years consisted of the construction of many hotels and sanatoriums. With the latter, the idea started of the mountains being beneficial to one's health, starting the development of thermal baths as could be seen in Vals or in Tenigerbad.

Tourism was present in the summer, but not the winter. Johannes Badrutt, owner of a hotel in St. Moritz made a bet with four of his British friends suggesting that when they come back in the winter he could guarantee them they would be able to sit on his terrace in a t-shirt without a problem. Of course, they could; the summers in the Canton Graubünden are very sunny and therefore winter tourism was born in 1850. Since then, many villages take advantage of this demand to develop themselves around the mono-activity of winter tourism. In the beginning it was mainly skating and ice hockey, but later also skiing. The first ski course came in 1902 in Zermatt and quickly increased in size due to its popularity under spectators and participants. As a consequence the first ski lifts and cable cars for passenger transport were constructed. Between the two world wars, the middle classes were also able to spend more time in the mountains. After the second world war tourism grew exponentially due to the introduction of paid vacations and the increase in mobility by means of a personal cars. The number of constructions, hotels and vacation apartments exploded in the winter sports resorts of the Alps.

From 1990 onwards, Alpine tourism stagnated. This phenomenon resulted in the migration of the population from the mountain regions towards the cities with its urban promise. The improvement of transit axes transformed the mountains again into a physical obstacle to reach the city. The most influential factor of this migration is by far tourism and its additional implications. Nowadays, staying in the mountains can be seen as a continuation of the everyday life that we have in the city. It is far away from the Romanticized view created by the British of the 19th century where going to the Alps was to experience the pure nature and its sublimity. This new way of living in the mountain is depending on large infrastructures and extremely diversified facilities. The competition between the remaining hotel resorts is also increasing each year. Tourism has become extremely fast in a way that people can change their mind last minute and go where the offer is better.

19. Simeon Bavler (1882), swisscommunity.org.

20. graubuenden.ch, Drinking Hall «Büvetta Tarasp»

1.2 Current situation

In 2005 Studio Basel consisting of Roger Diener, Jacques Herzog, Marcel Meili, Pierre de Meuron, Christian Schmid, assistants and students from the ETH explored the hypothesis that globalization reinforces differences in patterns of urban behaviour. They took Switzerland as the object of study and through a variety of means derived an idea for a future topography of the Swiss development. For this, they wrote down five typologies which are organized in the plan on the right: the metropolitan region, the networks of cities, the quiet zones, the alpine resorts and the alpine fallow lands. These typologies are large-scale trends and transformation processes which they had observed for a long time. They stress that these are not imposed, but rather offer an opportunity to initiate an order that is new but not alien.²¹

For the Alpine region three of the five typologies are present:

Networks of cities: “Converging small and medium-sized cities that lie outside metropolitan regions”

Alpine resorts: “Urban regions in the mountains that belong neither to networks of cities nor to metropolitan regions and whose only economic function is tourism”

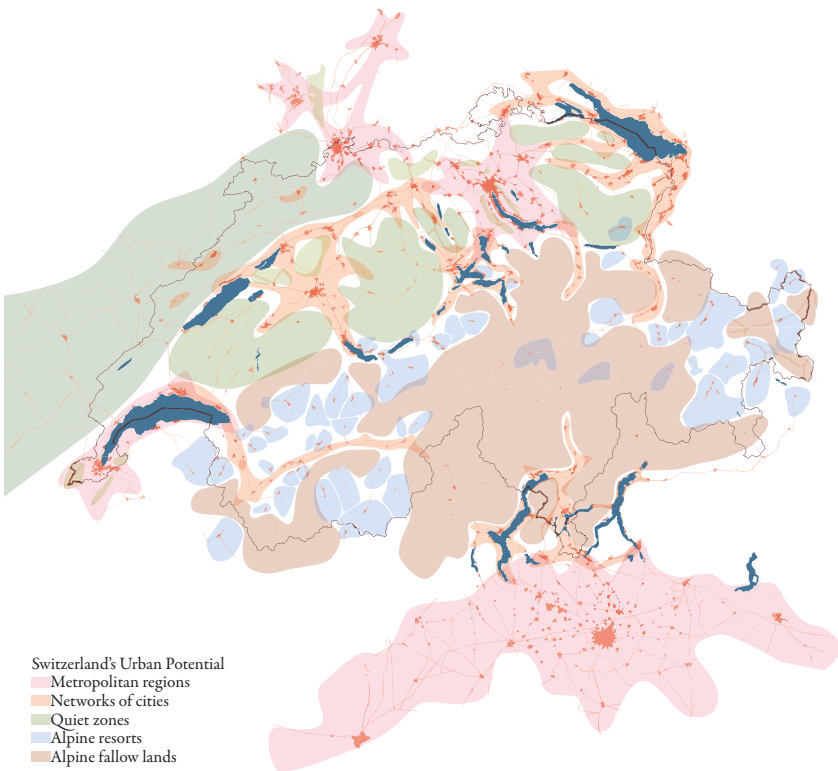
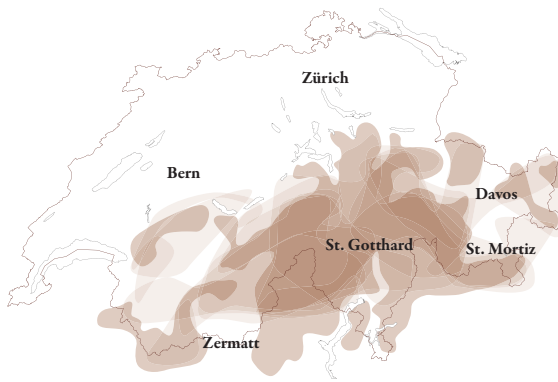
Alpine fallow lands: “Zones of decline and gradual recession”

In this inventarisation, the Alpine fallow lands typology covers the largest part of the Alps. Studio Basel describes two essential characteristics for these parts. First, they are not attractive for tourists and second they lie far from the larger urban centers. The Alpine fallow lands have hardly no space for winter tourism and are more focused around traditional tourism that is more easy on the landscape and the environment. The transition between alpine fallow lands and resorts is thus fluid. Alpine resorts risk becoming fallow lands if they are unable to relight their tourist base and evolve. This results in economic disadvantages for these areas. Although, centers and urban networks penetrated the mountains, their promised advantages do not shine through in the fallow lands. The Alpine fallow lands are the only areas that have not been drawn into the vortices of the urbanization process. Agriculture and local trade become the sole economic activity of these areas resulting in the decline of local infrastructure and the lack of jobs.²²

The provocative statements of Studio Basel came as no surprise to the population of the Alpine regions and resulted in resistance and annoyance of the dwellers: ‘urban arrogance’. The negative after-taste came not just from these statements, but also from the lack of the question: How could the decline be dealt with? The inhabitants of the alpine wasteland felt themselves let down.²⁰

21. Diener, R., & Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule in Zürich. (2006).

22. Frey, R. L. (2010).



Source: Diener, R., & Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule in Zürich. (2006).
 Above: Alpine fallow lands, p. 217.
 Below: Switzerland's Urban Potential, p. 219

1.2 Vernacular building type

With Switzerland's central position within the European mainland it is not strange that cultures collided. Similar to the co-existence of the four national languages within one country, German, French, Italian, and Romansh, there's a merging of South-European '*Steinbau*' and Northern European '*Holzbau*'. These two characteristic building types come together in the Alps to form a new housing type called the '*Gotthardhaus*'²³ that reaches all the way from the French speaking west side until the Romansh speaking eastern side of the country. The map on the right shows how within the country three different buildings types are present: stone, wood and half-timbered ('*Fachwerk*').

The vernacular type '*Engadiner Haus*' is only present in the valley of the Engadin (both the lower as well as the upper part). They are positioned in the south-eastern part of the country and lay against the border with Italy and Austria. The original houses in the Engadin where therefore a similar combination of wood and stone. Stone was used for the biggest part of the house whereas stacked wooden beams or logs, '*Blockbau*', were used to create the stable and the main living room. After the invansion of Alois Baldiron in 1622 the hidden villages of the Engadin where burned down and mostly destroyed. They had to be rebuild for which the typology of the '*Gotthardhaus*' was slowly transformed into a new type. Rather than the former stone/wood combination the wooden parts were encapsuled with a mantle of stone. After the 17th century the houses appeared to be pure stone houses. The stone walls were coverd in a layer of plaster which was scratched, pigmented and decorated. This technique known as Sgraffito was introduced by Italian immigrants, working in the valley.²⁴ The massive facade with its irregularly outwardly widening arranged windows following the needs of the peculiar interior layout break through the thick stone mantle wall. They result in a new building typology with a special kind of charm to it. A new type that is neither uniform nor ancient and yet has a characterful effect.

23. Weiss, R., & Egli, H. (1959). p. 35.

24. Weiss, R., & Egli, H. (1959). p. 50.



Above: Distribution map: building materials in Europe, p. 37.

Below: Overview map: Local house forms, inside cover.

Source: Weiss, R., & Egli, H. (1959).

Part II

The Engadine





2.1 Layout of the valley

From within Switzerland, the valley of the Lower Engadine can be reached either by train via the Vereinatunnel or by car using the roads 28 or 27. Zernez is the first village of the valley, but lies slightly ‘outside’ of the main valley arm. This researches puts the focus on the main area that spans from the village of Susch in the west until Tschlin in the north-east. In a straight line the distance measured is almost 30km on which the 11 large villages are positioned on an roughly equal distance apart from one another. The average width from peak to peak, north to south is 7km. In comparision with other Alpine valleys in Switzerland, the concentration of inhabitation is foccused around the villages, with little to no settlements further away from the main road or the river. An exception however is the settlment of Martina in the far eastern point of the valley. Roads lead from village to village with an occasional sidetrack leading up the mountains to scattered stables, lodges or small hamlets like ‘Zuort’. The area of Samnaun towards the north-east of the valley is also passable via the main valley. The villages of the municipality of Samnaun are even more remote and hard to reach due to their isolated positioning within the Alps.

Scale
1:150.000

Legend ——— z

-  Relief
-  Buildings
-  Roads
-  Train

Source: map.geo.admin.ch,
swissALTI3D



Acla da Fans

Samnaun Compatsch

Plan

Ravaisch

Samnaun dorf

Tschlin

Reschen

Graun

Ramosch

Vna

Griosch

Zuort

Sent

Scuol

Fran

Larasp

S-charl

Urschai

Urezzas

Ardez

Guarda

Lavin

Susch

Clüs

Zerne

Ova Spin

Il Fuorn

Vereina

Röven

Bandez

2.2 First encounters

In 2020 and 2021 I have been working in two different architectural offices in Chur, Switzerland. In my free time I liked to go out on hikes and trips. Experiencing nature, cities and villages. The Canton of Graubünden is locally known as Switzerland's holiday resort where many people from all over the country retreat to during the weekends and during holidays. As a foreigner I was no exception in that sense. During my weekly trips I was constantly struck by the beauty and contrast of the landscapes around me. The mountains, the shadows cast by giant rocks, the bright light and clouds flying in between the mountain ridges were a spectacle I could never get tired of looking at. How such an immense beauty was just always around you like it was nothing. The way in which people have been interacting with this direct landscape was an additional layer of fairness that gained my respect. Ever since travellers, merchants and eventually settlers came across this area they have been dealing with the hardness of the landscape; cultivating it in some ways, but always showing respect for this nature that can be devastating at times.

Together with my two housemates in Chur we went on several trips together. One of them, Anna-Barbara, mentioned that they she had a family house in Bever, a small village in the valley of Engadine. Because she noticed how I enjoyed discovering the Alps with its slow villages she mentioned that I should definitely once go to this valley of Engadine. In winter a thick pack of snow covers the soil, but in spring the grasslands are scattered with fields of wild flowers. This short description was the only image I had of the valley. Normally I would look up more picture, but strangely enough I didn't do that this time. I decided to go on two different occasions. The first time was in the middle of winter and the second time was in the late summer of 2021. There was this amazing light. The mountains of course close by. Walking over the stone pavement, small pebbles, gravel patches and so on. Big farmhouses left and right with white walls, colourful walls, decorated richly. Buildings in direct conversation with the landscape and with each other.

These experiences are described by two short stories on the next pages which I wrote after I returned back in Chur. Looking back at these moments where I was struck by the intensity of the places they played an important role in my personal development. I felt at home in these settlements in between the mountains. The smell of cow's manure was a comfortable smell reminding me of the place I grew up in. Maybe one could say I found a place where I felt at ease. Through the atmosphere of this place I became fascinated by the desire and ability of the peasant dwellers to lend their village form and identity through the use of material, craft, building and use of the surroundings. The presence of these places within this valley deeply hidden away in the Alps became the focus point for my graduation.

Right: Stable door of Chasa Sarte, Bröl 61, Ardez.
28/12/2020. Tim Stoop



Afternoon in Ardez

Monday the 28th of December 2020

That day I set out to visit two villages in the Lower Engadine - Susch and Ardez-. The one hour trip brings you from the more open part of higher Engadine to the enclosed region of Lower Engadine. The mountains are pulling you in with their compressing stature. The light makes the air visible, the skies are already southern but the air is fresh. After exiting the train, the walk is up. The new smooth asphalt road changes abruptly into a gravel path. The sound of the small pebbles underneath my feet are comforting me. It's a romantic sound, a sound I love. Buildings arise on each side of the street. Big farmhouses with adjoining barn-stables under the same roof. Engadine houses impressively built into the slopes, facing small squares and lanes, their façades decorated with Sgraffito and paintings of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thick plastered stone walls accompanied by wooden walls indicating the stables. The gravel path diverges into a stone path. Made from different stones. Different sizes, different colours and patterns. I am sitting down on a bench with my back against the church wall. A smooth, white surface, warmed up by the sun. The bench equally smooth, made of a grey granite. My feet on the cobblestone pavement. The wall on the opposite side lies in the shadow. The Sgraffito decorations show their intrinsic beauty. The landscape slopes up towards the front door. A colourful wooden door with equally colourful window shutters. Some closed, some open. The bright sun is shining on my face. Its warmth is pleasant. One hears wonderful sounds close by: footsteps, kids playing in the area, neighbours murmuring with each other in the background. Again the church bells!

At that particular moment of the day, at that particular square in that particular village in the valley I was struck by the intensity of the place. At the square I felt big, but with the mountains. Those mountains! They make you feel tiny. You start to notice how magnificent everything is out here. You experience the place. Simply sublime! It was a truly experiential space. You feel everything around you. Not for just a brief moment, but for a while – a feeling of timeless intensity. Through the atmosphere of this place I became impressed by the desire and ability of the peasant dwellers of old to embellish their homes, to allow public spaces to emerge, to lend their village form and identity through material, craft and time. Walking up, to the village edge and beyond, the landscape comes into the picture. The village appears as a compact structure; one body in space. New joins the existing, creates form in the language of building: harmony, beauty, tension, dissonance, kinship, near, far, distance and realness.



Cha d'Mez, Bever. Chasa Wickli on the right side.
15/08/2020. Tim Stoop

Morning in Bever

Sunday the 15th of August 2021

At around eight o'clock I get up. A-B. is already in the kitchen; preparing breakfast. The old house in Bever in the middle of Engadine is not that large, just right. The only window in the kitchen is open. A light breeze of morning wind enters the room. The sun was already up, long before I even was awake. It shines inside. The churches are calling its actors, the bells ring loudly throughout the whole valley and into the kitchen. It is a magnificent spectacle. I put my hands around the steel bar at the bottom of the window and hang my body partially outside. There, it dawns: today the sky is clear and a magnificent mountain landscape stands before me. Left and right, cliffs lead to peaks. They seem so close, graspable and yet unreal, as if all were only an illusion; a stageplay's background. Between the mountains lie fields of countless larches. Their tips sway in the wind; it is a dense, dark green carpet. "That changes in autumn. Then all of them are yellow, more of a blanket" says A-B. For now the dark green, the greys and whites are all covered in a nice blueish light. A colour that I have seen before on different mountains. It was my second time in Engadine. Previously when everything was covered in a thick pack of snow. Now, it was different. Spring grass and plants were blossoming out of the ground. The red train going alongside it. Flocks of birds in the slightly warm air. This landscape is a presence that may always be here and acts as a stage. Welcoming its inhabitants and visitors again and again.

2.3 Traversing through the valley

Placing

The villages are mostly placed on the northern side of the river Inn, therefore laying on the southern side of the mountain receiving the most sunlight during the day until the sun goes down again behind the mountain. There are however a few smaller settlements which lay to the south side of the river which consequently receive less sunlight and therefore are colder during the start of the day since all surfaces are still covered in a thin layer of frost from the night before.

Connectivity

Motorway 27 connects the Lower Engadine with the rest of Switzerland and Austria. Villages are accessible by car either via this motorway or side roads that lead up the mountains. The valley is connected to the railway network of the Rhätische Bahn leading to St. Moritz and Chur. The railway track ends at Scuol. From there a bus system is able to bring people further along the valley.

For the visiting of the valley in October 2021 the distance between villages was covered on foot. Most of these walks took up to 2,5 hours depending on the steepness of the mountain. From Scuol a bus was taken to Vnà after which a final hike was undertaken to Tschlin. In total, an amount of 38 km has been travelled on foot and 13 by bus. The total linear distance between Susch and Tschlin is roughly 30 km.

Scale
1:45000



Legend



Relief



Village outline



Mountain top



Buildings



Border Switzerland - Austria



Train



Foot



Car

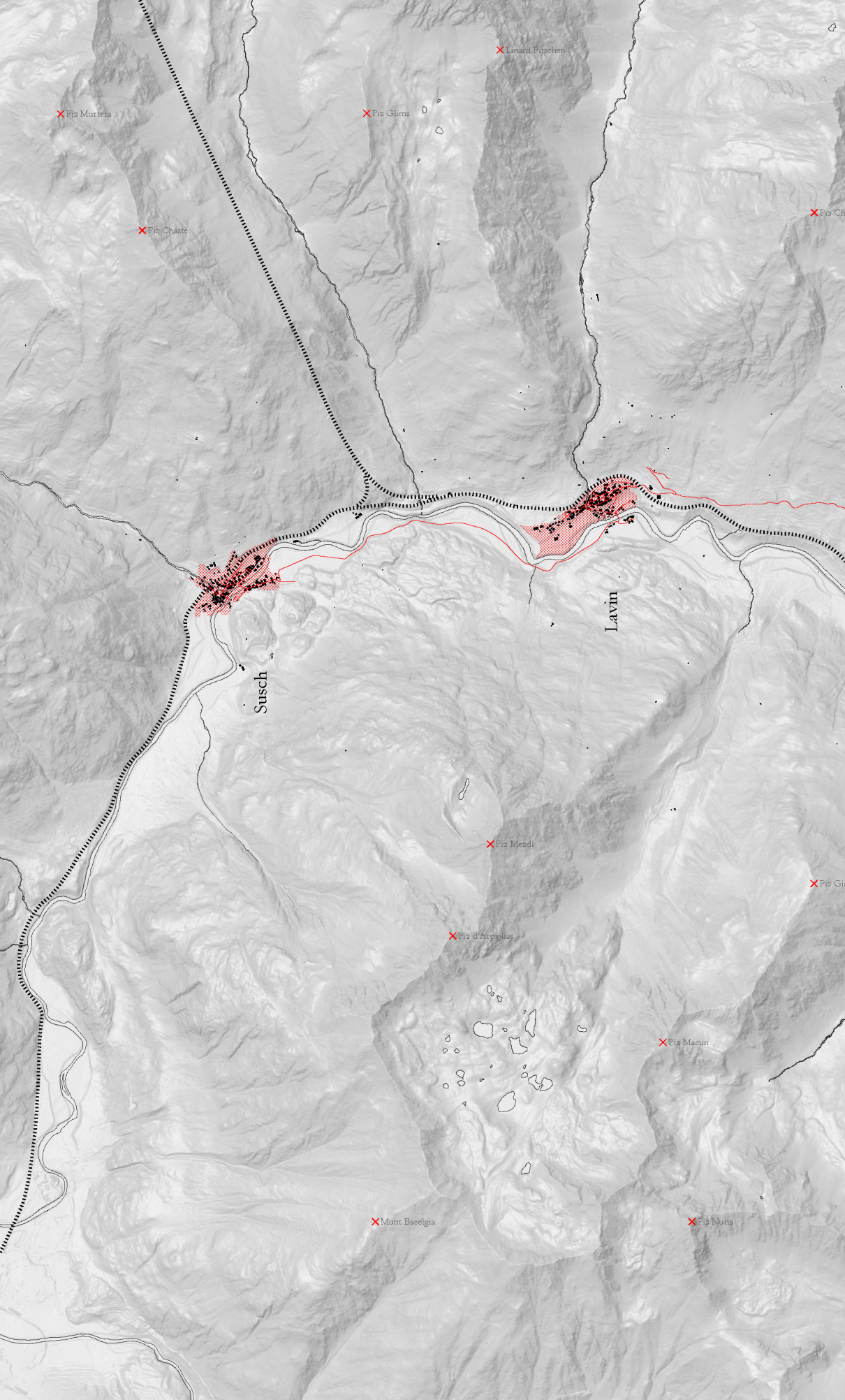


Bus



Water

Sources:
map.geo.admin.ch,
swissALTI3D
Google Earth



X Piz Murtera

X Piz Chaste

X Piz Glims

X Linard Pischon

X Piz Ch

Susch

Lavin

X Piz Meadi

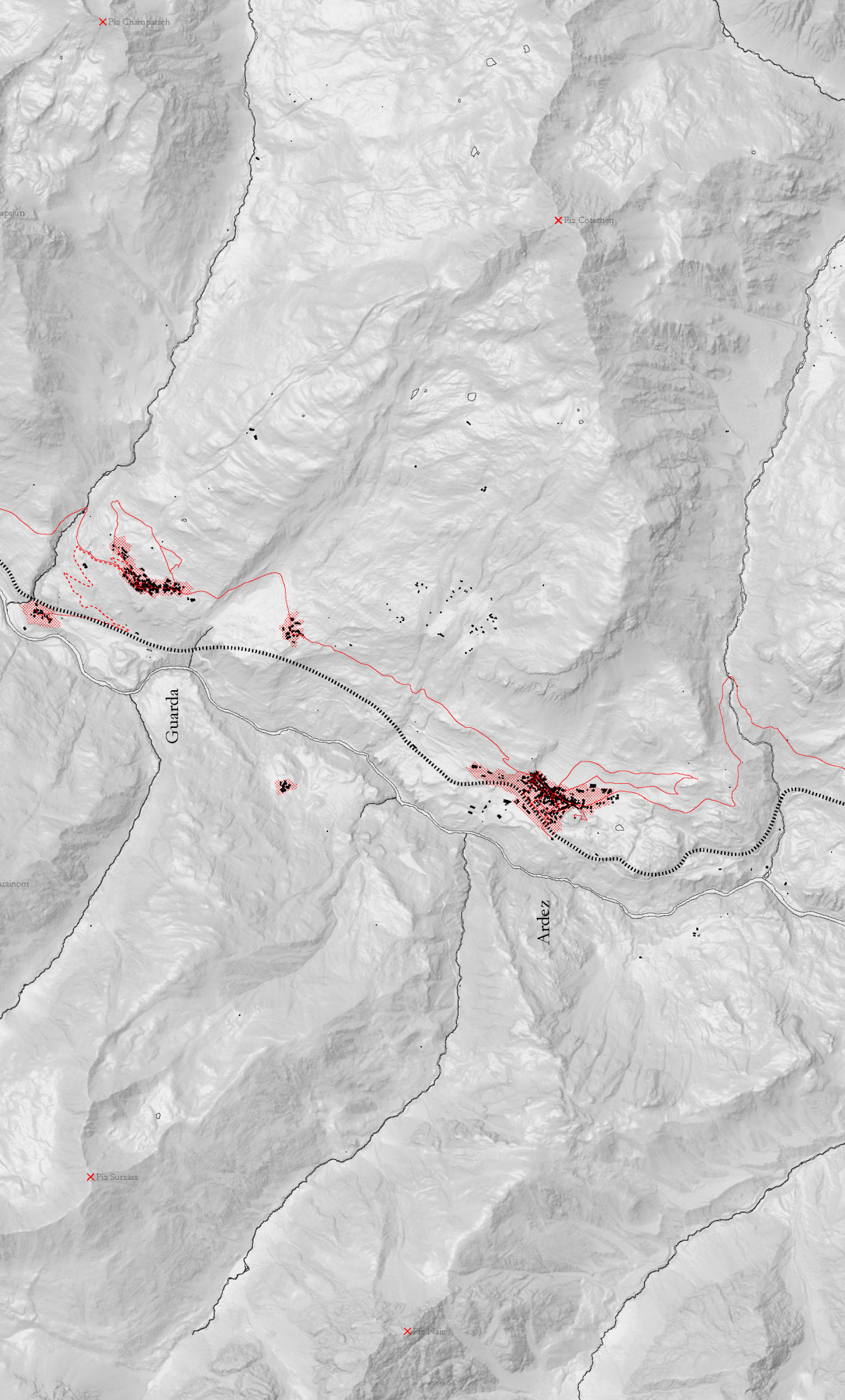
X Piz d'Arpelles

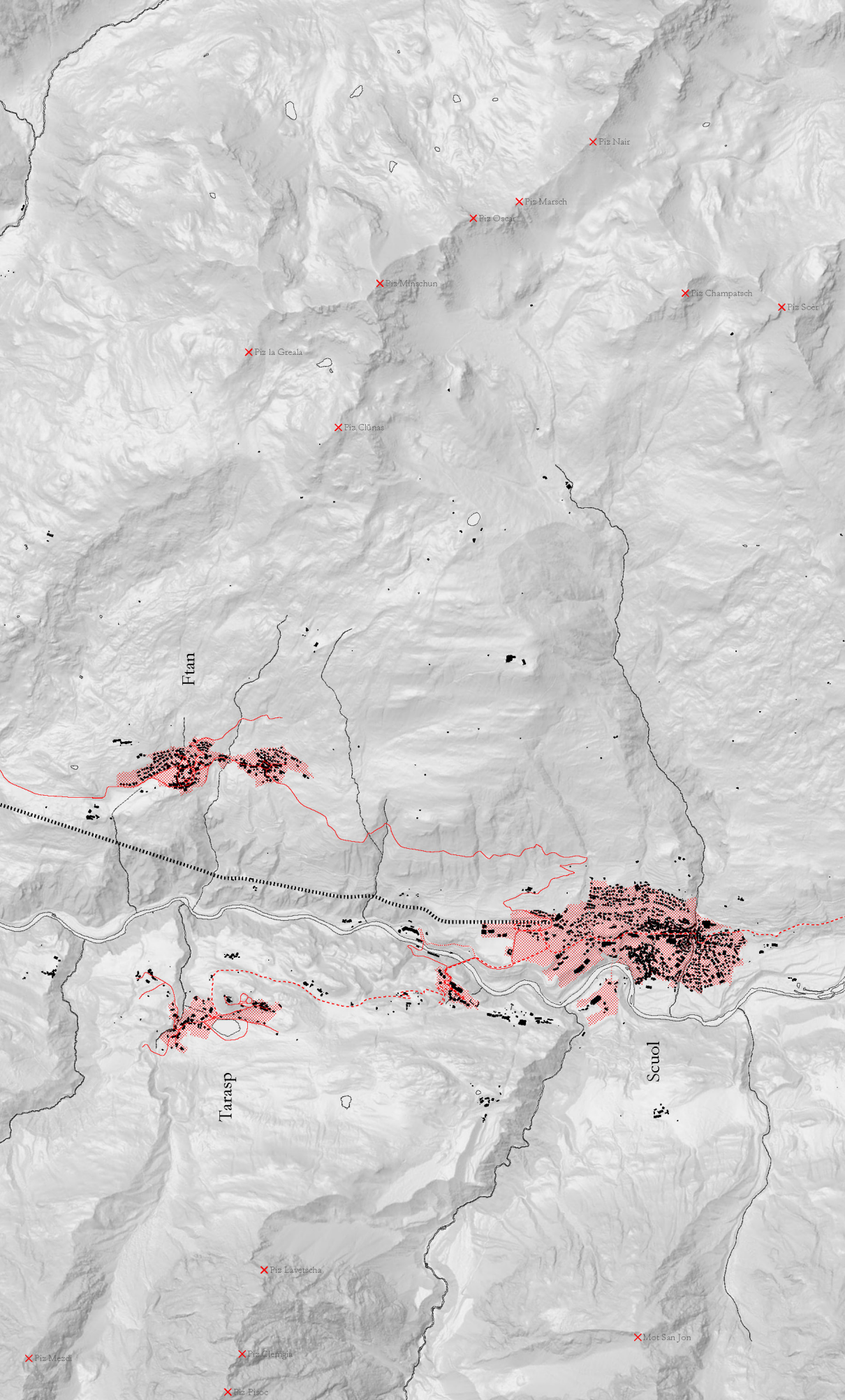
X Piz Gi

X Piz Macun

X Munt Baselgia

X Piz Nona





Ftan

Tarasp

Scuol

Piz Nair

Piz Marsch

Piz Oesch

Piz Minschun

Piz Champatsch

Piz Soer

Piz la Greala

Piz Clünas

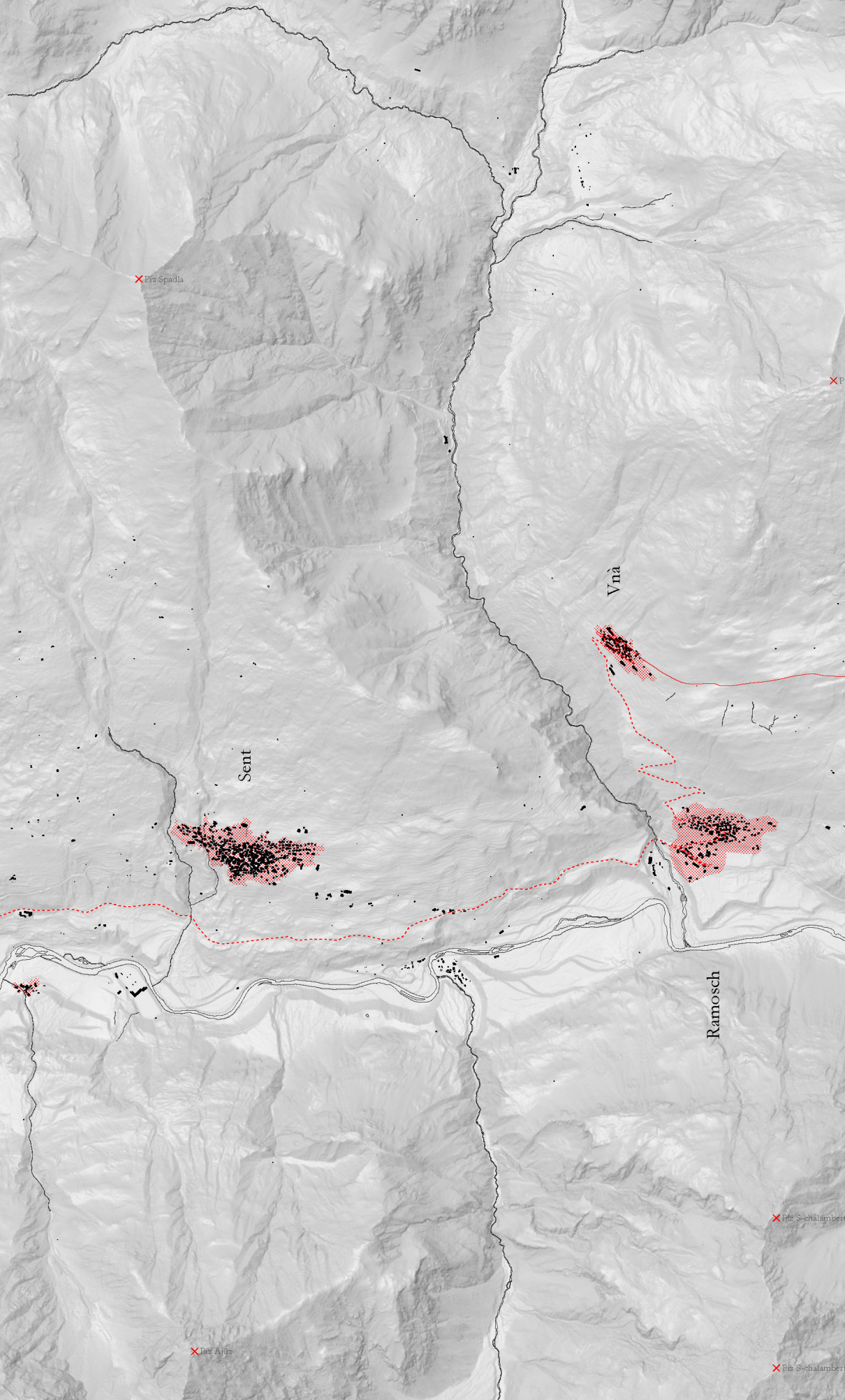
Piz Lavetscha

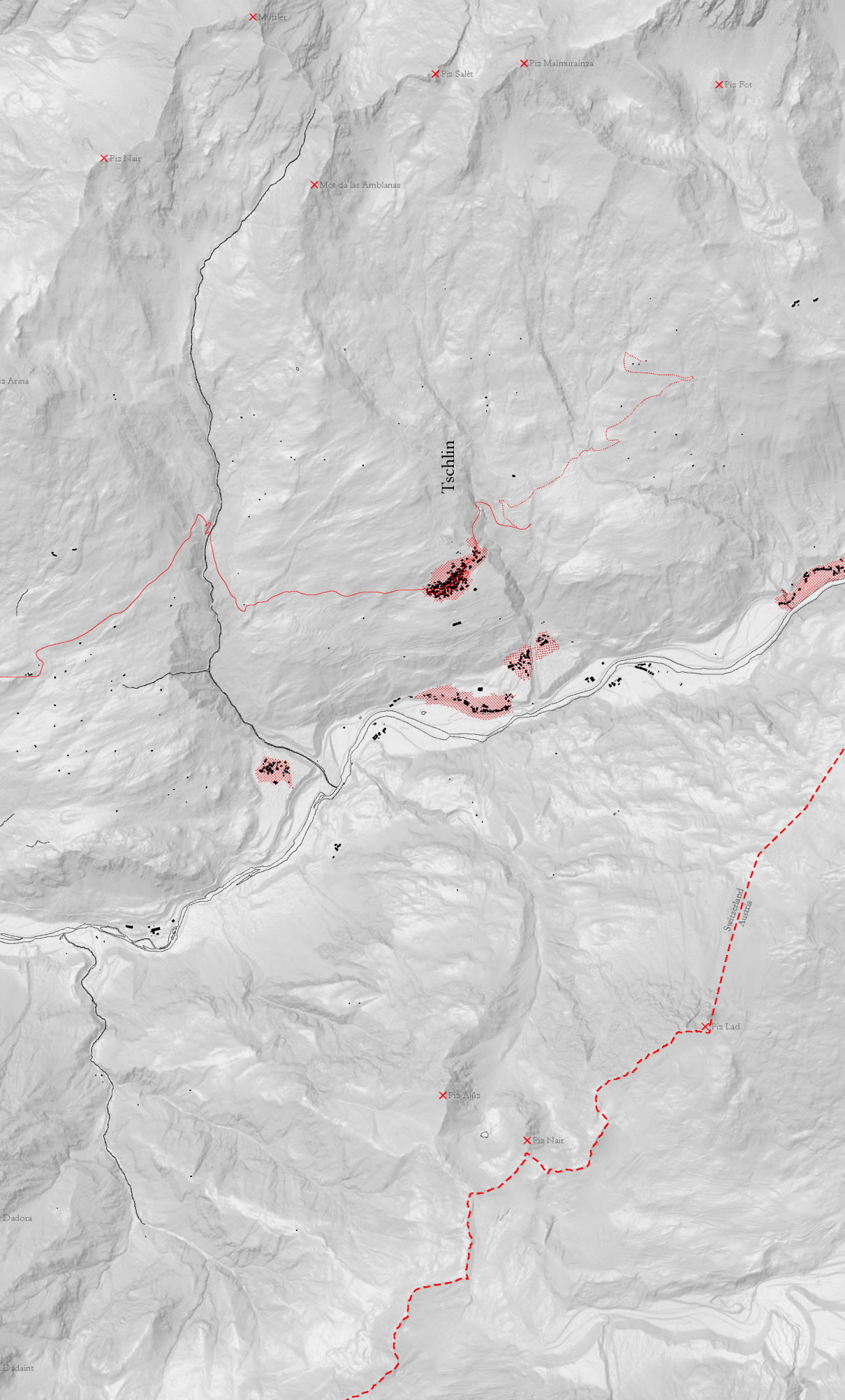
Mot San Jon

Piz Meza

Piz Glengil

Piz Plöc





✕ Muthet

✕ Piz Salèt

✕ Piz Malmurainza

✕ Piz Fot

✕ Piz Nair

✕ Mot da las Amblanas

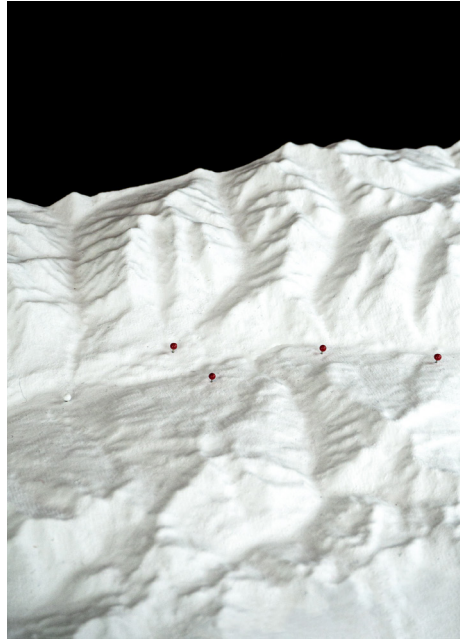
Tschlin

Switzerland
Austria

✕ Piz Ajüz

✕ Piz Nair

✕ Piz Lad



Visiting the villages

The map on the previous pages has shown the route of the visiting of the valley of the Lower Engadine from the 11th until the 25th of October 2021. This intense journey was full of new findings, interesting observations and new ways of thought. The idea behind the trip was to go to this valley vulnerable and directly after the pitch and before the P1 presentation which was on the 4th of November 2021. The canvas was not completely blank since some images were still stuck inside the head from the two visits the year before. Nevertheless, there was enough room for things to change or discrepancies to emerge.

The predefined notion of repetition, introducing a rhythm for each village made it possible to create a foothold. As described earlier, this repetition comes at a cost. A cost of having to deal with the agony of doing something over and over again. Quite quickly some elements of the methods devised beforehand became disturbing and a bit tortuous. This was because they didn't appear to work quite as well as expected in the field. Other elements were not as prominent in the villages as one thought they would. Therefore they were rewritten or cancelled all together.

The following pages hold the criteria for the villages and a comparison of scales which is followed by the four constant notions which were present during the field trip: dwelling, walking, talking and looking back. These notions turned out to be the framework for the visit and formed an important role in the experiencing of these places. Additionally, overview maps of each village are presented together with the positioning and naming of the water fountains. For one of these water fountains the sequence of actions that took place during the field trip is displayed.



The valley is home to many settlements, villages and larger towns. Where the Lower Engadine is a separation from the Engadine as a whole, inside of it a second division can be made. The large town of Scuol has a population of 2443 people living in the town. For comparison: the whole municipality of Scuol (which includes the villages of Ardez, Ftan, Guarda, Scuol, Sent, Tarasp) has a population of 4638 people. More than half of the people from the municipality are living in Scuol. With its larger demographic it's positioned roughly in the middle of the valley, splitting it in two. The railway is also stopping at Scuol making the eastern side of the valley only accessible by bus and car.

In the formulating of the research plan this division was already noted. For the field research it had to be clear which villages the focus should be put on. Therefore, the following criteria were defined. The village:

- is located in the Lower Engadine, Switzerland.
- is positioned in the main valley or parallel to the river Inn.
- has less than a thousand inhabitants.
- has a church or chapel

This resulted in the following selection of village from three different municipalities of Zernez, Scuol and Valsot.

Zernez	Scuol	Valsot
Susch	Guarda	Vnà
Lavin	Ardez	Tschlin
	Ftan	
	Tarasp	

As can be seen on the graphic on the right the villages vary in size and amount of residents. The size of the village influenced the speed of documenting and with it the mental well-being during the trip. To document Ardez with the same level as detail as Guarda costs a lot more energy and time due to it being twice as large. The three small settlements of Bos-cha, Giarasun and Vulpera are equally fascinating objects in the landscape squeezed in between the bigger villages. They appear to be standing by themselves: proud of still being able to exist. These settlements were not looked into further and were only points of interest laying on the route. An important observation is the type of structural organisation. All villages except for Tarasp are compact amoebic groups of house, whereas Tarasp is more of an arrangement of scattered houses. One should almost see Tarasp as three separate settlements since each of these parts is in size comparable with the settlements of Bos-cha, Giarasun or Vulpera.

Sources:
geogr.mapplus.ch, luftbildscuol.net, Scuol im Überblickengadin.com, Ortbrochuere valsot.ch, Geschichte



Susch - 214



Lavin - 214



Guarda - 195



Ardez - 399



Ftan - 495



Tarasp - 216



Vnà - 70



Tschlin - 448



Bos-cha



Garsun



Vulpera

Dwelling

The first understanding of these visits is the one of dwelling. Two nights in each village meant finding a place to stay for that period of time. While in the beginning it appeared to be difficult to find a suitable place to stay, via email and phone the local inhabitants appeared to be willing to help even if they didn't have a place available themselves. The quality of a small village in which everybody knows one another meant that a sleeping spot was never that far away.

For these short periods of time, the place of staying becomes a 'home'. A home to depart from, retreat back to and to relax in. Unselfconsciously calling someone else's place ones own happened multiple times during the trip, two of these occasions were even written down in the diary [Appendix 1] -day two: Starting the narrative and day seven: Quiet beauty-. Looking back at these places of stay and the people who offered their space to a traveller all had in common that they were open, trustworthy and uncomplicated. The ease with which they let the doors be unlocked during the whole day -even in the night- was a quality of living I never experienced before. It shows a sign of mutual respect between the host and guest but also between the village dwellers themselves.



Claudio von Planta, Susch



Urs Padrun Architekten, Lavin



Martin Breiter, Ardez



Giovanin Josty, Fran



Conrad Horber, Tschlin



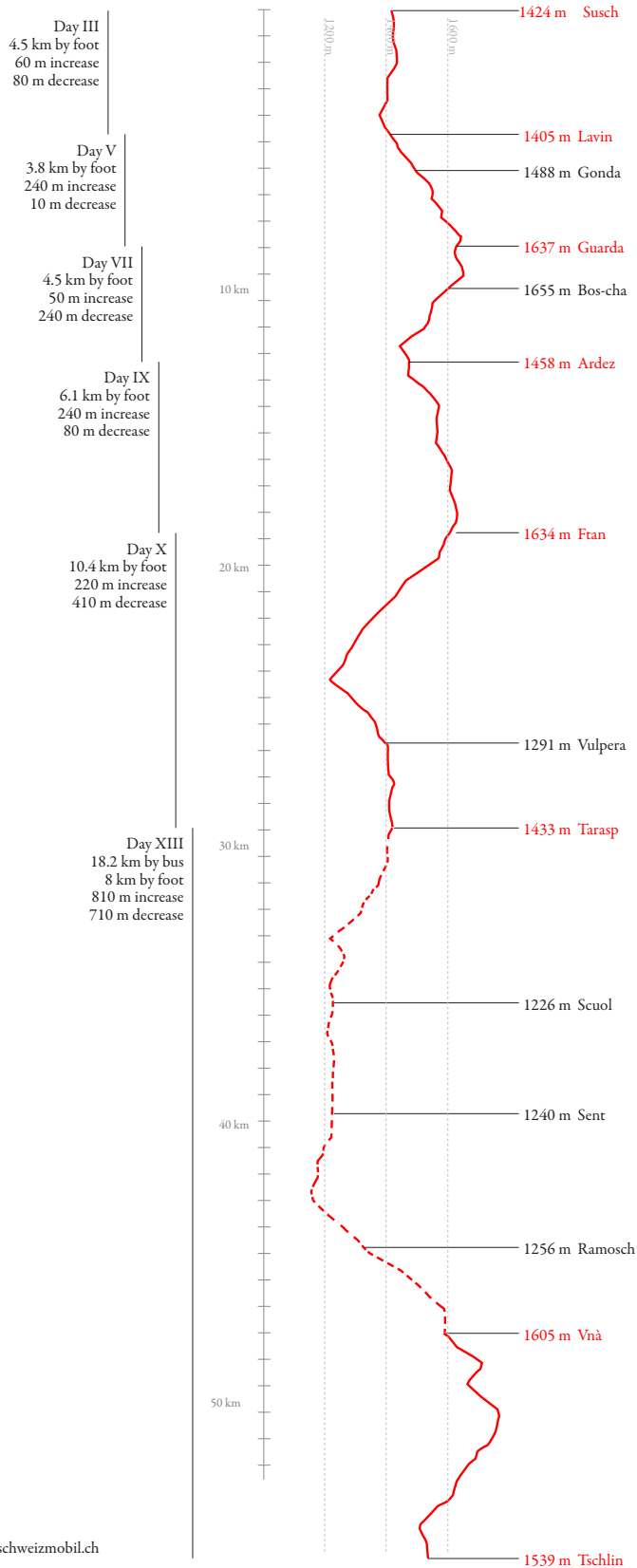
Riet Fanzun, Tarasp



Looking back from Bügl Sot on Parvih, Tschlin at the end of the day.
23/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Walking

Secondary is the notion of walking which can be subdivided into three parts. First of all: walking from village to village. This act of physicality made it possible to not only experience the landscape in a direct way, but also gave the opportunity to clear one's head, reflect and prepare for what lay ahead. A specifically memorable experience is the appearance from villages behind the mountain when walking over the next hill up ahead or the group of trees around the corner. It gives a sense of accomplishment by which one wants to move further and beyond. In the second place is the traversing from the highest to the lowest point in the village and vice versa. In Guarda and Tschlin this act of walking up the street that follows the mountain with houses on both sides is an incredibly strong feeling when once first enters the villages. Similarly, walking down at the start of a working day and eventually back up again at the end of the day influences the experience of the street. It makes the pedestrian feel like an actor in a play. The way in which the sun, shadows and wind influence this experience of walking is a additional layer of pleasantness. Finally, there are the points of recognition which work on both of these two scales. In the landscape one could think of a bell tower, mountain ridge or a bend in the river whereas in the village itself examples could be a water fountain, a colourful plastered building or an old tree. By having these points of recognition and being aware of their position in the landscape and the village it is possible to walk there effortlessly.



Source: schweizmobil.ch



Thomas Lampert lighting the fire in his workshop in Garsun.
16/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Conversing

Third, the meeting and dialoguing with local people. The valley is known for its locally produced goods, delicacies and the high quality of craftsmanship of architecture and furniture. Having had the opportunity to talk some of the local inhabitants, craftsmen and architects who operate in this region gave some insights in what the challenges, potentials and future prospects are for the Lower Engadine. The conversations with the plasterer, blacksmith, architect and carpenter discussed how they think how their craft will develop in the future. The notions of tradition, locality and landscape were returning points of interest.

Before the trip to the valley I was only half aware of the problem that is facing these villages. After the conversations [Appendix 2] this was now very much clear. Local inhabitants who lived their entire lives in the village they grew up in are no longer able to live in these houses. The price of renovation has gone up drastically, making it impossible for them to keep their old Engadiner houses. Rather they have to sell these houses to people from outside the valley: people from the city with enough finances to renovate these houses. Unfortunately, most of them do not start to live in these villages, but use them as holiday homes for only a few weeks in the year. The local inhabitants now with enough finances start to build new houses at the edges of the villages. However, regulations prohibit to build close to the old village structures making these new houses appear incoherent, loose objects with no direct relation to the old village. In conclusion one could say that the domestic residents are literally pushed to the side in modern, soulless boxes, while the village structure and centre they love is being drained from its life and now starts to act as a museum that is being preserved rather than being a developing organism.

Thomas Lampert, Blacksmith

“You have to keep up with the time. You have to live with it and use it. Without it I think the craft as a whole has no possibility of survival. There I might be a bit extreme. But here in the periphery we do not have the extreme or enormous assignments like one could have in a city environment. For this reason I’m more open for these new techniques also to produce something a bit more cheaper. And this road is the road of digitalisation, using laser and optimisation. **When it’s like this and there is still much craft involved, then I’m a complete advocate of all these new techniques.”**

Andri Riatsch, Carpenter

“I know all the inhabitants from the village. From every second home I have the key in the safe, that is something special. When you work in the city it’s different. When you make a mistake there, it’s a shame and you move on to the next, nobody knows about the mistake, but here you are not allowed to make a mistake. There is talk and a lot of gossip.

When somebody buys a house, money is no problem. Although **it is a shame in the villages that many houses are holiday houses.** When you are here during Christmas, there are more cars with Zürich numberplates than indigenous people. But for us, we can make a living out of them. **Hardly any new buildings are being build.** It’s mostly renovation. In these old houses we have a lot to do. Nothing is straight there, everything is different. An Ikea cupboard doesn’t fit in there, so that is our chance.”

Josin Neuhausler, Sgraffito artist

“Proudness. In the end you leave behind an unique piece –**Einzelstück**-. You are proud to be a part of the generation who passes on this tradition. You are proud when you are finished and you look at your work. Nobody can take it from you.”

Urs Padrun, architect

“It is simply important that people live here. People who are here and who develop something together rather than always people coming from outside. The people who come here for their holidays do not want that much change. They come here for the picturesque. But **the people who live here simply live here.** They use their space. The danger is that it becomes like in Upper Engadine. Of course there they have this winter culture for a long time now. This pressure is quite big.

But this hotel we are in now -Hotel Piz Linard- is a good example of a group of people with a good balance between local, tradition, land, city etc. Here I take off my hat, great job. **They don’t just feed on the locality; they bring jazz, they bring the world inside and make overall just good stuff. I think it is such a balance that we need.”**



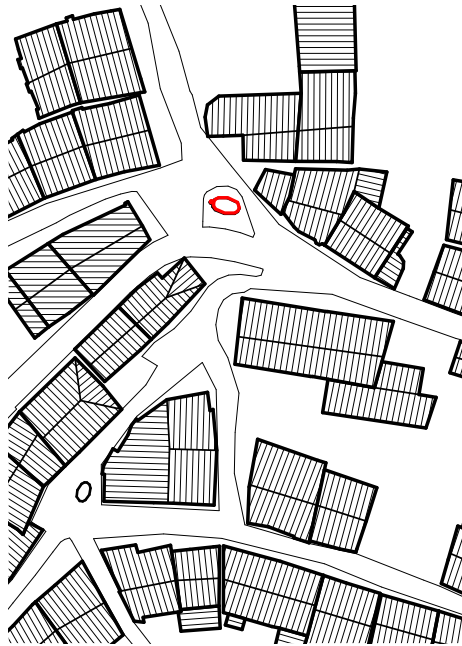
Looking back at an alley in Ftan.
19/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Looking back

Finally, the fourth notion. The one of looking back. This can be interpreted in two separate ways which are both valid for this research. The first is the one of physically looking back while walking. Stopping, standing still, turning around and observing where one came from, what is actually in front of the eyes, what was the experience? It happened both during the walks between villages -in the landscape- as well as in the villages themselves. One becomes aware of lines, patterns, colour differences and so on. It doesn't always work. Sometimes a strong perspective or change of the depth of view is necessary to see the differences more clearly. But when they do become visible, it's a feast for the eyes and mind. All of a sudden it makes sense. The other interpretation is of looking back in the sense of reflecting on findings and experiences. Like before, the walks from village to village made it possible to on the one hand let go and prepare for the next new thing while simultaneously giving the opportunity to clarify what the findings exactly were and to think about logical connections that could be made.

In the end the visit turned out to be a story of looking and documenting, walking up and down, looking back and forward, contemplating and forgetting, meeting and talking, drawing and photographing, sleeping and acting, taking time and hurrying, writing and speaking. Something that is very difficult to do and takes time to comprehend.



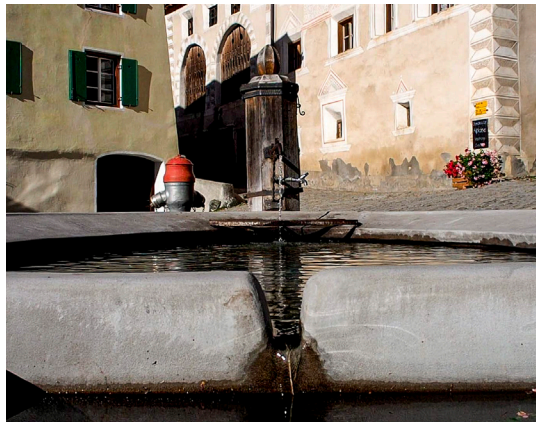


The water fountains

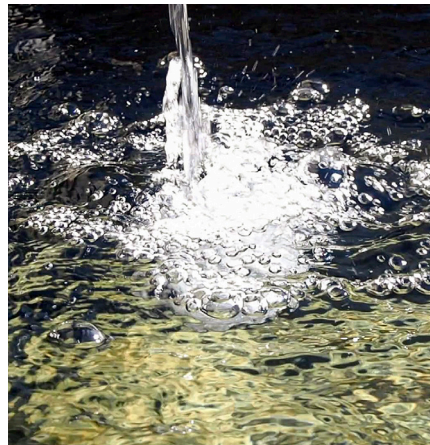
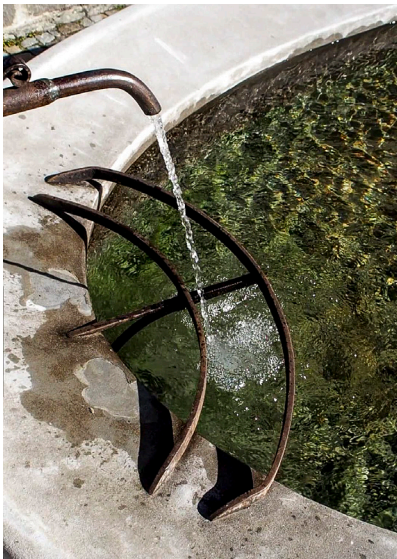
The water fountain takes on an important role while going on walks through Switzerland. The available fresh water springs that come from deep inside of the mountain are led into a system of pipes ending in a tap. From there it falls into a basin after which it flows back into the ground. The refreshing ice cold sensation of drinking this water is an incredible feeling. The way in which the fountains were used in the village is of a different order. This will be addressed in a section later on. Nowadays, the fountains are still a place of gathering, a stop for refreshment and moreover they add to the feeling of the place. The sound of the clattering stream of water that falls from the tap in the basin reverberates along the facades and throughout the street. The sounds of these water fountains was one of the strongest memories during the first encounters. Their documentation was therefore one of the most reoccurring actions during the field research. Depending on the size of the village and its use in the past there were either many or only a few fountains. Frontal and close-up photographs [see appendix 4 for all water fountains] were taken as well as a recording of the water splashing. In addition, each one of them has been marked on an overview map showing each village as a whole with the fountains positioned at strategic points. Sometimes a continuous line of fountains can be detected with side branches. Other times, they appear to be positioned at random without any logic behind them. The position of the water fountains in the village will be looked into further in a subsequent section.



Left: frontal photograph of 'Tuor' looking at 'Arfusch' taken at 09:49.
Below: still from video of the tap
18/10/2021. 09:47. Tim Stoop



sound recording
22 seconds
recorded on Tascam DR-05X



Left and above: close-up from the water hitting the surface. 18/10/2021. 09:48. Tim Stoop



Overview plan Susch 1:3000

Water fountains

1. Sur Punt
2. Stradun
3. Sot Plaz
4. Terza d'Immez
5. Grava





Overview plan Lavin 1:3000

Water fountains

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. Baselgias | 6. Plaz | 11. Sur Punt |
| 2. Tanter Muglins | 7. Somchants | 12. Zardin |
| 3. Sur Prassuoir | 8. La Schmelzra | |
| 4. Piazza Gronda | 9. Suotröven | |
| 5. Suzöl | 10. Plans | |



0 20 50 130 ——— Z



Overview plan Guarda 1:3000

Water fountains

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Davo Maria | 6. Jassetta |
| 2. Chantun Sura | 7. Piazza da Scoula |
| 3. Plazetta | |
| 4. Piazza Gronda | |
| 5. Suzöl | |



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N
↑



Overview plan Ardez 1:3000

Water fountains

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. Bröl Dadaint | 6. Plaz | 11. Fusch |
| 2. Bröl | 7. Pramuvèl | 12. Davo la Tuor |
| 3. Brölet | 8. Crusch | 13. Suot Vi |
| 4. Jassetta | 9. Aual | 14. Ramogn |
| 5. Plazzetta | 10. Tuor | |





Overview plan Ftan 1:3000

Water fountains

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. Rontsch | 6. Val Forada |
| 2. Suot Murütsch | 7. Jordan |
| 3. Tanter Auals | |
| 4. Plaz | |
| 5. Padrus | |





Overview plan Ftan Pitschen 1:3000

Water fountains

- 7. Jordan
- 8. Chaposch
- 9. Bügl Suot
- 10. Vichava
- 11. Munt Fallun

- 12. Bügl Sura





Overview plan Tarasp 1:3500

Water fountains

1. Cunca Bella
2. Sparsels
3. Costa da Zuort
4. Fontana Sura
5. Craps Suot



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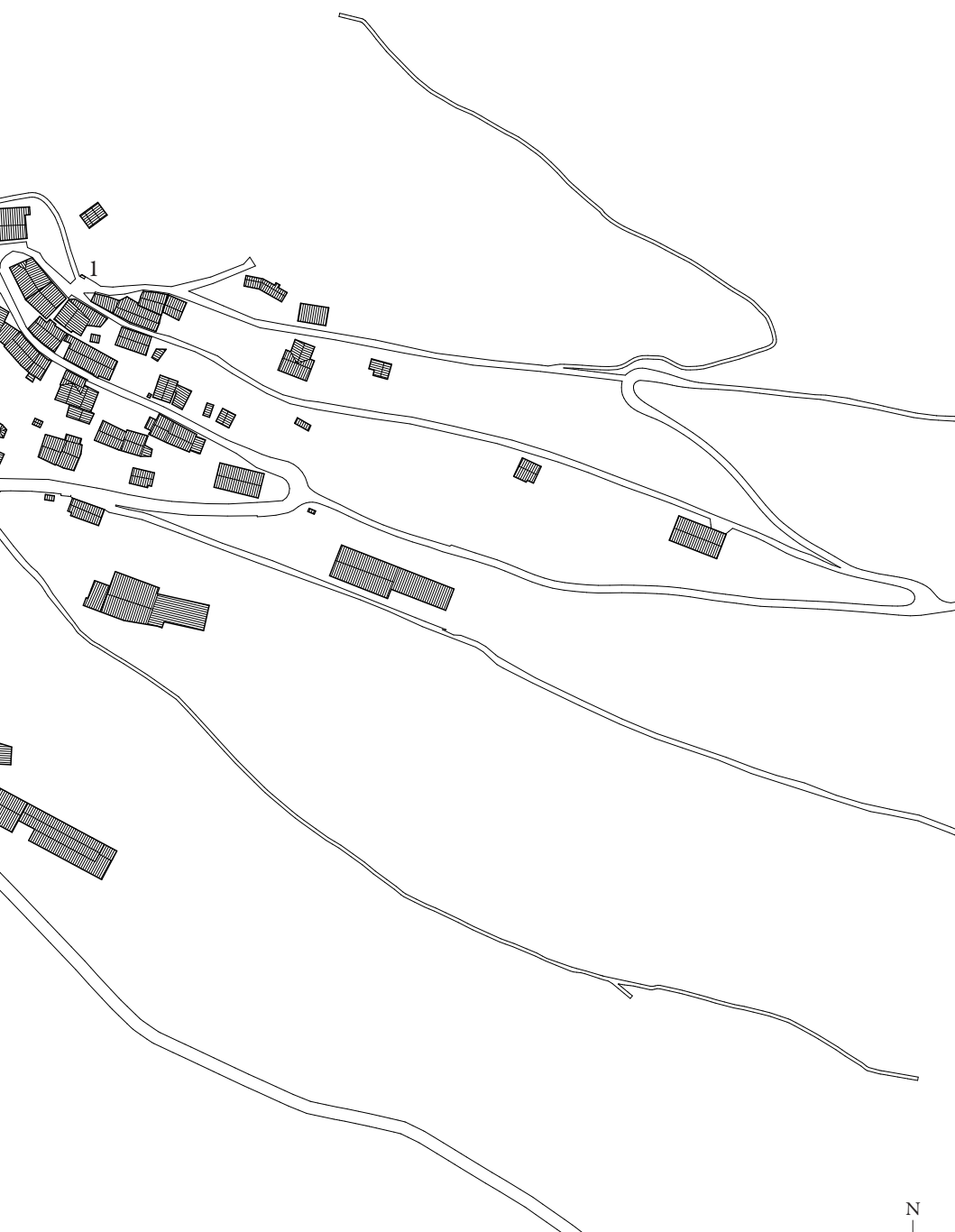
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Overview plan Vnà 1:3000

Water fountains

- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| 1. Favgia | 6. Bügliet |
| 2. Bügl Grond | |
| 3. Permez | |
| 4. Bügl Pitschen | |
| 5. Plaz | |



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Overview plan Tschlin 1:3000

Water fountains

- | | |
|------------------|----------|
| 1. Davo San Jon | 6. Pedvi |
| 2. Bügliet | |
| 3. Bügl Sura | |
| 4. Bügl Sot | |
| 5. Jassa d'Immez | |



Part III

Presence in the villages



3.1 Introduction

The third part of this research called 'Presence in the villages' looks more closely at the villages themselves and what kind of language is being used. The amount of eight villages was reduced to six. This initially came from a practical point: the 1:10000 model would become too large and take too much time to construct if the whole valley had to be modelled. However, quickly the division in the valley itself was noted. Scuol, the largest village in the Lower Engadine, splits the valley in two. The focus was therefore laid on the village in the western part of the valley: Susch, Lavin, Guarda, Ardez, Ftan and Tarasp.

First, the landscape itself is being looked into. As an outsider from a mostly flat country, the Swiss Alps appear as a phenomenal spectacle. To understand the places one first has to look at their topography. The body of landscape studies this topography, the positioning of the villages and churches and the effects of the landscape on everything it touches. Through a set of models and drawings this is documented.

Next, a brief research into the sounds of the village and the landscape highlights the importance of hearing in experiencing these villages. The results portrayed are visual and only a summary of the actual documentation. The rich library of sounds can hopefully be used during the final presentation to transfer the essence of these villages.

The way in which materials show their strong presence is being looked into. Materials, colours, textures, patterns and their effects on the houses is a quality that cannot be neglected. The use of stone appeared to be one of the most important aspects of the research. A more detailed look was given to the different patterns being used scattered throughout the village.

First to last is the chapter of 'Dorfkörper' that investigates through a handful of individual studies how the villages act as separate entities. Archetypical elements and principle village organisation are being looked into.

Lastly, the village square itself is being researched. Four different squares on which strong memories were constructed were chosen to research further on the topic of pavement patterns.

The way in which different elements of research were conducted was diverse and therefore fragmented but simultaneously very rich. Overview maps that catalogue the overall structures and larger movements gave a first understanding of these places. The results from the fieldwork quickly became leading in the further research, looking more closely to individual patterns, textures and materials and smaller village structures. Therefore it was challenging to combine these different field studies into one whole to benefit the narrative of the project. Its richness gave however a broad understanding of what these places mean, how they work and what their expression is.

3.2 The body of landscape

The landscape in the valley is an ever present factor. From upon pulling out of the tunnel and arriving in Susch, the landscape is always there, right in the eyes. The image created by the eyes is sometimes completely filled by these mountains. They appear in two different forms in the valley. The southern and northern side of the valley look completely different from one another. All villages are located on the northern side and therefore, when one is standing in these villages, the southern mountains come into view. Only when one is walking from village to village or after a crossing of the river Inn whilst visiting the smaller settlements of Sur En and Tarasp, the other face of the valley's mountains start to appear clearly. The southern side appears highly jagged, irregular and is covered in a dense pack of spruce and larch trees. The sides are steep and cast stark and defined shadows on the surface. Here the peaks like Piz Quattervals, Piz Pisoc, Piz Zuort and Piz Lischana form together the Lower Engadine Dolomites. They simultaneously form the background for a part of the background of the Upper Engadine and the Swiss National Park. The highest peaks of the valley lay in the northern part: Piz Linard with a height of 3410m followed by Piz Muttler which is 3296 m.ü.M. This side of the valley is however much less jagged and slopes down more gently. Glaciers, rivers, wind and other natural phenomenon have formed the mountain side here over time resulting in a geological structure with the characteristic of a more rounded landscape. Moreover, the softly rising topography allows for high-lying terraces. These terraces receive the most amount of sun during the day resulting in the villages being positioned on these platforms.

The direct grandeur of the mountains and their influences around everything was researched by different means. First of all photography, the results of which can be observed through this thesis. Almost all photographs of villages have the mountains looming in the background. Secondary was the construction of a large scale model (scale 1:10.000) of a part of the valley in which the six visited villages are visible. Making this model by hand, cutting foam, plastering it, sanding it smooth and thus learning the topography from the finger tips was a valuable lesson in the overall understanding of the landscape. The mountains are abstracted in a grey shape that shows the massiveness of the landscape. No trees or rivers are therefore highlighted or put into the model. Only upon close observing, the lines of the rivers and side streams become visible. The next pages show the results of these studies of the landscape and the man-made objects in relation to the landscape in different models, drawings and mappings. This formed the biggest part of the research conducted after the field-research, but also turned out to be the most crucial in the grasping of the valley before one could start to think of a design assignment. After performing these studies the initial surprise of seeing this beauty will not have been taken away, which was not the purpose either. Rather, the chapter 'Body of landscape' is a study in the coping with the beauty and vastness of nature and topography.

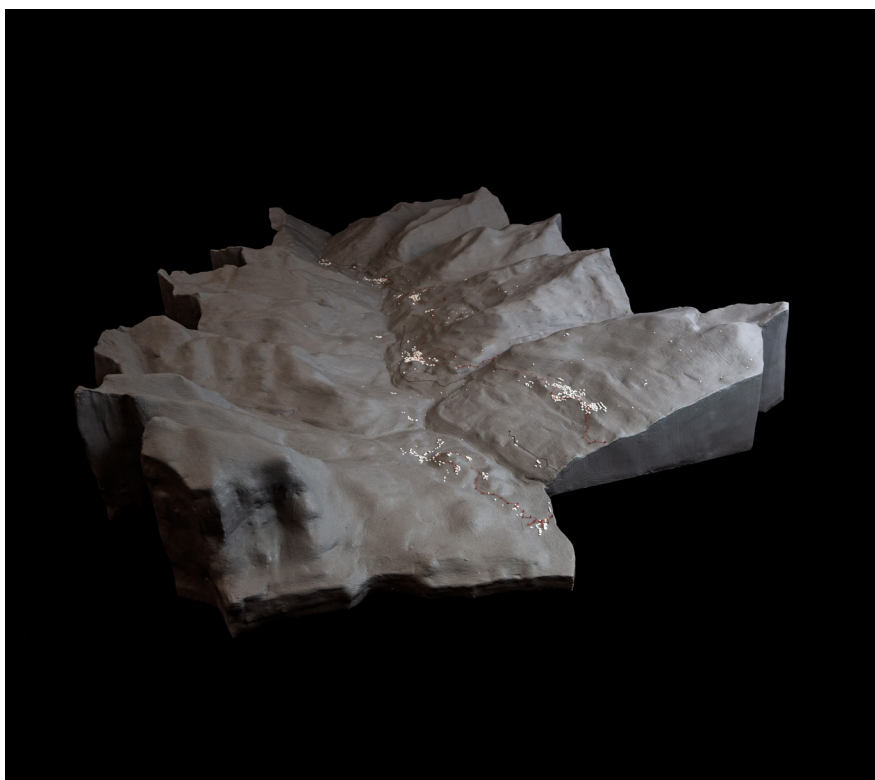


The body of landscape, Tarasp Castle in the distance, Ardez.
18/10/2021. Tim Stoop





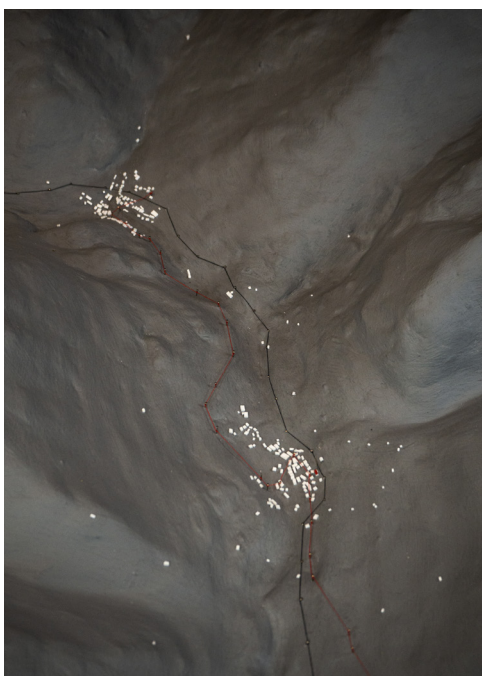




Previous page: top down of the valley model scale 1:10000. This 2.5 meter model acted as the start of the research.

Above: birds-eye perspective of the valley showing the positioning of the villages on the right bank of the river.

Right: zoom-in on Lavin with Susch in the back.



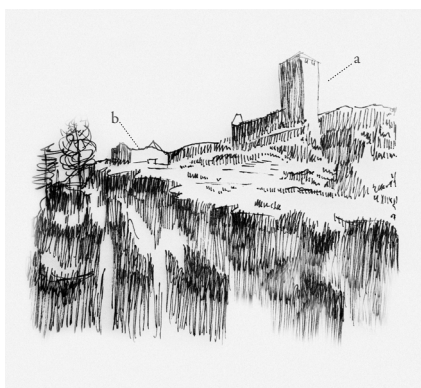


A view on Tarasp with Tarasp, Florins in the foreground.
19/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Homogeneity of topography and the man-made

The illustrations on the right were drawn after having seen a similar set of images of John Ruskin in his book ‘Modern painters’. The illustrations ought to show three different buildings positioned in the landscape where the construction and the landscape flow into one another. This is not just the case for larger structures like castles, towers or churches, also the villages as a whole appear to be one with the surrounding landscape; following the curves and the nooks and crannies formed by the mountains. The image above shows how the road curves alongside the hill, with adjoining parts of Tarasp following the same curves. All the built elements put there by people have a direct relation and response towards their surroundings. In the lecture ‘Orte Schaffen’ Gion Caminada mentions how he likes that the village body of Vrin, his home village, is formed by the topography. Furthermore he says: “People didn’t build their village on a slope, those are the places for avalanches. Only a fool builds at a slope prone to avalanches. Nowadays of course you can allow yourself anything which can be seen at different places. Luckily, this wasn’t the case for Vrin.”²⁵ With this view on topography a similar pattern is visible in the Lower Engadine valley. By standing still and observing, reading the lines of the mountain formed by with, rock slides and other natural phenomenon, the landscape becomes somewhat understandable.

25. Lassalle-Haus (2021). 08:42



Burg Steinsberg, Ardez



Reformed church, Scuol



Castle of Tarasp

Pen drawings on tracing paper.
05/01/2022. Tim Stoop

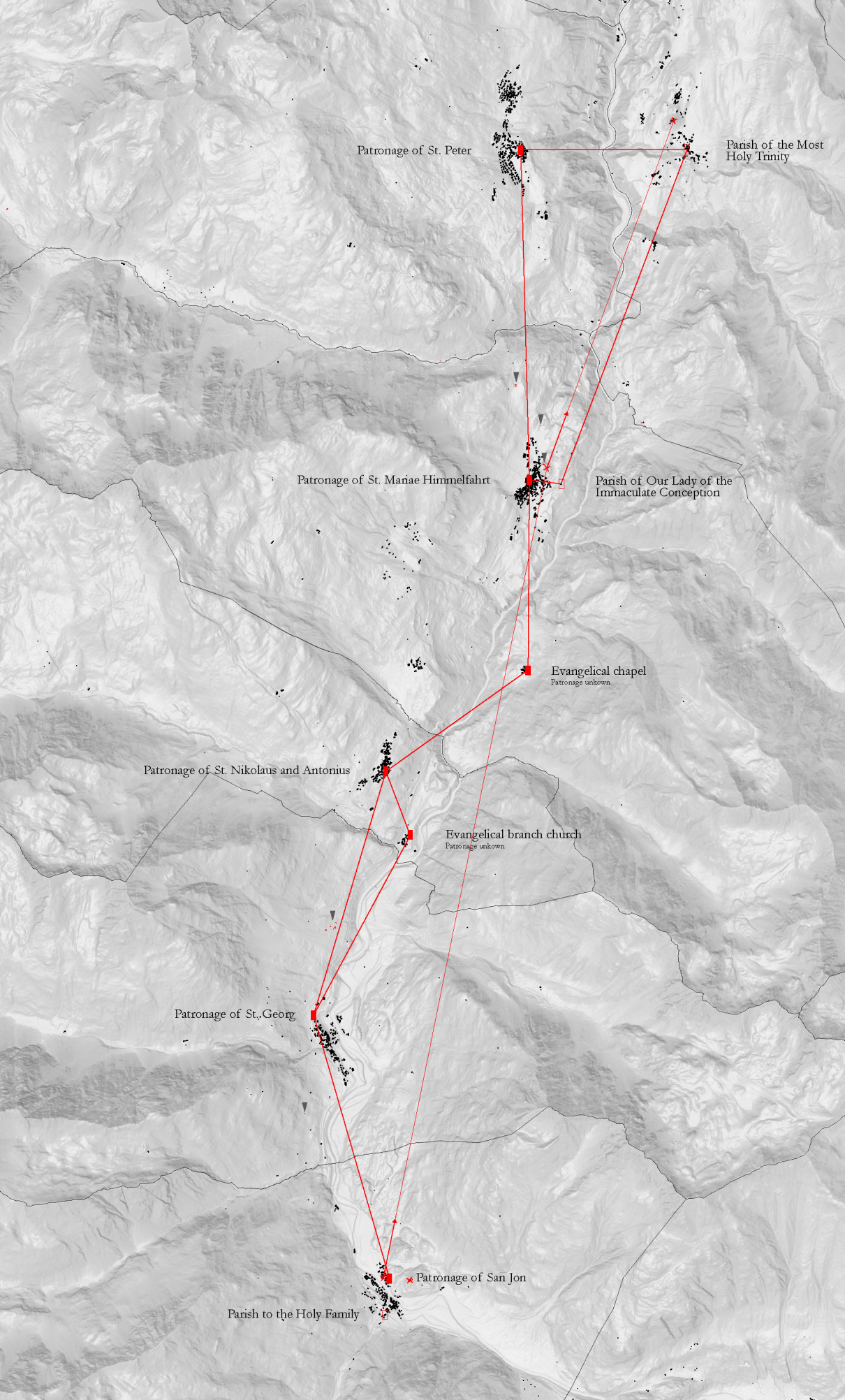
The churches of the villages in the Lower Engadine take on an important role in the experience of the villages themselves, but also in the valley as a whole. Their unique shapes and strategic positioning allow them to be points of reference and reflection. Whilst walking, the bell tower of the next village was already looming over the next hill awakening the presence of the rest of the village. The mapping on the right shows the positioning of the churches. Each village has one church with the exception of Ardez where there is also a catholic church. This catholic church lies on the outskirts of the village due to the reformative character of all the villages. As previously mentioned, Tarasp is the only catholic village in the Lower Engadine making its only church consequentially catholic. The network of churches formed follow the topography of the valley just like the villages themselves.

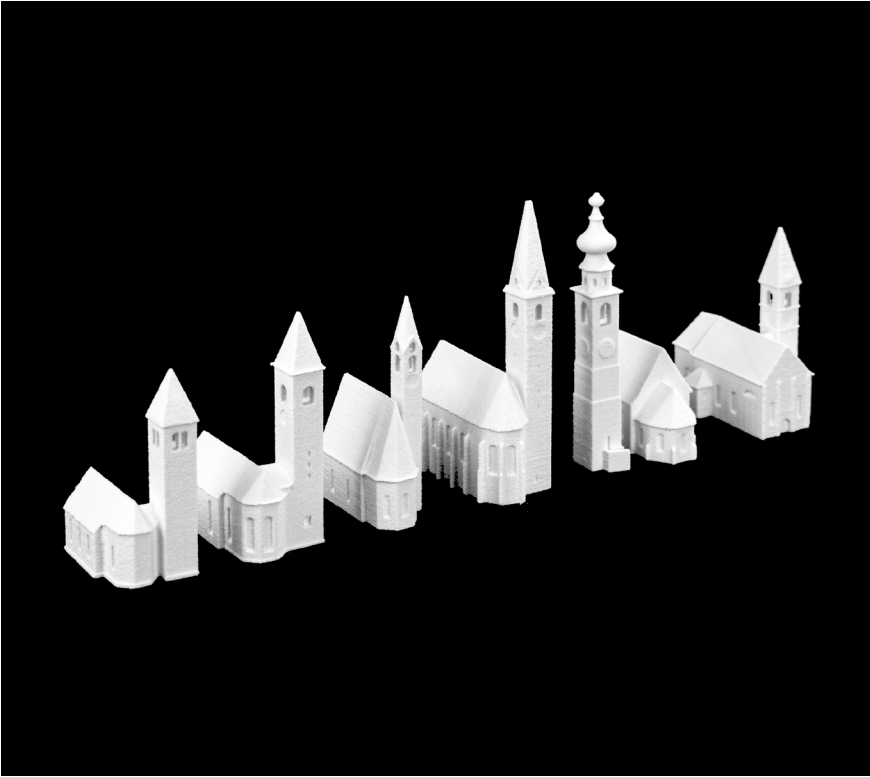
All churches have different aesthetics, but do share a roughly similar form language. The next page shows a set of model pictures of these churches in the form of Gypsum 3D-prints. By this, the churches can be compared. The reformed church for each village has been chosen. Due to their scalelessness, the 3D-prints can be placed in a variation of the 1:10.000 landscape model. For this, a relatively thin cast of plaster bandages from the other topography model has been made, proving that the landscape isn't just massiveness of rocks and stone but can also be seen as a delicate skin. In this wrinkled crust, the prints of the churches are positioned on an elevation, showing the relation they have with each other but also with the landscape even if they are enlarged.

Scale
1:60.000

Legend

-  Relief
-  Old fortifications
-  Buildings
-  Reformed church
-  Catholic church
-  Ruins
-  Former municipality border
-  Churchline
-  Sightline





Patronage of San Jon

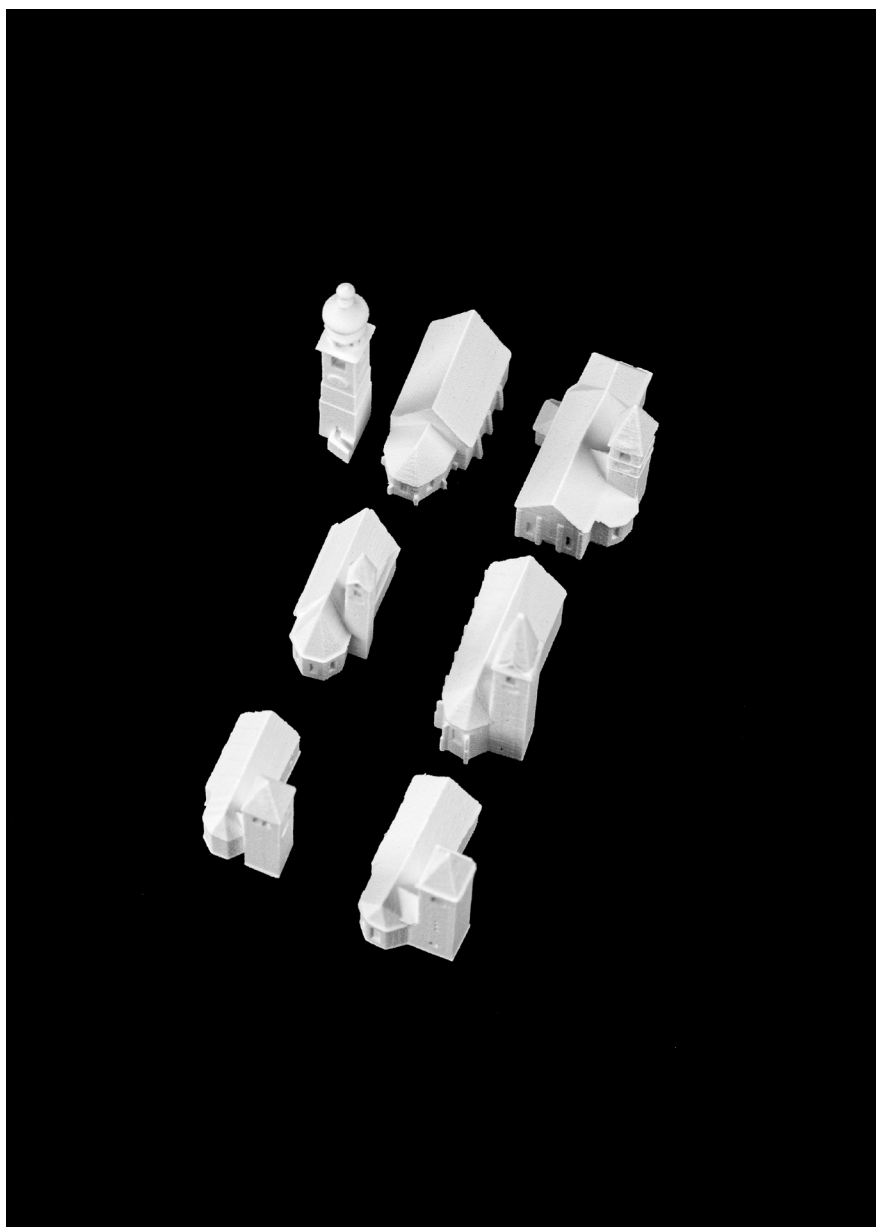
Patronage of St. Georg

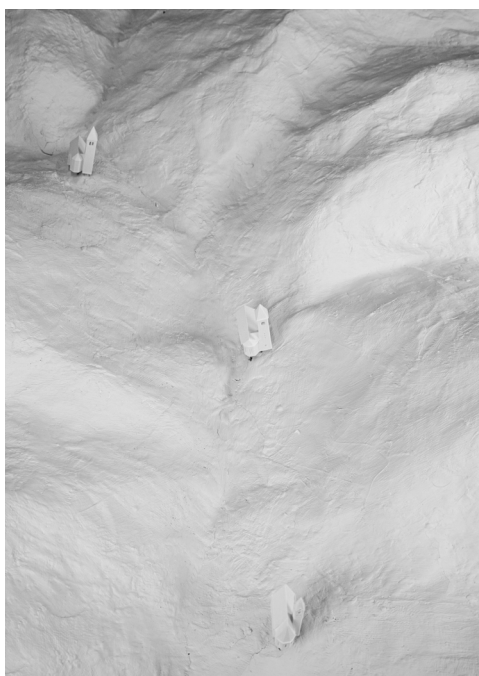
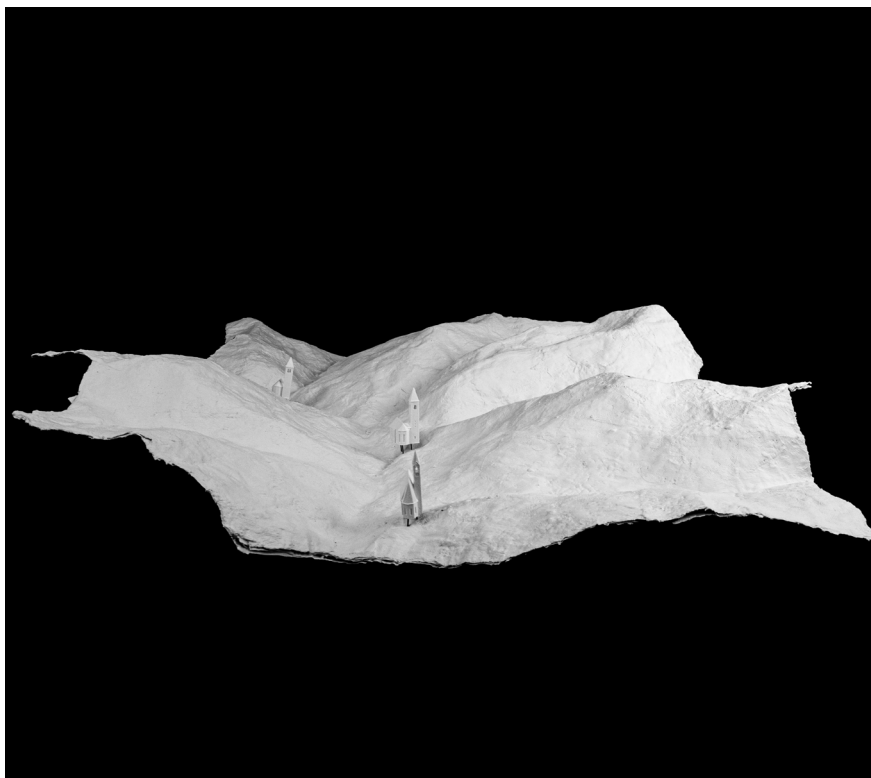
Patronage of St. Nikolaus and Antonius

Patronage of St. Maria Himmelfahrt

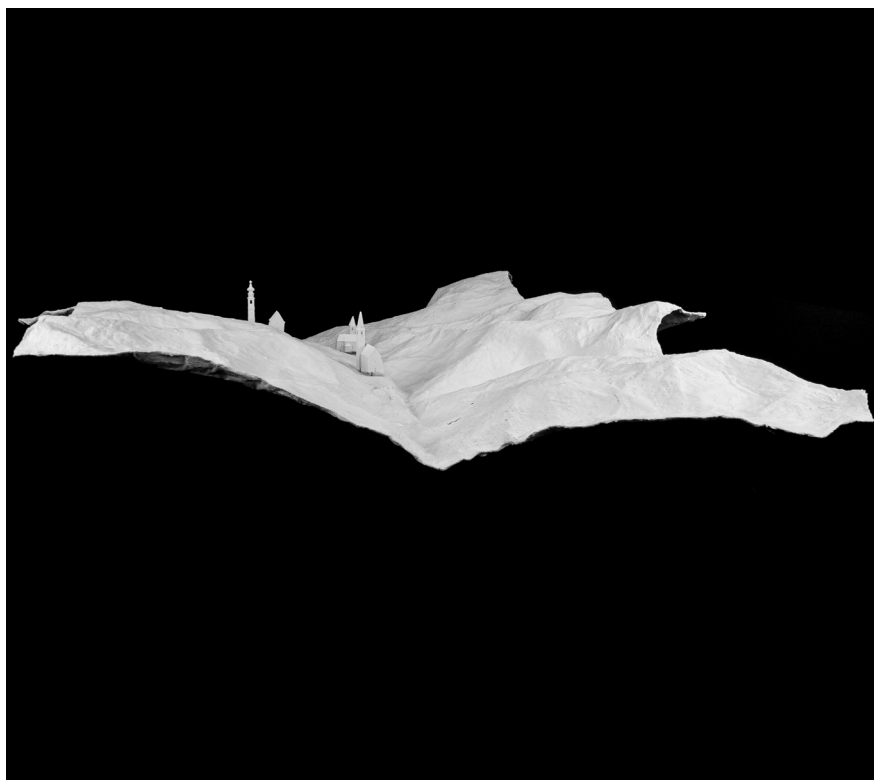
Patronage of St. Peter

Parish of the Most Holy Trinity





Above and right: churches of Susch, Lavin and Guarda in the surface model. Landscape 1:10.000, churches scaleless positioned on steel pins.
Next page: churches of Ardez, Ftan and Tarasp.



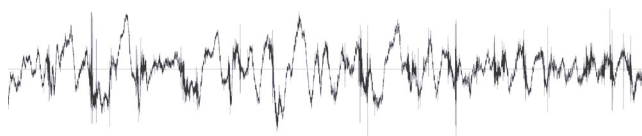
3.3 Sounds of the village

The villages lay in the landscape. They resnoate with one another and with the landscape. Resonate; a deep, full, reverberating sound. You can feel it in the air, bouncing off surfaces, produced by nature and by humans. Some sounds are clearly distinguishable, whereas others are more of an agglomeration or cacophony of different tones.

To understand the relation between sounds and the village further a set of recordings has been made. This started of together with the study into water fountains as discussed previously. For each fountain 30 seconds of the water splashing down in the basin was recorded. Depending on the size of the basin, the height of the tap, the amount of tapnozzels and influences from the village like cars, people, wind and surrounding buildings the noise created by the falling water sounded differently. Re-listening these recordings brought one back to the place instantly. The sounds became an almost medative set of tones whilst listening to them.

The sounds of the church bells were recorded on each second day of the visit of each village at 12:00. Sitting at the base of the church tower, against the wall the best sound quality was obtained. It took however some trial and error to set up the recording device, therefore sometimes missing the exact moment of 12:00. The bells all sounded distinctly different, producing a set of tones specific for each village. Close listening of the recordings produced a feeling of materiality. One could hear how the reverberating echoing sound of the bells was produced by a clapper hitting the heavy metal bells.

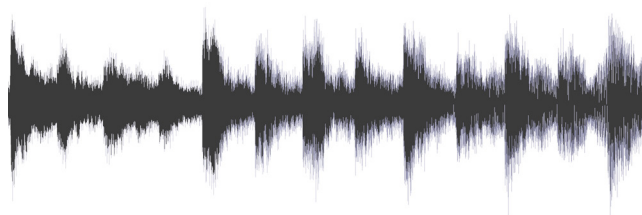
When walking from village to village I often listend to the surrounding landscape. Sounds of birds flying across the meadows, the sound of the cow-bells of in the distance, the water of a nearby creek splashing down from the mountain, a train letting the passengers know its arriving by blowing a horn and the cars on the nearby motorway. All beautifull sounds, taking one away from the busy city life into a more secluded are of the Swiss Alps. Sometimes however, I listened to music along the way. Specifically music from a group that originated in the village of Tschlin, the last village on my route. This music group called 'Ils Fränzlis da Tschlin' was born in the first half of the 19th century in Tschlin and later played throughout the whole of the Engadin. The group still exists today, of course with new members and a slightly different repertoire, but their approach is still similar to the original members. One of the songs I listened to frequently was 'Lush Life - Il cumün in silenzi' from the album 'Mit alles und scharf'. The songs starts with an isolated clarinet, producing tones reminding me of the water of a small creek meandering through rocks and hills. Then the others! Strings escort the water down the mountain. A double bass brings in the dormant tempo of the landscape. The rythmn produced by a modest group of instruments that only played the most essential notes was helping me to understand the region better. The music made me appreciate how the landscape was formed and how people used it; walking, looking, staying, building and living a lush life!



Gravelpath in Lavin



Fountain in Guarda



Church in Lavin



'Urfränzlis' walking in the valley of the Lower Engadine

Source: <https://www.fraenzlis.ch/de/fraenzlis/geschichtliches/>

3.4 Material presence

On a more personal note one should know I'm very fond of materials. Stone, brick, wood and steel are the rudimentary materials which never not seize to amaze. The day trips taken during the weekends while working in Switzerland proved to be a big inspiration. During a walk on the 19th of October 2020 to the Grüensee near Arosa, me and my housemates passed the settlement of Strassberg. At that point there were only a few people left since everybody left for the incoming winter. All houses were constructed from solid tree beams. Some rounder than others, but all stacked in the well known 'Strickbau' method. What I remember most about these houses was how the sun had given patina to the beams. Depending on the orientation of the house the beams were grey, brown, black or still relatively untouched. The way in which the materials of all houses worked together to create a presence of material touched me deeply.

The materials of the Lower Engadine consist of different materials. Here there's hardly any 'Strickbau' being used for the construction of houses (it is only used for stables). Rather the houses are constructed from massive stones and finished with a thick layer of lime plaster (either painted or coloured). Additional elements like roofs or additions to the stone bodies are from wood, steel, zinc or copper. The villages and its inhabitants seem to have an understanding on how to deal with these materials in a respectful way: they let them age and require patina. Wood is being coloured by the sun. The plastered facade is allowed to crack and discolour over time, the roofs rust if made from steel and oxidises if made from copper.

The materials and subsequently the colours come from the direct surrounding. Wood comes from the forest, chalk used for the plaster from the mines, larger stones were excavated from the mountain and smaller stones from the river are used in the paving of streets and alleys. All together this material pallet radiates a presence to the village stroller. It breathes an understanding of locality and craftsmanship.

During the field research, many surfaces were photographed to capture the textural quality of the walls. The following pages show a brief inventory of these photographs together with abstract tracings of the surfaces themselves. Quite quickly it became clear that the materialstory of these villages lay in the field of stone and chalk. Therefore, a more in depth study in the stones used for the paving was done to investigate their influence on the village structure as a whole. For each of them an inventarisation was performed and a description was given to the experience and feeling one got from strolling on these surfaces. These results will prove to be crucial in the approach for the design assignment. In further parts of the research, relations to these results will be drawn when looking at the smaller scale of some of the village's squares.



Looking over the roof landscape of Fran.
19/10/2021. Tim Stoop



Sgraffito placard on a red pigmented wall, Plaz 83, Ardez
18/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Colours of the existing

When strolling around the village the presence of the vibrant colours fall in the eyes. The plaster is either painted with colours or pigmented through and through. The colour on the surface is uneven, with some spots being lighter while other spots appear darker. This unevenness is a quality connected with the quality of the stone which is similarly uneven. Josin Neushäusler, the Sgraffito artist from Susch deals with these kinds of surfaces. He both uses pigments and paints depending of the needs of the building and the available financial resources. When the question was asked how important the relation with the landscape was for him he answered as follows: “With this landscape, everything has to be right. Look at the colours outside. The old houses in Engadine have these colours; the red, the yellow. Have you been to Guarda yet? When you look at those houses, you will see that many houses take over the colours of the trees, the larches; the yellow, the ochre. Look at these calm colour hues, they are beautiful!” [for the full conversation see appendix 2] Many facades have a variety of colours. Pure colours, pigmented and scratched into the surface. The appearance of colours changes depending on the time of the day, the season and the type of light that is coming down from the mountain. The photo series show some of the different colours being used and the unevenness of it.



Deep yellow, Crusch 106, Ardez



Deep red, Plaz 75, Ardez



Light pink, Chasa 55, Guarda



Light yellow, Stradun 23, Guarda



White, Vichava 19, Ftan



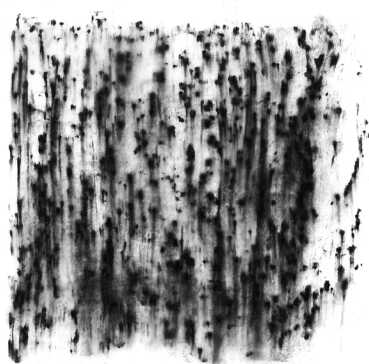
Green/blue, Jordan 52, Ftan



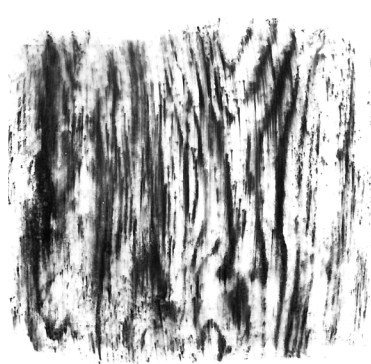
Church wall Baselgias 74, Lavin
13/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Textures of the surfaces

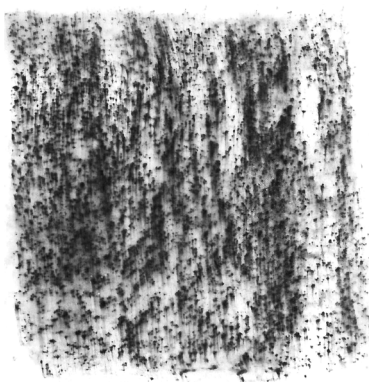
On a sunny day where the shadows are hard and strong, one notices the textures of the walls. Some are plastered smooth, others rough. In other circumstances the stones even come out of the wall. In all situation the massiveness of the walls come forward; they have a strong presence in the street. Charcoal tracings on sketch paper show the hidden texture that lies in these surfaces. For each village a set of six traces were taken of different surfaces resulting in 36 drawings [see appendix 5 for all texture drawings]. Stone surfaces like the pavement, marble decorations near churches and plastered walls were the most dominant in this set of drawings. They show the grain of the individual stone, but also the pattern of the whole.



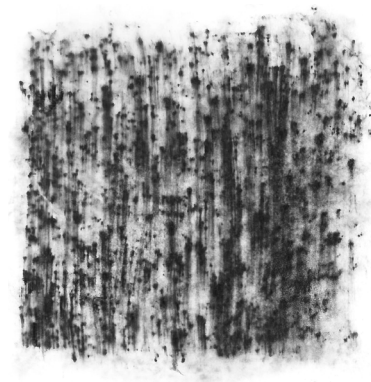
Stone step, Ftan



Wooden door, Ftan



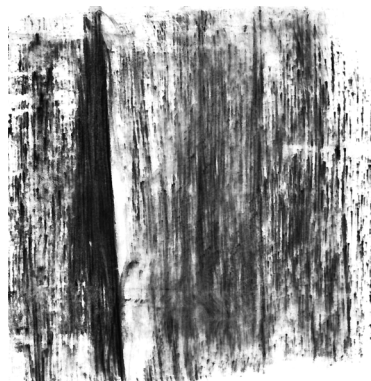
Gneiss marble decoration, Lavin



Plaster wall, Ardez



Plaster wall rough, Guarda

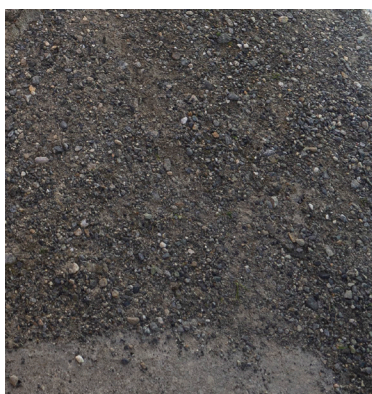


Wooden wall, Susch

Presence of stone

As the previous study has shown, a consciousness use of materials can be seen and felt in these villages. As a part of the project intends to research how places acquire their strong presence throughout material presence a separate study into the use of stone was conducted. Stone can be seen as the most prominent material used in these villages. Through different applications and forms it is being used in the construction and overall attitude of the houses and streets. Walls erected from massive stones and boulders, sometimes showing a stone or two from behind their white plastered skin and streets being structured by different lines, types and bonds of stone. The way in which these stones in the street patterns are present and therefore become a quality makes it possible to have a constant relationship with said stones -underneath the feet and reverberating in the ears as one walks on them-

In order to establish this relation of the lines in daily use -streets, paths, walkways, etc.- a mapping was done focusing on the different patterns and forms in stone for the eight villages as a whole. Gravel and asphalt are surfaces present in every village but vary in quantity depending on the location. The four stone patterns are laid out using two types of stones: square cobblestones -*Pflastersteine*- and round river stones -*Bollensteine*-. The river stones are laid out in a free bond with the occasional straight lines of river stones highlighting a direction. The cobblestone patterns can be divided in three types: Arch paving -*Bogenpflasterung*-, fan paving -*Schuppenpflasterung*- and row paving -*Reihenpflasterung*-. In addition to these maps a description of the different types of pavement and use of stone per village is given in order to see the differences and determine how the type influences the presence and overall feeling of the place.



Gravel surface



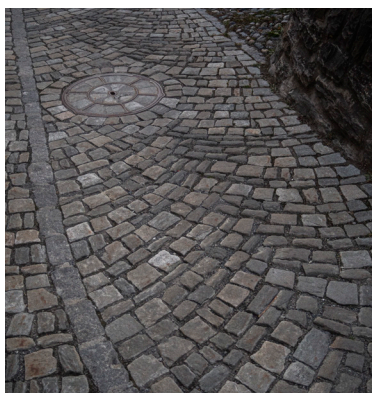
Asphalt surface



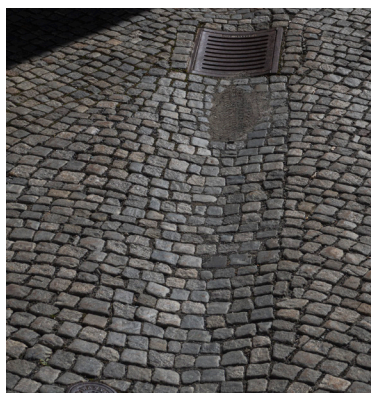
River stone



Arch paving



Fan paving



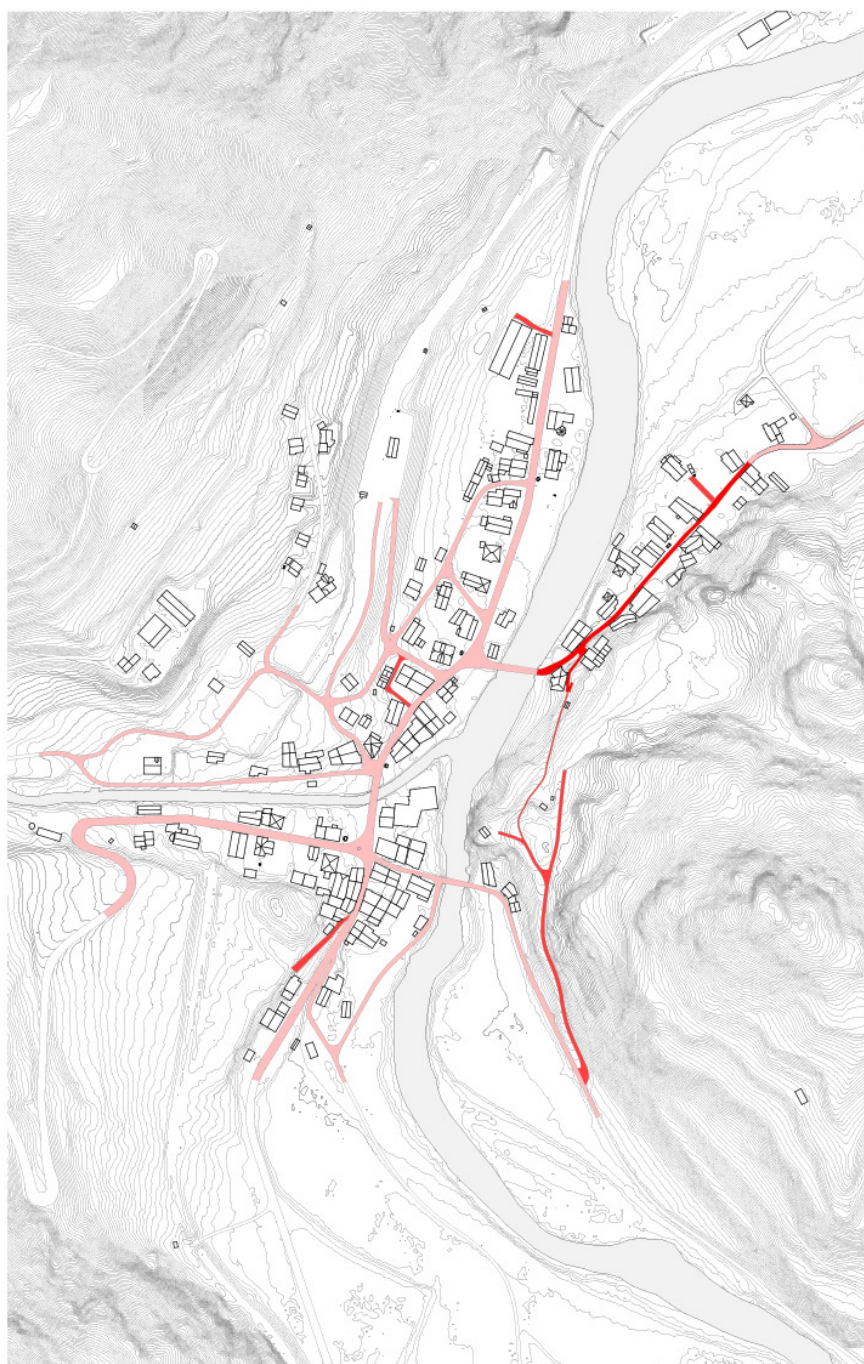
Row paving



Sur Punt 90, Susch
12/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Susch

The paving in Susch shows a clear distinction that can directly be related to a similar distinction in the houses and other buildings. As stated in a previous section the river Inn, much like the main road -Stradun- cuts the village into two parts. A division in old and new. The old part on the east bank of the river still holds an arch paving which is in harmony with the not so long ago restored buildings parallel with its road. The western part consists of mostly asphalt roads with here and there a gravel path. This makes it that the experience of the village is also two-fold. On the one hand strolling through the narrow street on the eastern bank is pleasant and comforting, but the new asphalt roads on the west appear to be put there out of efficiency and therefore lack soul.



Paving plan Susch

Arch paving

Gravel surface

Asphalt surface

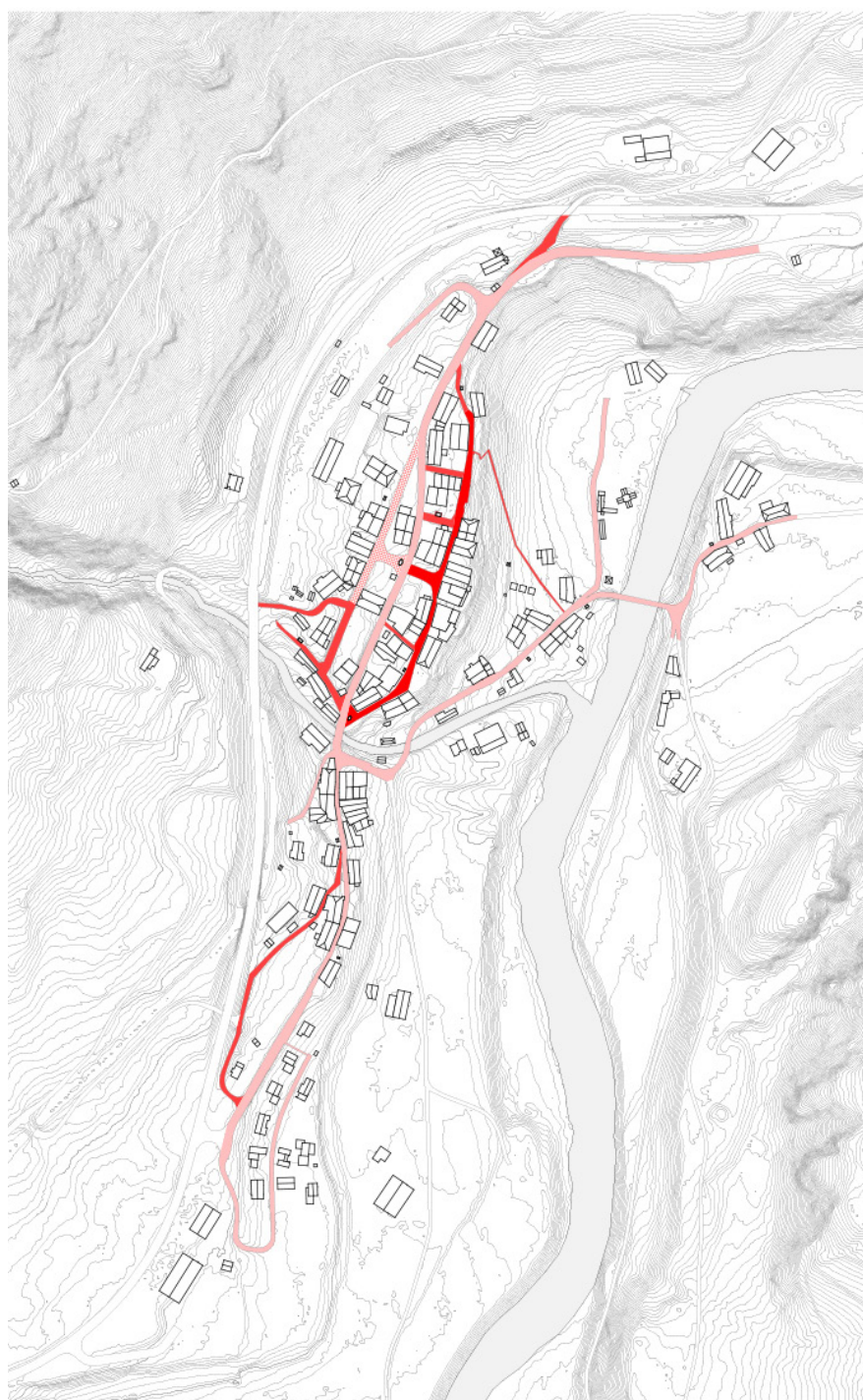
N



Sur Prassuoir 17, Lavin
14/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Lavin

Much like in Susch, Lavin has a road going straight through its core: Via Maistra. However, the main road connecting Lavin with the rest of the valley lies just to the west of the village's border therefore making Via Maistra less prominent. Although having an asphalt surface it doesn't appear to be as much of a divider as Stradun is in Susch. Arch and fan paving on both the west and east side of Via Maistra bind the village together as a whole.



Paving plan Lavin

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-----------------|
|  | Arch paving |  | Asphalt surface |
|  | Gravel surface |  | Fan paving |

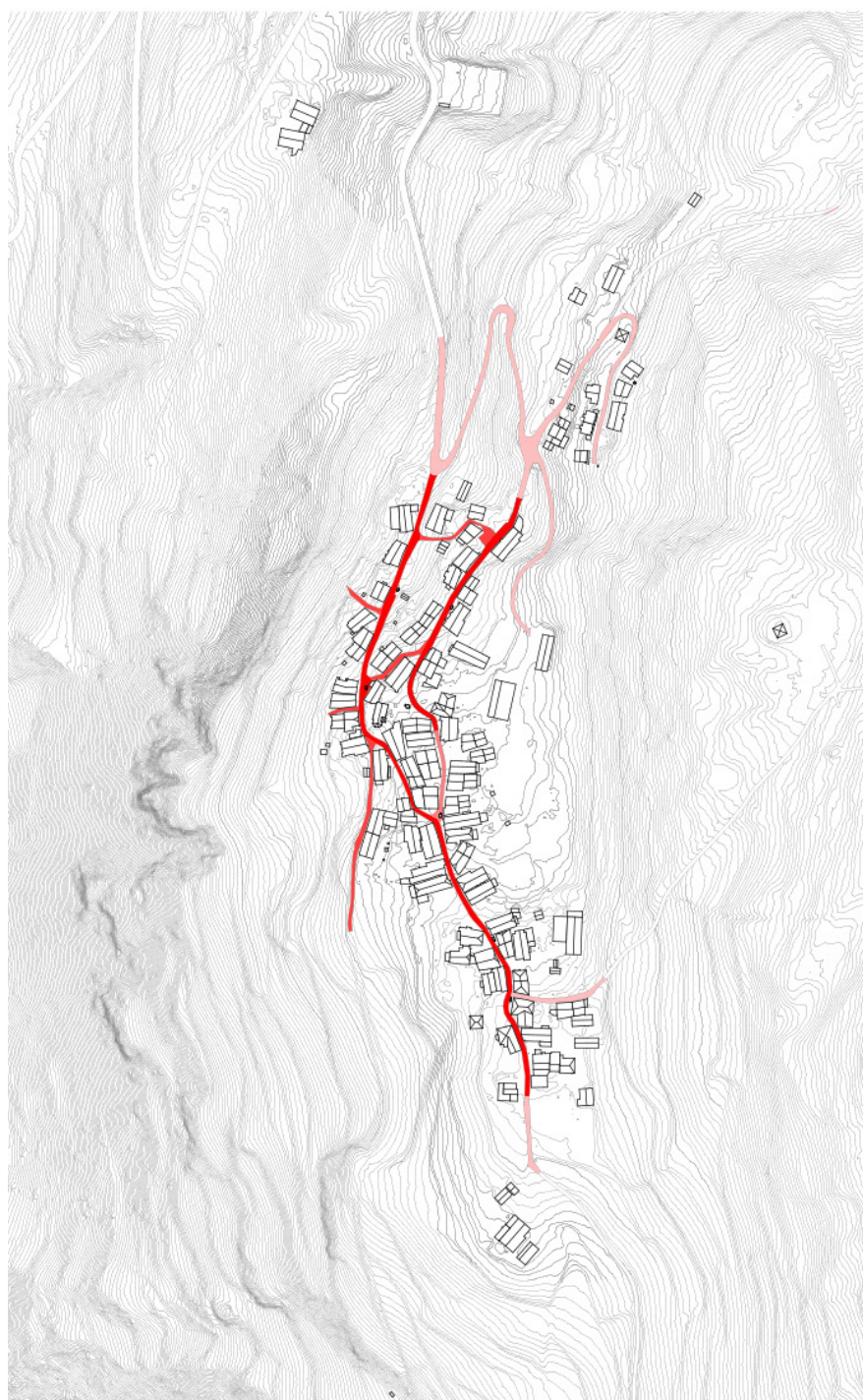




Plazzetta 66, Guarda
15/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Guarda

In comparison with Susch and Lavin, Guarda is the opposite of these villages. Not struck by village fires like the other two, Guarda's structure and appearance has stayed mostly intact over time. Parking is solved outside of the village and the amount of heavy farmer machinery is kept to a minimum, making the need for an asphalt road obsolete. The road that leads up from the west to the east is complete cobblestone arched paved road with side tracks of gravel and additional row paved parts. The benefit of Guarda in comparison with for example Lavin is that it's much smaller and its orientation is narrower. Its structure is that of a two legged fork whereas Lavin has many more sidetracks. The streets in the new western part of Guarda are asphalt paved connecting it with the main access road that leads to the main road down in the valley. This distinction is again visible in the type of housing and the way in which buildings relate to each other. There's a similar village division in Susch, but also Ftan appears to be organized in such a way. It would be interesting to see what would happen if Guarda would expand in width. If a new road would be constructed would it receive a stone type of paving or would it become asphalt?



Paving plan Guarda

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-----------------|
|  | Arch paving |  | Asphalt surface |
|  | Gravel surface |  | Row paving |

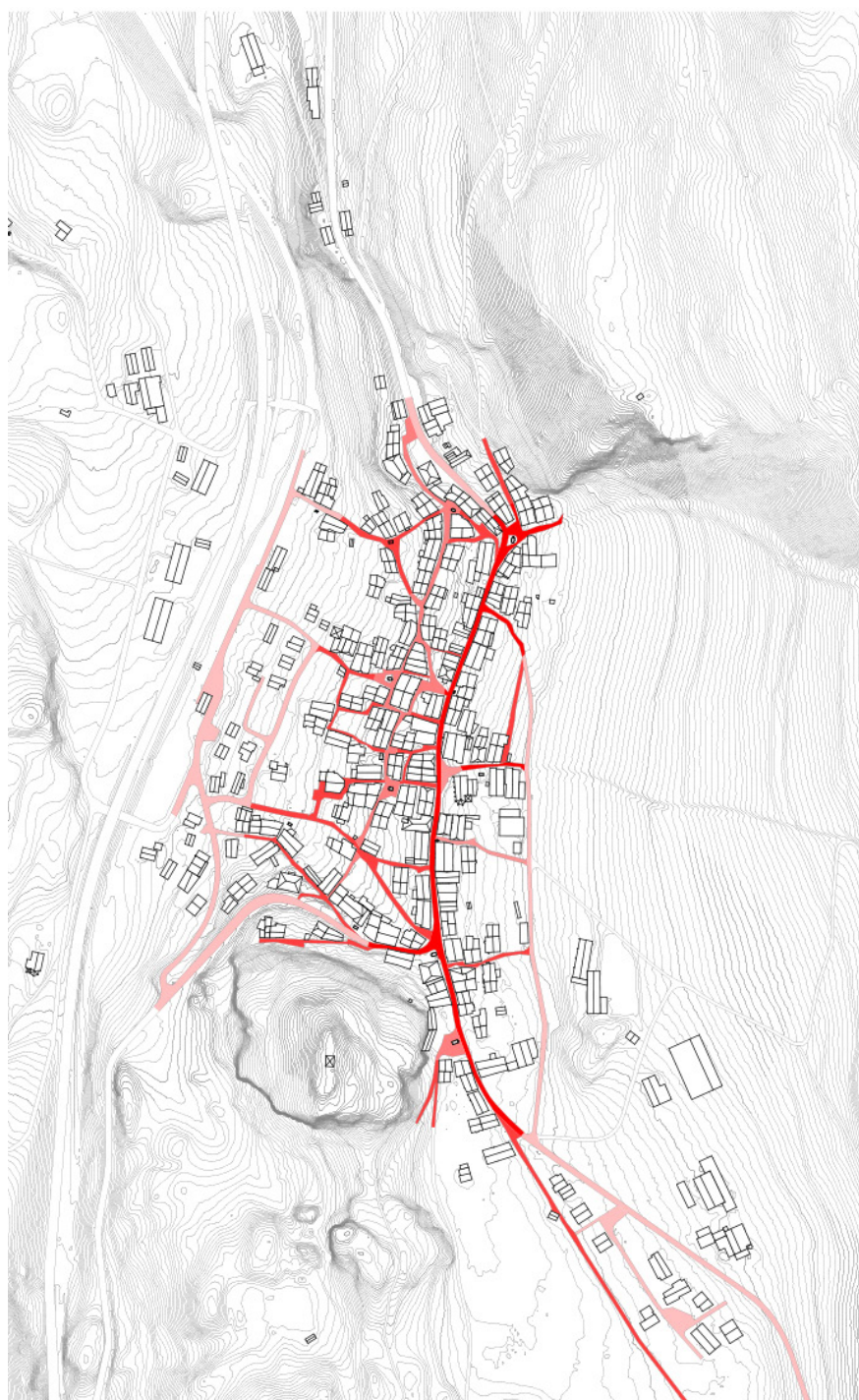
— Z








Crusch 104, Ardez
17/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Ardez

Ardez' main street Via Maistra acts as a vein throughout the whole village. Cobblestone laid out in arches bind the houses on both sides together. An additional parallel alley network is connected to this main road by gravel slopes. Being one of the largest village visited, it still functions as one entity. The different types of pavement together with the gravel alley's give the feeling of wholeness. Near the railway station on the south side the streets are asphalt connecting Ardez the to main road that goes through the valley and connecting it with the rest of Switzerland.



Paving plan Ardez

- | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-----------------|---|--------------|
|  | Arch paving |  | Asphalt surface |  | River stones |
|  | Gravel surface |  | Row paving | | |

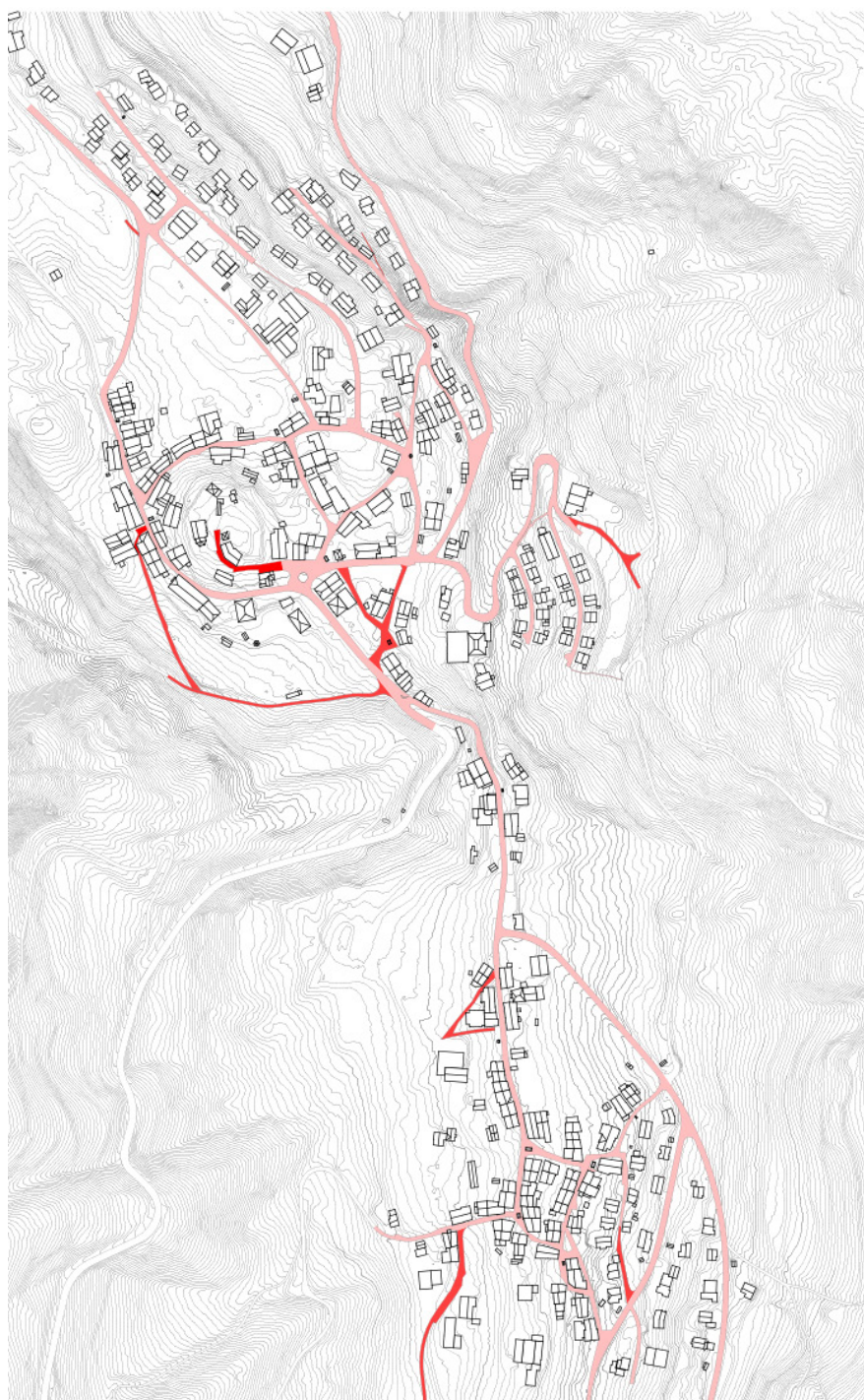
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Rontsch 69, Ftan
19/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Ftan

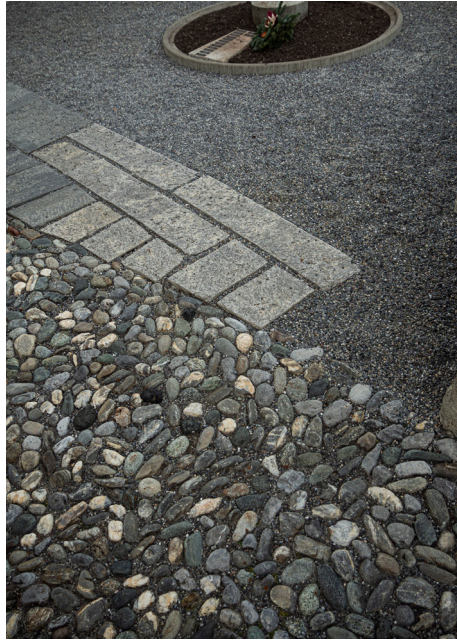
Similar to Guarda, Ftan is split in two parts. The roads are however almost all asphalt roads making it easy for the farmers to drive around between the two parts and up to the higher areas where the cattle grazes. Host Giovanin Josty explained how all the streets and alley's used to have no pavement at all, but instead used to be covered in just sand and gravel, making a dust between the houses. Two older parts in the bigger part of Ftan namely near the church and bell tower and the houses around the water fountain Rontsch still hold parts of cobblestone paving. However, they appear to be loose entities and mere formalities in the rest of the village street language.



Paving plan Ftan

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-----------------|
|  | Arch paving |  | Asphalt surface |
|  | Gravel surface | | |

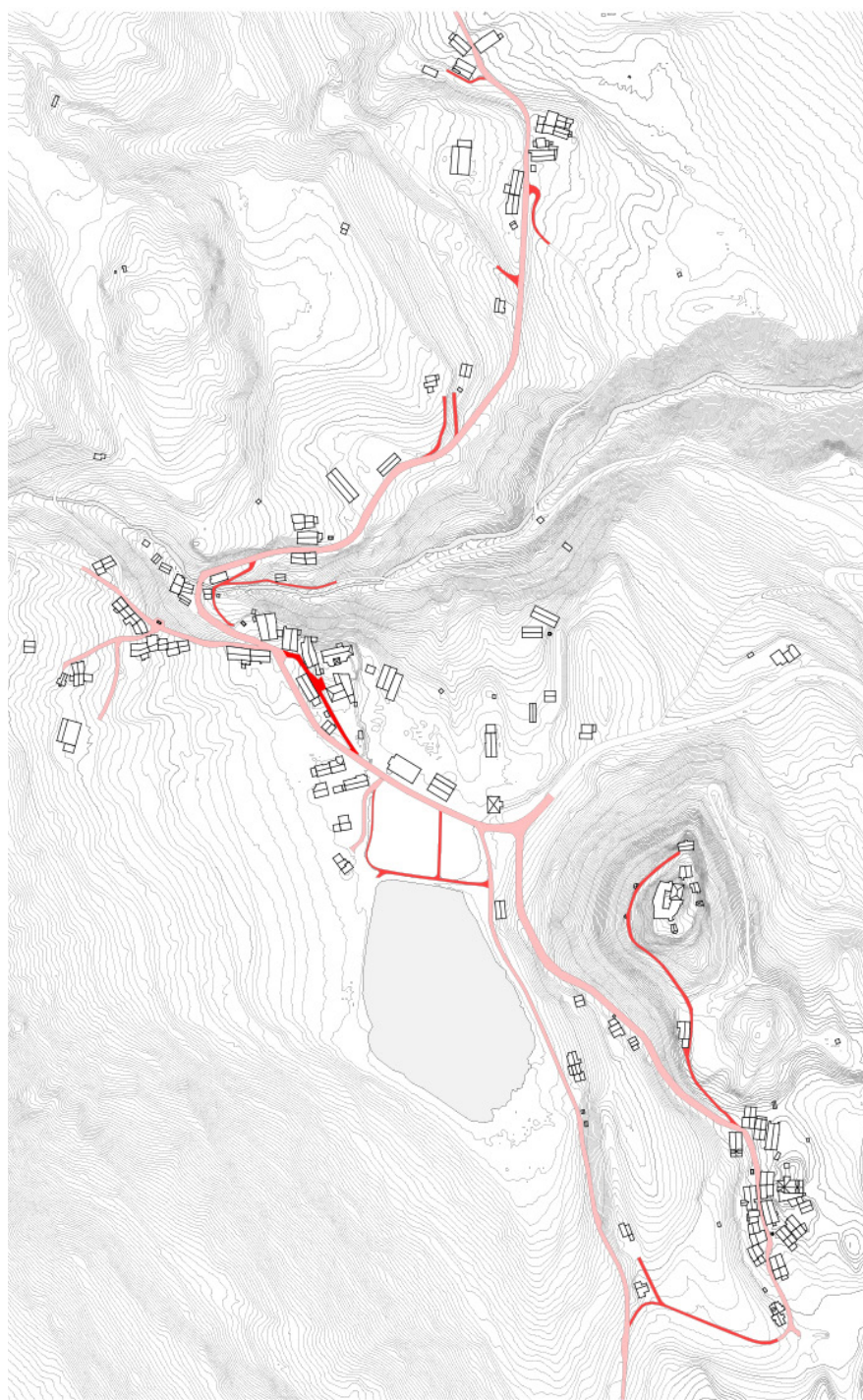
— Z



Fontana 17, Tarasp
22/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Tarasp

The paving situation in Tarasp is very much alike the one seen in Ftan. Being a scattered village without any core, the main access roads are all asphalt. Around the church, a small area is paved from cobblestones. The transition between asphalt and the arch paving is hard and direct. Because there's no real village core, the asphalt isn't being that intrusive when compared with the paving plan in Ftan. The asphalt does however give the feeling of desolateness and is in this case probably mainly functional. Especially in Tarasp, where there appears to be no coherency, walking on the asphalt surfaces without the direct relation with the houses one gets the feeling of loneliness of standing in a field.



Paving plan Tarasp

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Arch paving | ■ Asphalt surface |
| ■ Gravel surface | ■ Row paving |

— Z

3.5 Dorfkörper

In a recent lecture by Gion Caminada on the 12th of June 2021 called 'Orte Schaffen' he spoke of the word 'Dorfkörper'. Caminada's definition was literally: "Homogenität/Topografie des Dorfkörper im Landschaft", which means as much as the homogeneity and the topography of the villagebody in the landscape. This word and description describes how the village is acting as one entity, as one object embedded in the landscape. It follows the existing curves of the topography and positions itself to it.

When walking from village to village the word kept going through my mind. It was also always present when arriving or departing at a village. The image on the right shows how the settlement is nested in between two smaller hills on the northern side of the riverbank. Roads follow the topography, houses are organized along side it. The church stands proudly in the middle, guiding the eyes.

The previous studies into landscape and topography already looked briefly at the positioning of the village and their relation with the landscape. However the individual qualities of the concept of 'Dorfkörper' was to be further researched. The individual village structures are constructed from individual houses. A mapping for each village shows the existing houses and shapes. It becomes notable how the original Engadiner houses share a similar form language and size.

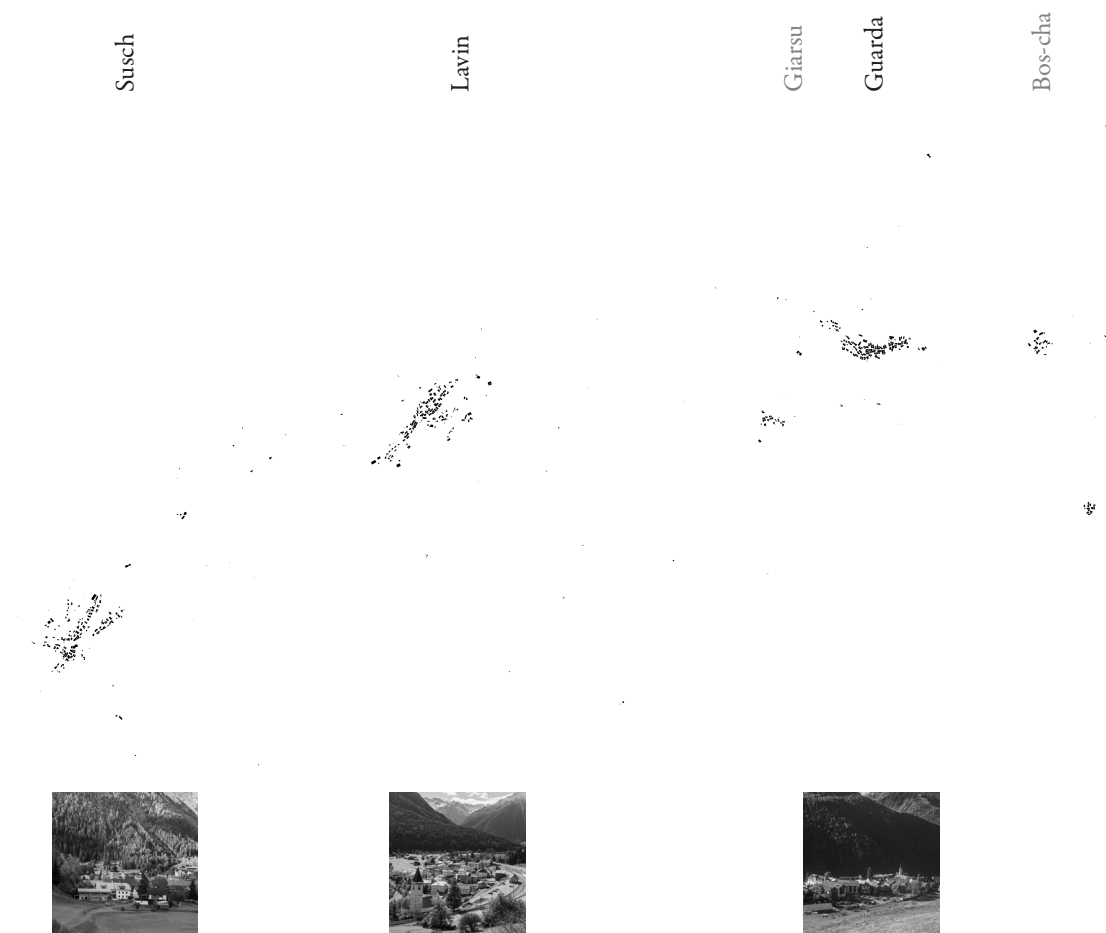
The way in which these houses are organized to form 'Brunnenkomunne'; clusters of housing around a shared water fountain forms the first understanding of the strong presence of certain places.

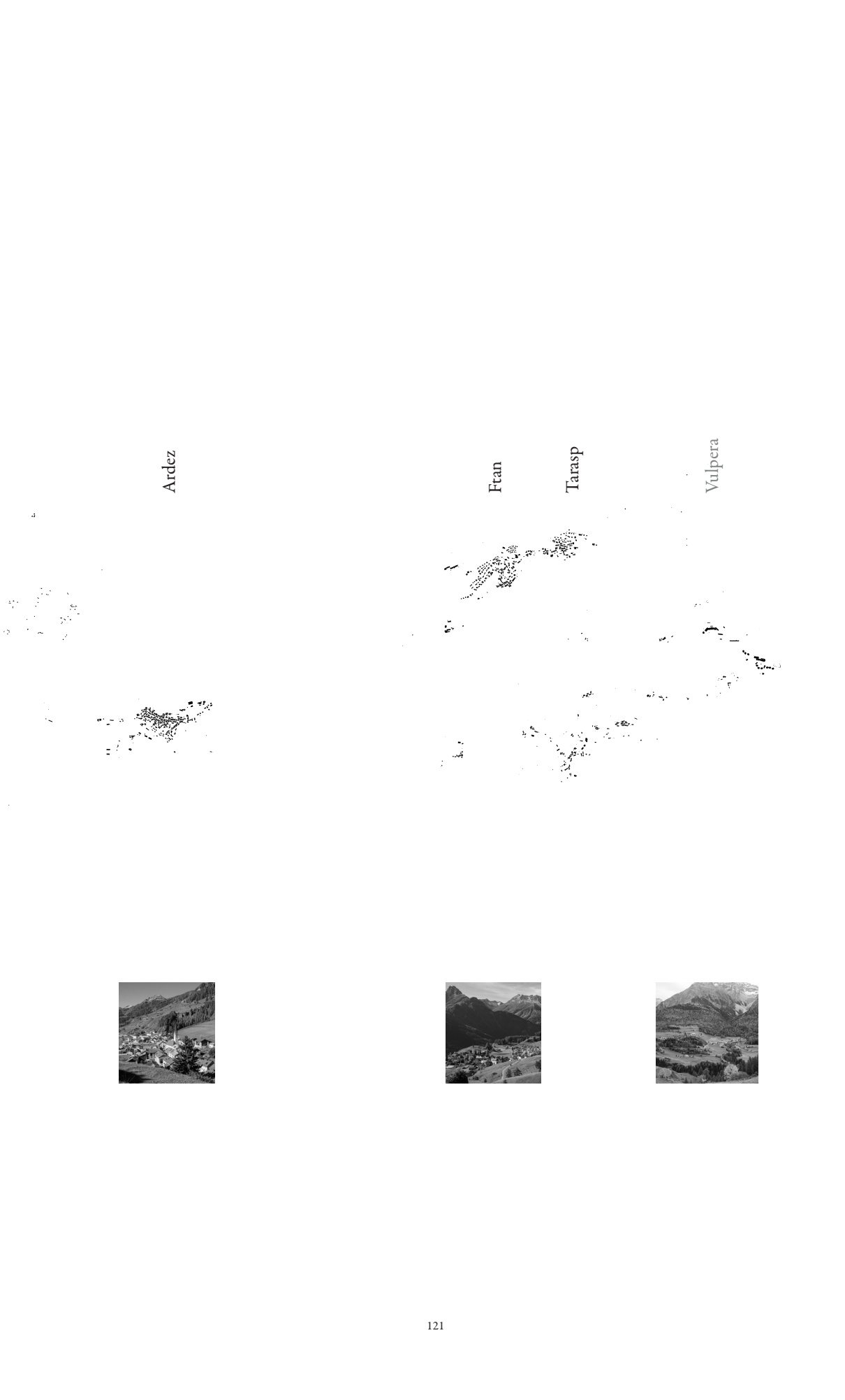
The way in which the door plays a role in the experience of the village as a whole is further researched into three different parts: 'the individual door', 'the door in the facade' and 'the door in the street'.

Other archetypical elements like the house bench, the bay window, the basement window, the grille, the off-cut corner and Sgraffito decorations have been photographed. This study into the type shows again how the individual houses share the same aesthetical form language.



Looking over Fran from a northern hill.
20/10/2021. Tim Stoop





Ardez

Ftan

Tarasp

Vulpera





The individual house as an object in the village, Plaz 83, Ardez
19/10/2021. Tim Stoop

An assembly of sizes

The drawing on the previous two pages show how the houses are grouped together to create the village. The villages act as separate entities; separate bodies; separate 'Dorfkörper'. The loose elements like houses, stables, sheds, storage barns, churches all act together to form a whole. The illustrations on the right show what happens when these elements are pulled apart and organized by their size. This is a comparative analysis of the amount and size-differences of the built objects for each village. As can be seen, Guarda has the least amount of buildings and most of them are similar in size. Compared to Ftan with the most amount where there's a wider variety of structure sizes. Notably for both these villages is the larger sized Engadiner house. Where Guarda consists of almost only this type and size of traditional houses, half of Ftan house's are 'newly' built objects, much smaller in size. This adds to the experience of the village. In Guarda all houses seem to talk the same language and therefore form a strong Dorfkörper, whereas in Ftan the division in old and new is more prominent, making the buildings to appear less coherent and therefore lacking in the feeling of Dorfkörper.

Source: map.geo.admin.ch, Ambliche Veressung



117

Susch



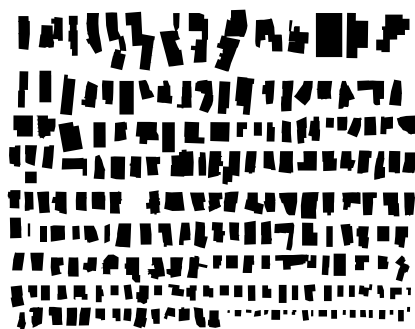
135

Lavin



78

Guarda



203

Ardez



277

Ftan



95

Tarasp

Brunnenkomunne

Guarda

The traditional village of Guarda has seven water fountains. The houses' living rooms (Stube) are oriented around the seven water fountains. The feeling of coherency is strong in Guarda. One walks from fountain to fountain; their sounds flow over into one another, making strolling seem easy and without any hassle. The fountains follow the two-street fork layout of Guarda, where the northern street has five fountains, the southern street that leads to Garsun has the other two.

The experience of the fountains and the clusters of houses is therefore easily notable and relatively easy to read as an outsider. Walking and pausing alternate. The village is small and therefore very pleasant to quickly walk through.

vertical

empty

pleasant

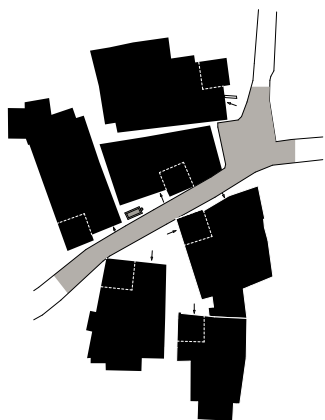
colourful

coherent

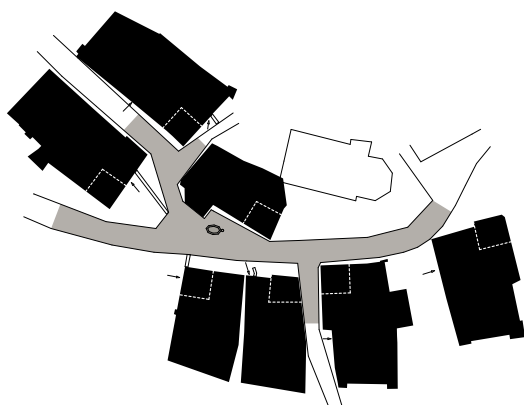
strolling

water

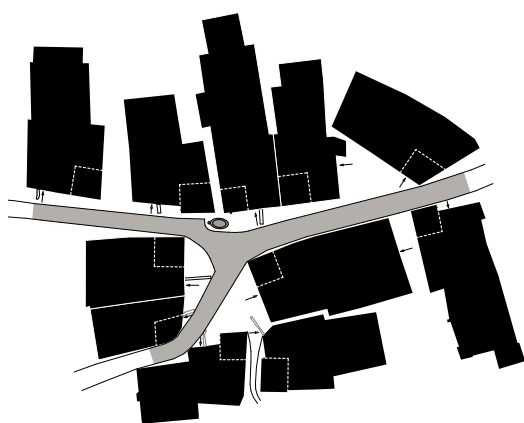




Chantun Sura



Suzöl



Plazetta

Brunnenkomunne

Ardez

Ardez has 14 different water fountains scattered over a dense and intricate system of roads, paths and alleys. Ardez is one of the larger villages of the Lower Engadine and can be compared with Guarda in its original structure. However, Ardez has an additional road, parallel with the main street introducing many sidetracks and alleys. The clusters of housing are therefore sharing two fronts, rather than only one (like in Guarda). The village feels bigger and less readable at first glance. The quality of wandering and getting lost is introduced. The main road is moderately busy with cars and people. When one takes a sidestep into one of the lower laying alleys, the surprise of finding a hidden water fountain is there.

In general however, Ardez much like Guarda shares a similar 'Brunnenkomunne' layout in which the houses are oriented towards the water fountain.



horizontal

effortless

side-lit

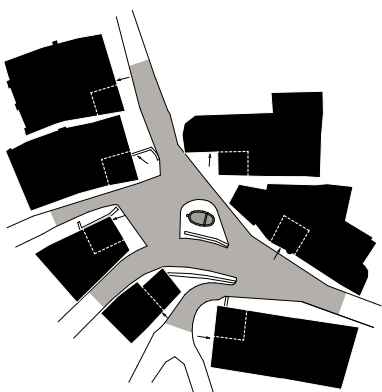
empty

sunny

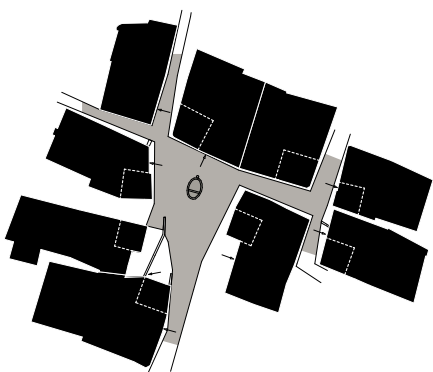
corridor

converging

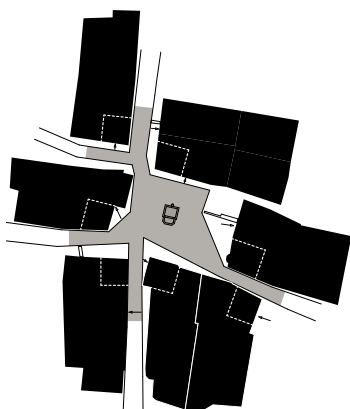




Tuor



Crusch



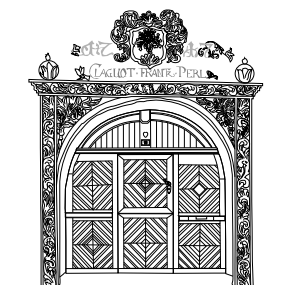
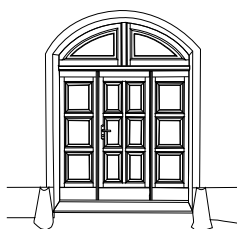
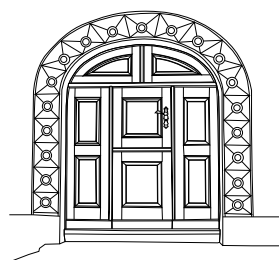
Plazzetta

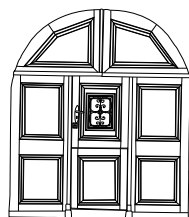
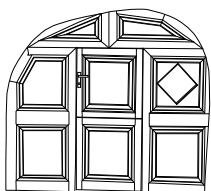
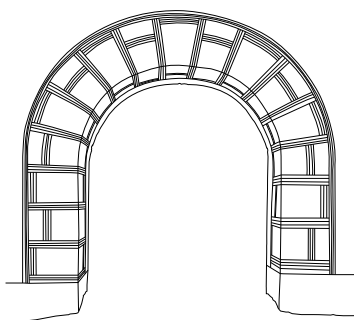
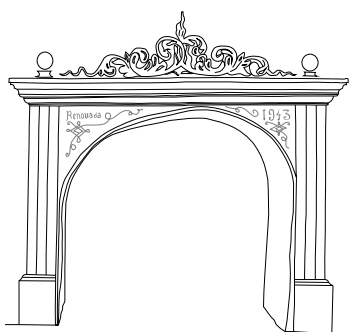
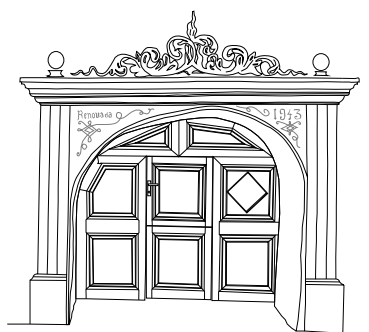


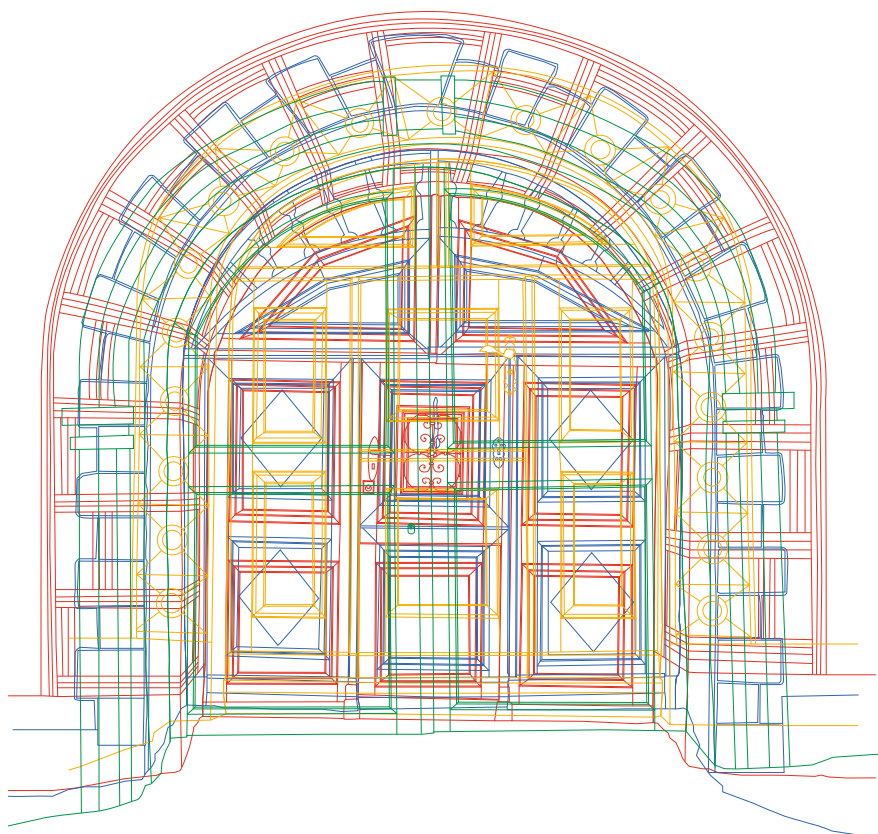
Hues of the door, facade, roof and sky go together, Surpunt 40, Lavin
13/10/2021. Tim Stoop

The individual door

One of the first elements striking the eye is the arched door. Not only their shape and positioning in the wall is compelling, but their individual expression, materialisation and colouring is an interesting phenomenon. In general, the openings share roughly the same dimensions. Depending on the use behind the door, they can either be small or large in width. The way in which the door itself lays in the back of the wall is studied in the drawings on the right. Additionally, the panneling in wood, structuring the opening into three parts and the ornamentation around the openings, alongside the arch were looked into. The studying of the rich individualism of each door resulted in an understanding of what the door means. It's in a way a personal statement of the inhabitants, but also showing fragments of time. How the wood colours differently depending on the paint, varnish and shape-differentialities of the stone wall shows us the relation of the wall, the opening and the door. On the next pages this three-fold study was conducted for two doors in Guarda and Ftan. Additionally, four doors were overlaid on top of one another to highlight how, although all being individually distinctive, they share the same typological form language.







Left: exploded drawings of two doors in Guarda and Ftan.
Above: overlay of four different doors showing the shared form language.



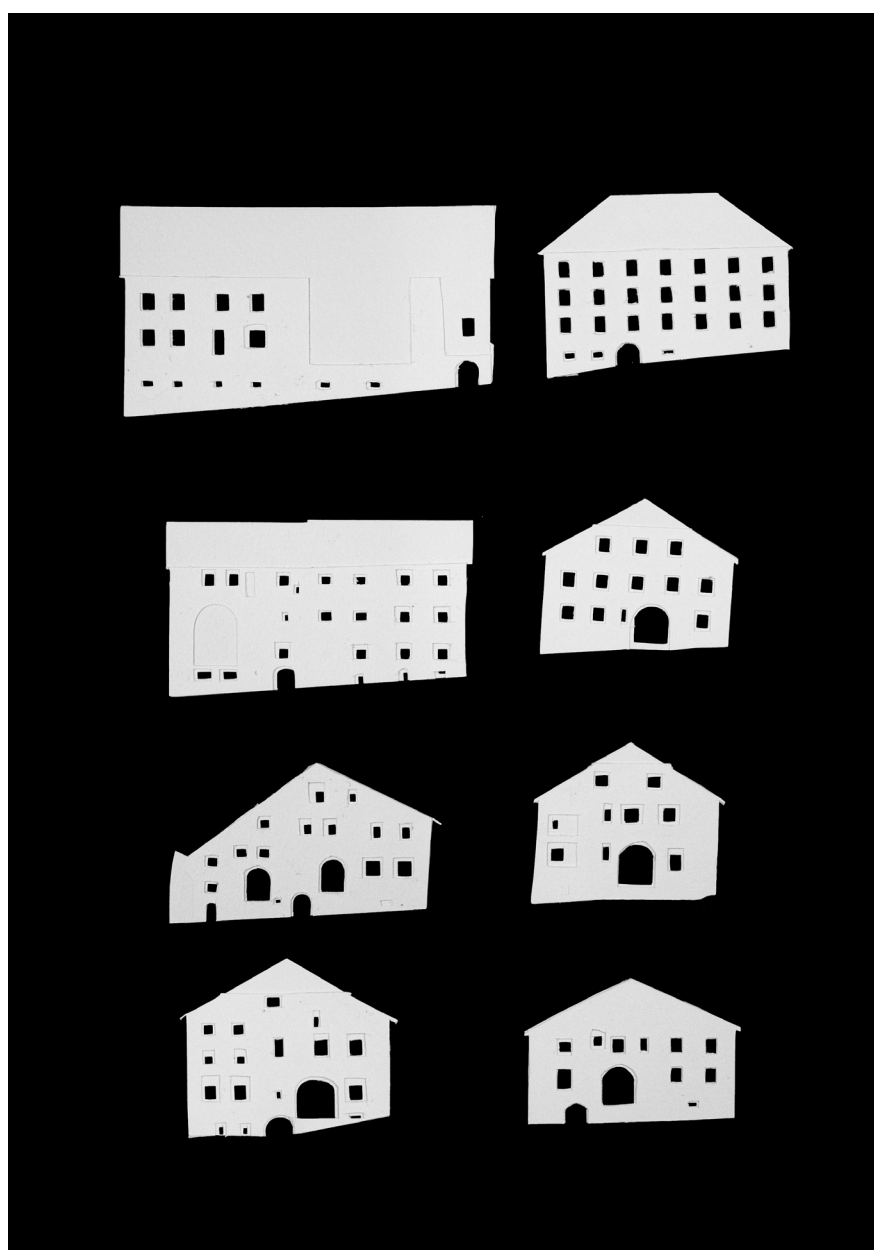
The typical organisation of the doors, Plaz 48, Lavin
13/10/2021. Tim Stoop

The door in the facade

As mentioned previously, the shape of the door is partially determined by its use. The Engadiner house is traditionally a large farmhouse. One part house, the other part stable. In most cases the facades shows this distinction: the house part is a close facade constructed from stone and small openings, whereas the stable is composed of wooden beams and planks. However, in the some villages, the stable facade is also erected from stone, making the contrast less present.

In the main facade there are most of the time two doors: one that leads into the house and the other that leads into the stables one story lower. Depending on the house's orientation, the direct topography and the size of the plot, the distance between these two doors can vary in size. The stone, load-bearing walls are heavy favouring the use of efficient, small openings. The doors are therefore arched, leading away the forces of the stone towards the foundation. Additionally, the arched shape comes from a practical point of view. Hay wagsons used to drive in and out of the stable area. The hay was stacked not like one big square, but rather as a stacking of rectangles that is wider at the bottom and smaller at the top.

The door is the largest and most notable opening in the facade and highlights the feeling of heaviness of the stone.



Paper assemblages of 8 houses in Guarda, scale 1:200

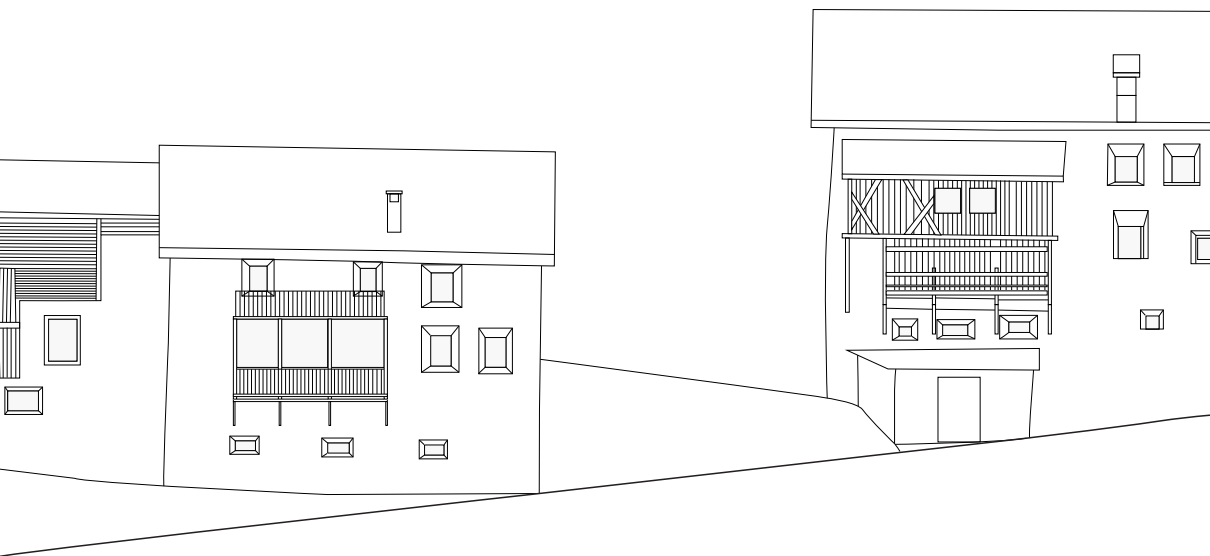
The door in the street

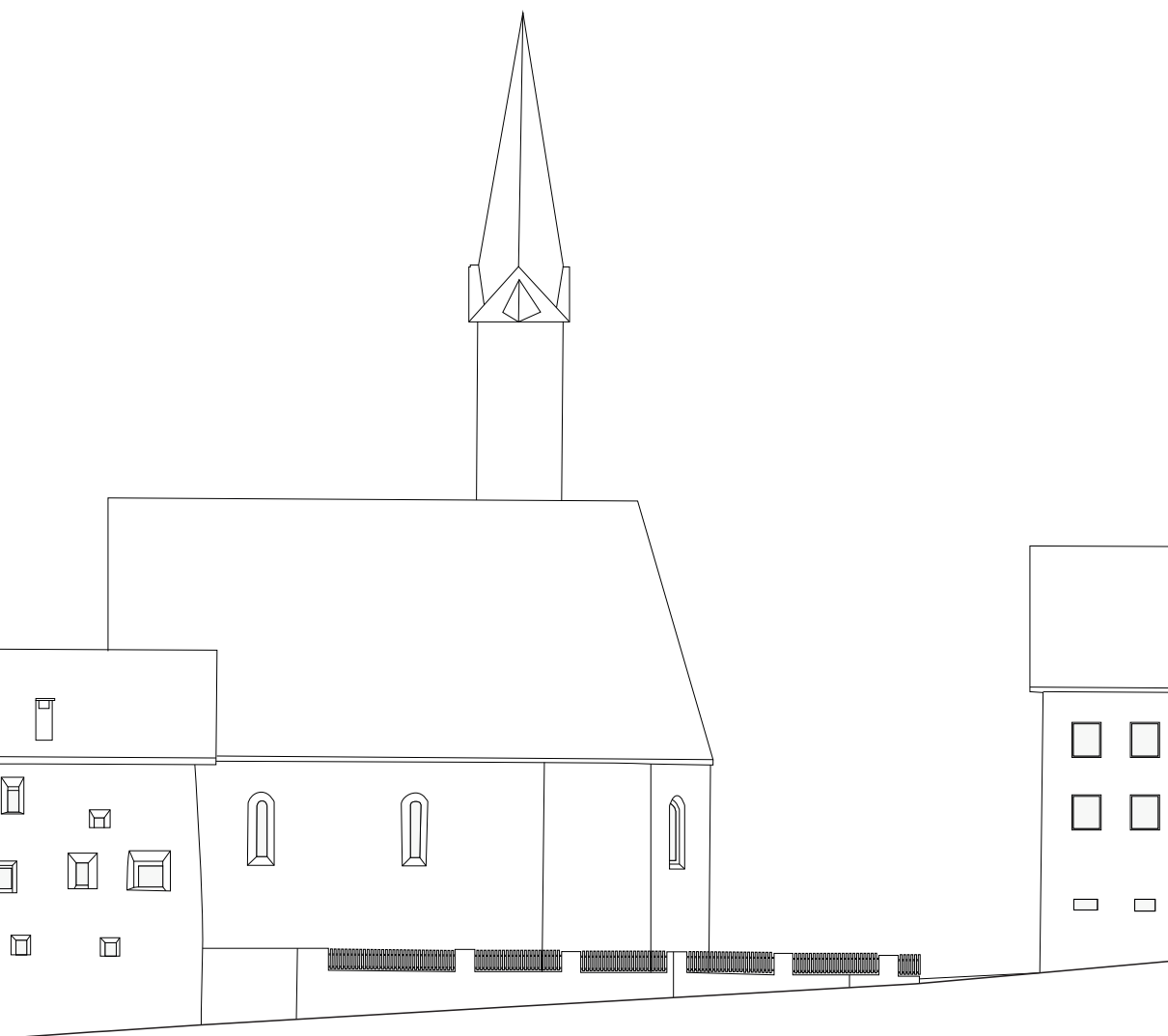
Thirdly, there's the way in which the individual door, and other openings for that matter, act together in the street as a whole. The Engadiner house type is repeated over and over, they have small nuances, differences and abnormalities, but their main typological form language is shared. The door openings work together to create one experience when walking through the street. One notices the individual openings and the relation they have with their own facade, the facade of its neighbours and the rest of the street. The drawing on the next pages shows an elevation-section of 'Via Maistra'; the main street going through the village of Guarda. Whilst walking up on this 450 meter long street, one is immediately captivated by the traditional farmers houses with the intricate openings, colours and facade textures. The presence and character of the church tower and the slanting of the roofs are additional qualities that make up the experience of the village. This aspect proved to be vital in the understanding of presence of place for these villages.

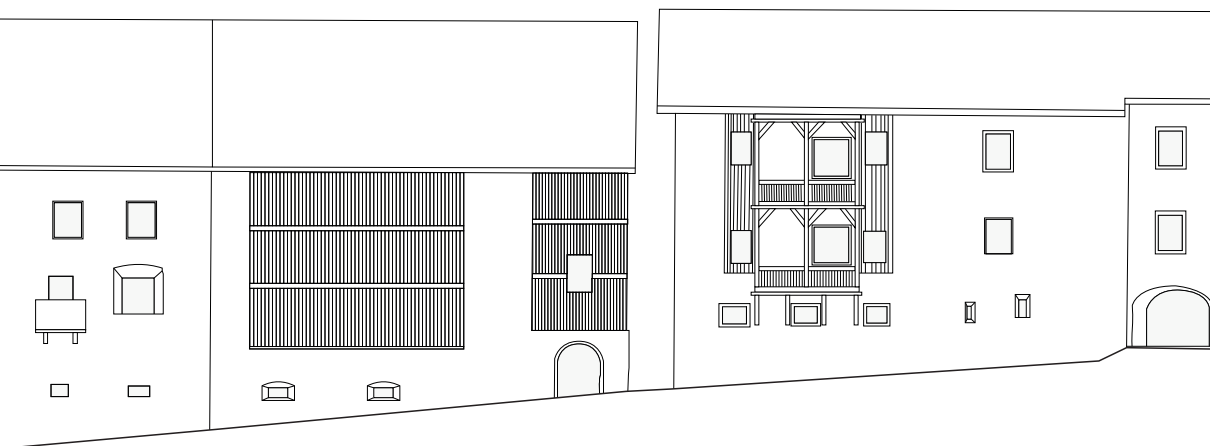
The drawing is a rough retracing of the 'Schnitte 1:500' drawn by Lorea Schönenberger in 'Typologiestudie Das Engadinerhaus in Guarda', ETH, Studio Boltshauser.

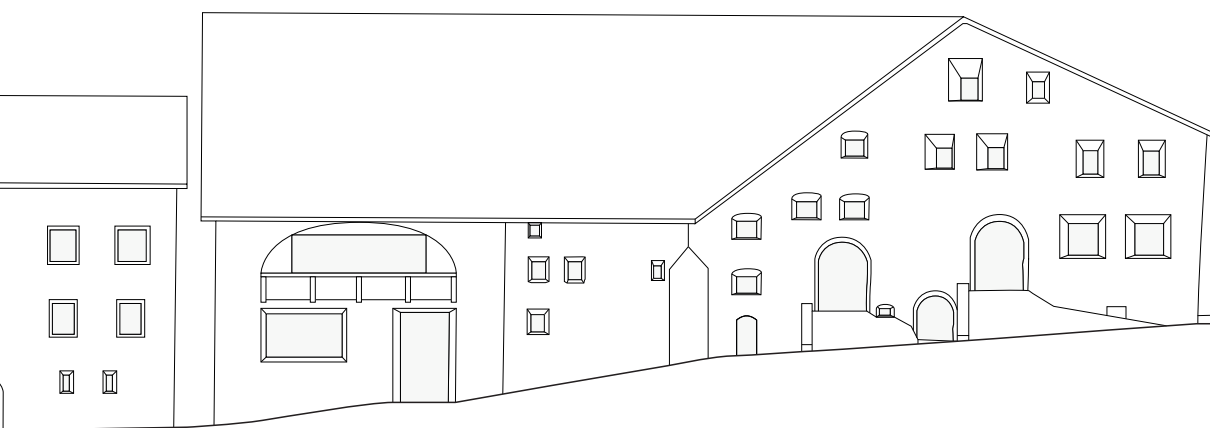


Looking back in the street, Bröl, Ardez.
18/10/2021. Tim Stoop

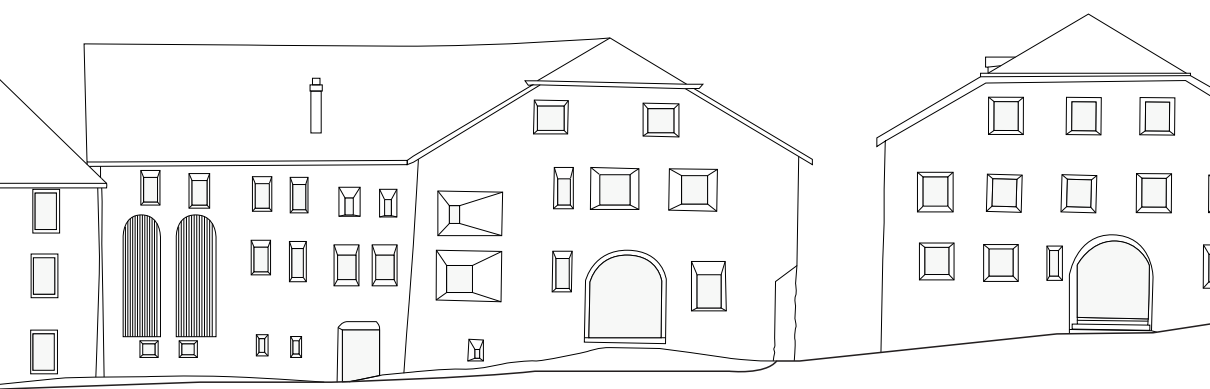


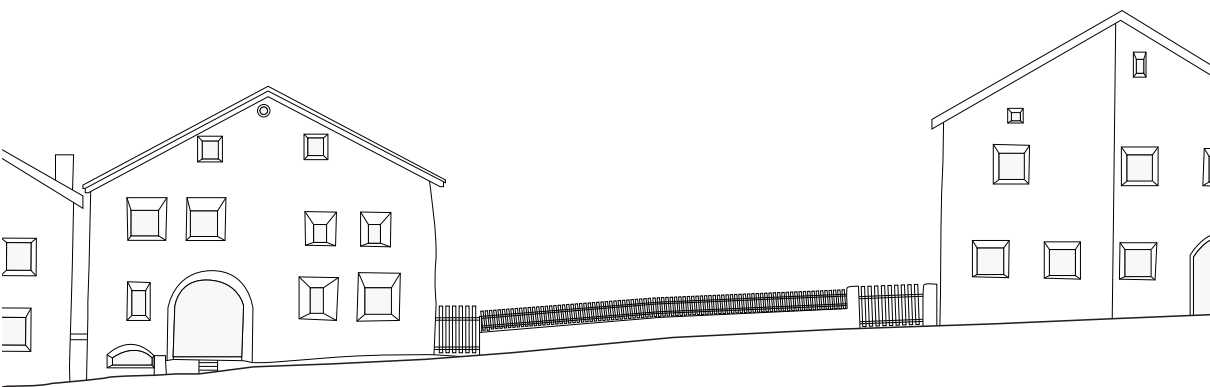


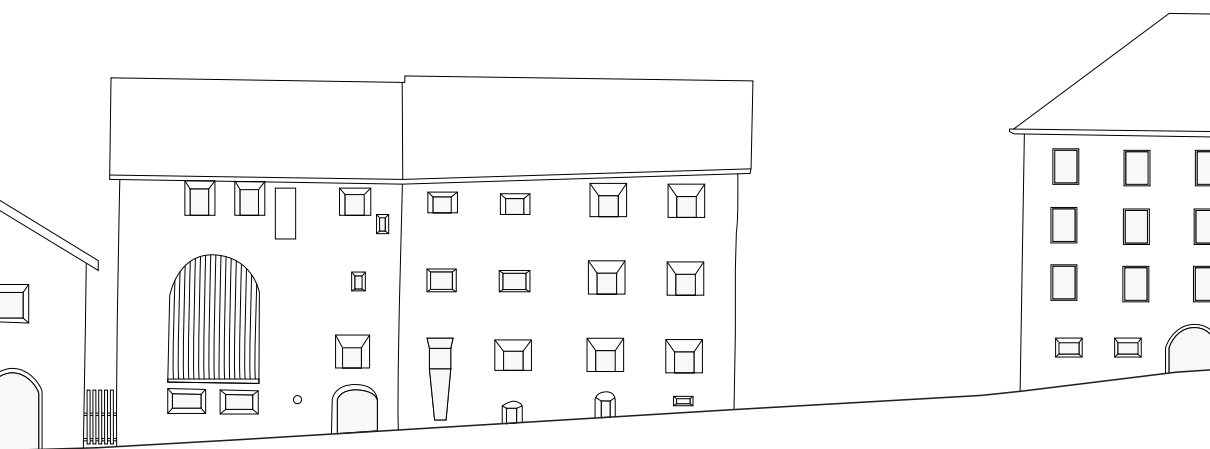


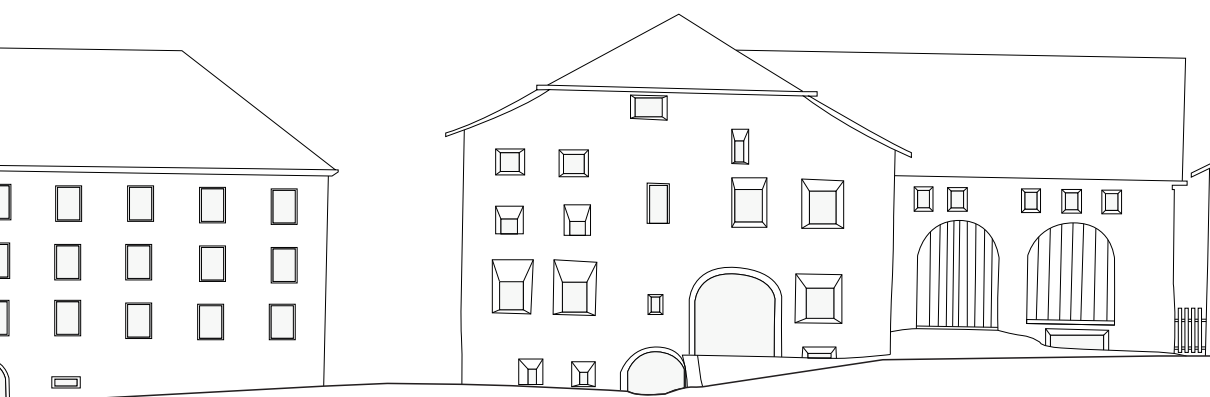


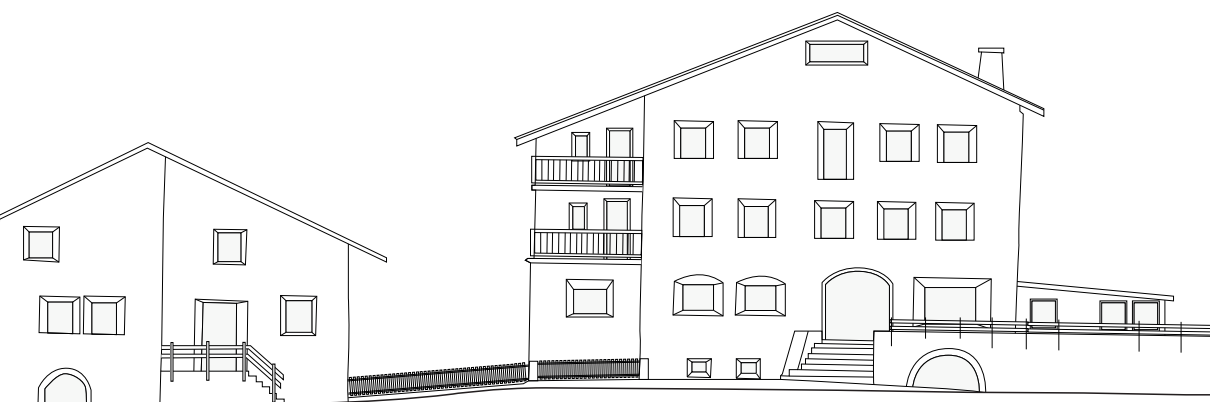












As mentioned previously, the farmhouse typology for the village in the Lower Engadine, but also the Engadine as a whole is very specific. The way in which they are aesthetized nowadays is in strong contradiction in how they were erected and used. Their shapes, material choice and composition all came from a practical point of view. Not to say that the dwellers of old had no eye for beauty. On the contrary. The way in which walls, doors and facades were decorated indicate a high level of aestheticism flowing through the bodies of the inhabitants. This results in individual characteristic elements specific for these places. In the first encounters one has with these villages, there are a number of elements that strike the eye. The following pages show a fragment of these types.

The following typological elements were photographed:

House- and stable door

House bench

Bay window

Basement window

Grille

Off-cut corner

Sgraffito

For each village each of these elements has been documented. The method of repeating the same step and therefore learning about this step proved to work effectively. The photographic sets on the following pages show only a handful of the elements present in the village. The section 'House and stable doors' received its own appendix due to the vast amounts of doors present and their individual expression.

Elements like the bench and the bay window are strong architectural moments in the house and the village itself. They hold social qualities. For example, the bench is a moment of meeting, resting, but also work. It was a place to do house-work, outside or to store items for farming.

The bay window is a more rare site in the village. Only a few houses have them due to their positioning. Most of the time, they are connected to the main living room and therefore provide an additional place to sit. Moreover, the way in which these bay windows are organised allows the inhabitants to look parallel into the street, perfectly for checking if the water fountain is available for watering the cows and seeing who is walking the street.

Some elements like the grille or the off-cut corner were only present in a couple of villages. The exact reason for this is unknown, but probably has to do with the rebuilding of some villages (Susch and Lavin) resulting in the absence of the element.

House- and stabledoor



Sur Punt 78, Susch



Via Maistra 27, Lavin



Chasa 51, Guarda



Plaz 83, Ardez



Vichava 8, Ftan



Fontana 21, Tarasp

House bench



Sur Punt 88, Susch



Via Maistra 27, Lavin



Chasa 46, Guarda



Plazzetta 103, Ardez



Vichava 19, Ftan



Chaposch 62, Tarasp

Bay window



Sur Punt 88, Susch



Via Maistra 27, Lavin



Chasa 46, Guarda



Plaz 99, Ardez



Vichava 19, Ftan



Sparsels 153, Tarasp

Basement window



Sur Punt 78, Susch



Surpunt 42, Lavin



Chasa 74, Guarda



Fusch 155, Ardez

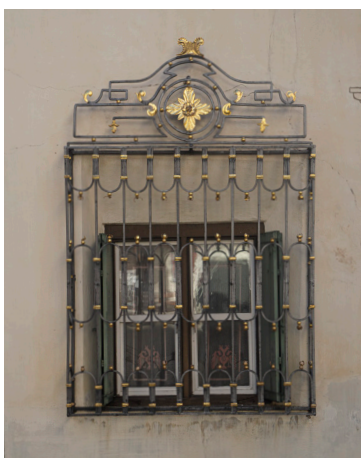


Plaz 116, Ftan



Fontana 25, Tarasp

Grille



Stradun 34, Guarda



Paramuvel 120, Ardez



Vichava 7, Ftan



Fontana 21, Tarasp

Off-cut corner



Chasa 51, Guarda



Crusch 118, Ardez

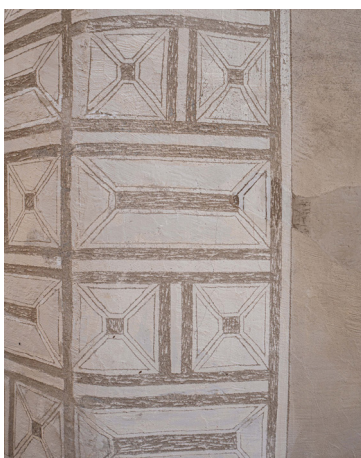


Rontsch 69, Ftan



Fontana Sura 28A, Tarasp

Sgraffito



Susch



Lavin



Guarda



Ardez



Ftan



Tarasp

3.6 Village Square

Until this point, the village was mainly researched by looking at facades, roads, alleys and the repeating elements. These 'rivers' as we could call them lead into one bigger pond: the village square. Depending on the size of the village the amount of squares vary in number. Around the church there's often a small square on which a water fountain is positioned and where activities can occur, like on the square in the picture on the right. The previously described typological elements come together to create one entity of intensity at the square. When walking through the villages, the squares are also points for reflection. Often, one stands still to observe just a little bit better in comparison with walking to a street. All of a sudden, relationships between buildings, the topography, the materials and texture, the colours of the landscape and the relation of the human body in all of this start to become visible.

The next pages show the results of the study into four different squares in the villages of Susch, Lavin, Guarda and Ardez. These points were chosen based on their expressional qualities and personal preference. All of them provoke a specific memory towards the place.

The previous study into typological elements formed the basis for the understanding of these squares. With this knowledge, the focus was first laid on the topography and the surface of the squares. Observing, lines, patterns, manhole covers, drainage gutters and the use of different sized stones resulted in four drawings for each village square.

From the square in Guarda a model was constructed investigating the proportions, openings and topography. The model, erected from styrofoam and wall filler was painted white. By doing this the essential becomes visible: the door openings and benches interact with the topography reinforcing one another. Additionally, the windows of the living rooms were left uncovered making it possible to look through them from behind and seeing how the individual houses are positioned around the square's water fountain.



Above: Overlooking the village's square, Ardez.
19/10/2021. Tim Stoop

Sitting on a bench at a square
Looking, listening, observing
..the facades
..the doors
..the people
..the stones
..the steel sewer covers

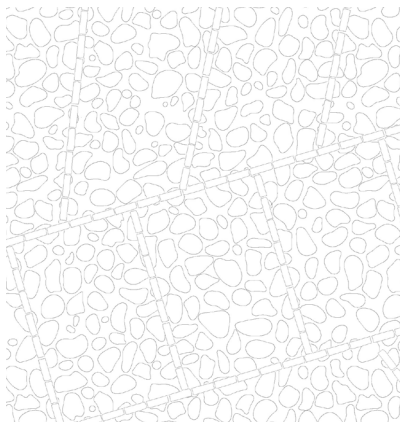
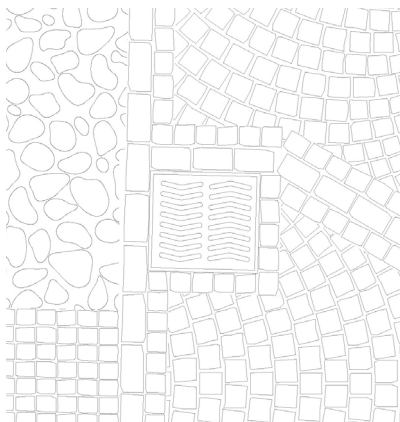
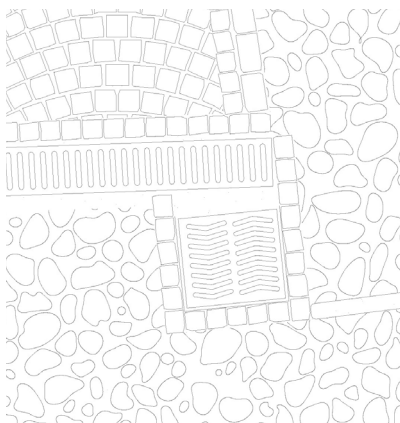
They all look the same and have this mark in them: "Giesserei Chur". Look how many there are at this point of the street. The round covers are different. They are made from a more slender steel profile with a steel inlay. Both covers have stones around them, following the round shape or the rectangular shape after which the free laid riverstone pattern continues again. There's an assemblage of steel covers, natural stone and river rock laying in front of me. Lines are even visible in the seemingly randomness of the river rock. They show the ways towards the square or towards the door. Fascinating, hidden stories!

It is through the observing of these small points on the square that the square as a whole can also be understood. With the houses directly positioned on the square, the drainage and therefore free use of the square is most important for these villages. The play of different patterns using a variety of rocks, the steel covers and the hidden lines leading towards doors, water fountains, alleys and so on show how the square is being used. By photographing these moments and a careful redrawing of these points, the at first glance hidden skin of the square becomes a tactile piece of fabric.

The next pages show redrawing of the stone patterns of the following squares:

Sur Punt in Susch
Pra San Jorg in Lavin
Plazzetta in Guarda
Fuschina in Ardez

The squares of Susch, Guarda and Ardez look alike in their 'randomness' and their authenticity, but it should be noted that the square in Susch is relatively new: it was repaved during the construction of the adjasoned Museum Susch.

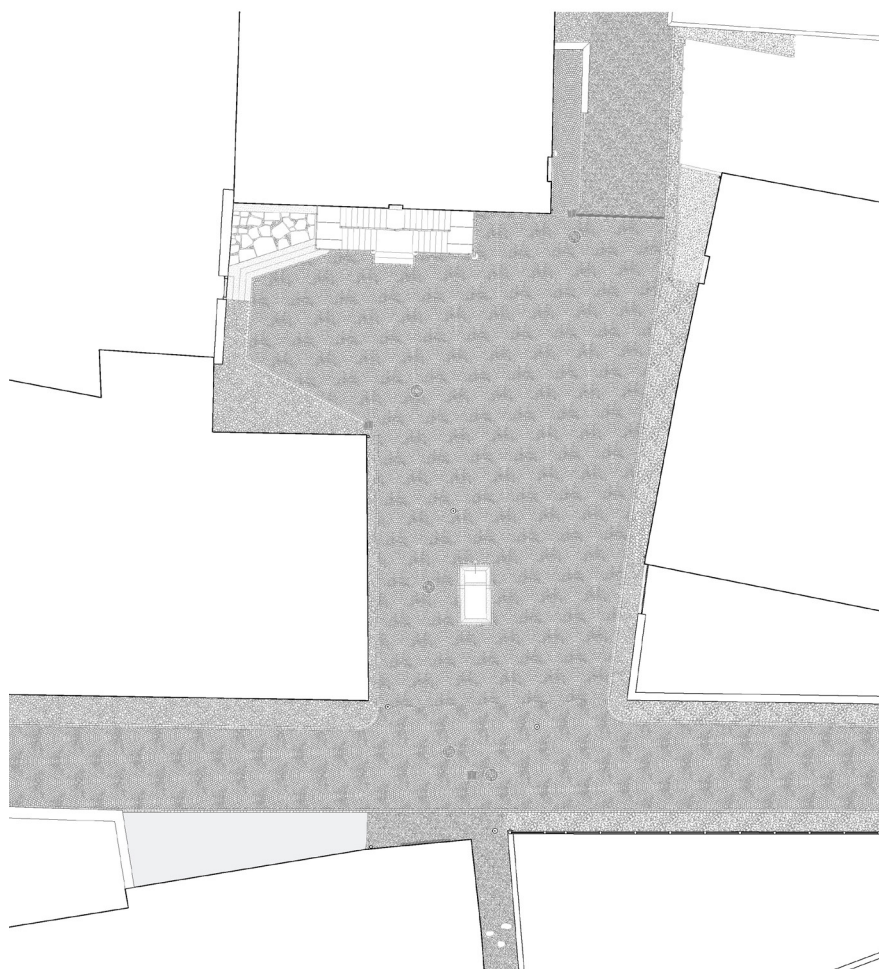


Points of assemblage in the villages of Ardez and Guarda.



Susch - Sur Punt

Presence in the villages

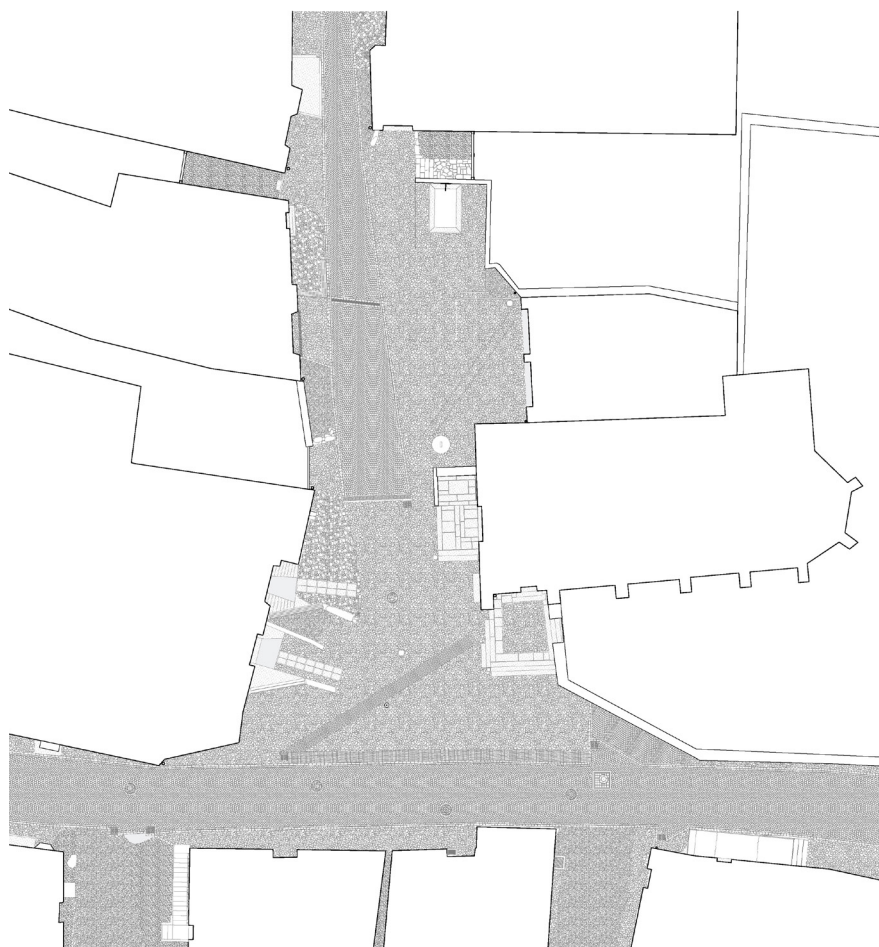


Lavin - Pra-San-Jörg

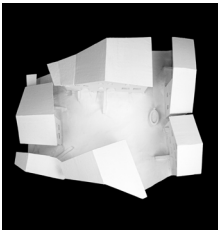
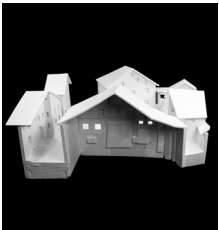
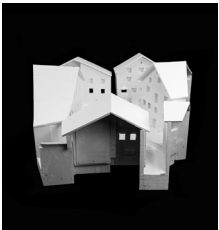


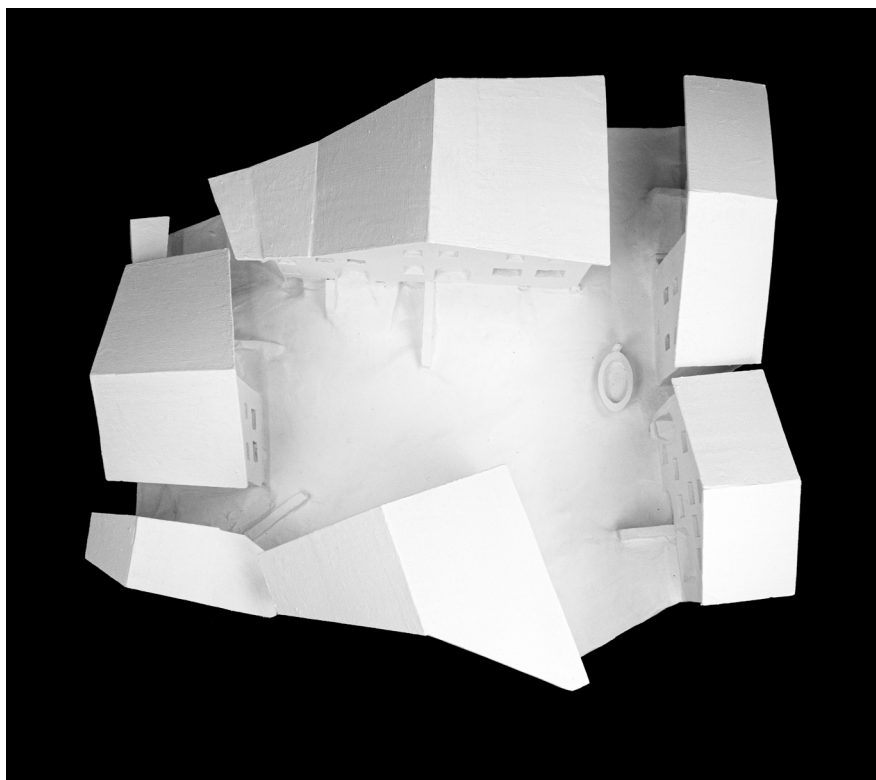
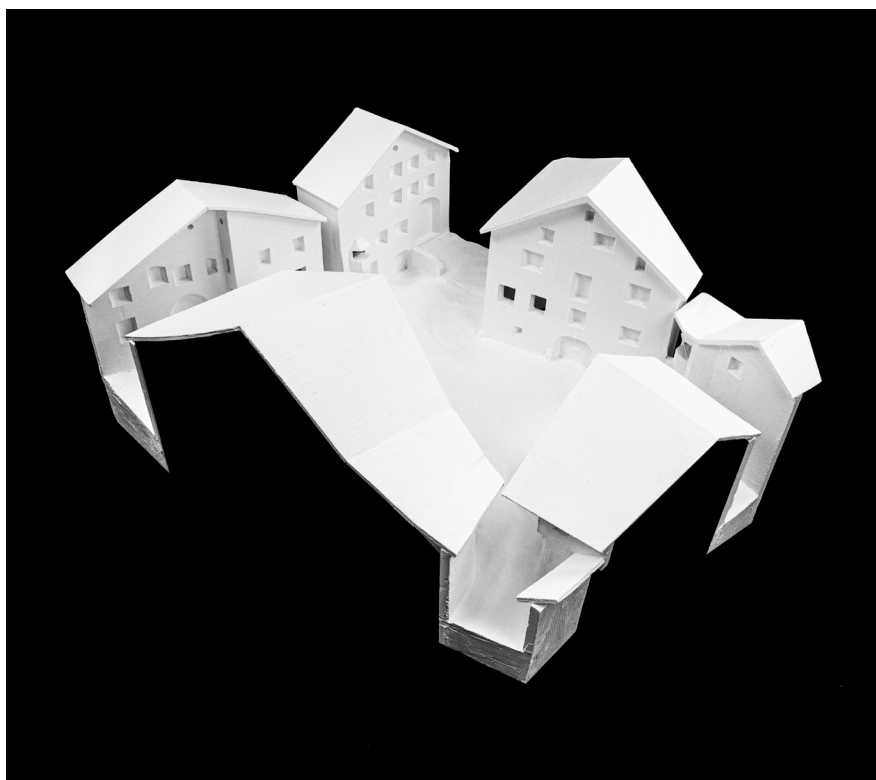
Guarda - Plazzetta

Presence in the villages



Ardez - Fuschina





The village as a body

In the exhibition 'Dear to Me' held from September 2017 to January 2018 in the Kunsthhaus Bregenz a celebration about all things culture was held involving cultural work throughout different means. In his latest eponymous monograph from 2021 the following definition of culture is given: "Culture is thinking about the world, looking closely, asking questions, listening, comprehending". This research started from the idea to observe closely what is happening in the valley of the Lower Engadine. The choice for this location can be traced back to two visits conducted in October of 2020 and August 2021. From these initial visits a specific fascination and deep love for the villages themselves from the perspective of craft, material and an overall attitude to life manifested itself. The intention for this research was to identify which values are embedded in these rural Alpine settlements, understand how they were formed and fathom how the local architectural typology works that together form a strong presence of place. This point was therefore to be researched further.

In retrospect, the definition of culture provided by Zumthor can be seen as a subconscious starting point for this research. Learning from the qualities of a certain place, means diving in, absorbing everything around you and trying to comprehend what is going on. In the field of architecture, where this research puts the focus on, the act of observing is extremely valuable. Only through this one is able to understand the continuous line of history of which we are a small part. Through a phenomenological lens the valley has been observed. The close reading of a place is an act of reading the embedded history and therefore an act of repetitional observation, through which the differences between objects on a very subtle scale can become visible. By means of a number of field experiments in combination with physical models and drawings the villages could be compared from which subsequently the local typology was to be understood.

The theoretical background formed itself around the definitions of 'Genius Loci', 'Atmosphere' and 'Presence'. These words grew to me personally over the years and are an extension of my personal way of working and therefore the unquestioned pillars throughout this research. The use of language during the site visit and the further research turned out to be an important factor. In some instances German words were not translated, keeping the essence and therefore the meaning of the word intact. To introduce the factor of slowness it was important to stay a certain amount of time in each village to absorb its presence. Two nights per village resulting in 18 days of walking, dwelling, documenting and reflecting in the valley. Due to the physical qualities of the places, the research outcomes would speak a similar physical language: a language of photographs, drawings and physical models based around five main topics: 'The body of landscape', 'Sounds of the village', 'Material presence', 'Dorfkörper' and 'Village square'. Each topic had its individual focus point, but aided in a deeper understanding of these places. The villages have proven themselves to be a vast treasure chest of cultural, social, political

and architectural systems that have organically formed themselves in and around the presence of the Alpine landscape. The pre-assumption that all villages more or less look alike was quickly abandoned after the two week site visit in October 2021. It turned out that each village, although sharing a general typological and stylistic influence and view on its direct surroundings, was radically different. Influences from invaders, fires, avalanches, general positioning in the valley and availability of materials drastically influenced the appearance of and the presence in these villages. It turned out to be a good thing: for the shaping of strong identity, difference is needed.

The vernacular type of the 'Engadiner Haus' is an example of how a repetition of the same object with minimal differences can shape a strong identity for the village as a whole. On itself, the house is an interesting typological piece, a time frame towards a different age. An age where people interacted differently to their surroundings and where customs and habits were directly embedded into the objects of everyday use. It is only when the house is observed alongside its direct surroundings that things start to blossom. Throughout the interplay and the creation of house-ensembles narrow alleys, squares and streets emerge. Certain spots have a swiftness leading people away or acting as a transit route, whereas others invite to slow down and stay for a longer period of time like the 'Brunnenkommune' in Guarda or Ardez for example. Here, the man-made objects constantly interact with the simultaneously by man influenced and shaped topography, both natural and cultivated.

The village becomes an object both created by man and nature. A system of planned and grown elements. Of a hierarchy between things thought out and naturally grown. The village acts as one object; one entity; one body, one 'Dorfkörper'. The village can be seen as one body in space. This metaphor for the village originated somewhere in the beginning of the project and grew overtime into a strong realisation about what the presence of a place truly means. A place in which all elements work together to create one expression or one memorable experience. After close observation of each individual element within the village, one more present than the other, they can be explained as separate parts of the body: each element acts as a separate organ with each their own character and atmospheric experience.

The water fountains are the lungs, breathing in the fresh Alpine air and sublimely bringing the water from within the mountain out towards a basin. It's a place of gathering and departure: a social place of movement. The sound from the bells in the church is a heartbeat. They clang and resonate at set times throughout the whole village giving structure and setting a rhythm for the inhabitants and visitors. A sound that powers the day and the night. The surface we walk on is a skin: uneven, sometimes rough, sometimes smooth, made beautiful by time. The intricate system of streets, alleys, paths and dead

ends is a vascular system. They lead the inhabitants towards neighbours and to work, visitors towards hotels and cafes, animals towards the meadows and stables and cars towards the next village in the valley. The houses are bones, holding everything together, giving strength and structure. They are interconnected to create a base from which other elements are allowed to grow. They work together to protect from outside influences. They share a similar language, but all are individually different. The surrounding landscape are ears; listening, hearing, observing and absorbing all sounds create by its actors. Sounds are stored in the landscape, hidden away and sometimes released in a burst of power.

Just as in a human body, each organ plays a vital role, Without one, the whole doesn't function properly. The village can and should therefore only be read as one entity: a scenography of elements, actors, decor and natural phenomena. The villages of the Lower Engadine are a good example of how the traditional and contemporaneity are intertwined and where one can see and learn about the continuous line of man living on and with this earth. The main question for this research, how does craftsmanship and the sense of materiality influence the embedded architectural qualities of eight Alpine villages in lower Engadine to create a strong presence of place, can therefore not be answered explicitly. One can however state that the village body consists of a respect for continuity: a respect for nature, materials, culture, building typology and history that together create a strong presence. The story of this presence is captured in a layered casing of continuity one can feel when traversing through these villages. It's a story of observing, documenting and giving attention towards the way the villages persistently change, adapt and form themselves over time. To be aware of this quality of slowness is the most meaningful aspect that came forth from this research.

View overlooking Ardez from the west after walking from Guarda.
17/10/2020, Susch. Tim Stoop.



Discussion and relevance

We live in a period where building physics and associated topics have such a significant impact on building design and expression that buildings from the 1960s or the Palladian era are no longer comparable. The buildings and the craftsmen's tasks were simpler back then. We no longer construct from the interior to the outside and from the outside to the inside because we must deal with different issues now. Additional questions generate a rift, rendering them uninteresting in public space because they lack the sensuality, shape, and attention to detail that the eye requires. If we don't want to lose the craft of construction, we can argue that we need to rediscover our trade; a step back to take two leaps forward.

One must position oneself as a member of society. You must cultivate and maintain an attitude toward society and the future. Our goal for the future is to continue to improve on what already exists. It takes time, practice, and some historical knowledge to build effective criteria for these kind of queries. Architecture can be thought of as a form of construction art. In some ways, it's a very tangible work, constructed from real objects that are in direct dialogue with the environment. We go to places in our line of work to get a sense of the place, to see and feel it, and to get an idea of how we could react to it as architects. We see new things every day.

New people, locations, situations, cultures, and traditions are all observed. We've all read books, seen movies, listened to music, traveled around the world, spoken with people from many walks of life, and shared ideas. All of these things combine to make us who and what we are. They serve as incubators for new ideas. When you work in the creative field, everything you do is connected to who you are. We are a part of the past. A thread of life populated by objects, things, or human acts. It explains where we came from and how we can move forward. To understand the people inhabiting places as an outsider is challenging. It's more difficult to understand what they mean when they say something like this or like that. The physical locations themselves are less problematic. It is an act that everyone can complete if they learn to take their time, be patient, and develop the ability to behold. To construct a method of seeing at the location, one looks at the landscape, terrain, buildings, materials, breathes in the air, and listens to the sounds. There is the creation of an interior image. We can naturally react, imagine, and envision genuine locations before they are built as a result of this. It's about observing a location and imagining how one may react to it.

However, doing so means to immerse oneself in it, explaining and documenting what is on and underneath those surfaces. In most cases, the history of such places may be found on paper. would state that history doesn't just happen when one has a source from which to draw information. Words on paper are just that: words on paper. They describe a tangible object. Especially in the case of architecture, a physical art

of construction, the object itself is lost and, regrettably, becomes an academic history.

Rather, I'd vow to approach places largely through their physical history, which is preserved in the objects themselves like has been the case with the context for this research. The place where a building stands is always a historic place whose traces of history are stored in the topography, a village, a townscape, a city or in the landscape. The newly constructed thing begins to resonate and becomes more valuable as a result of its connection to these kinds of histories than it would be if it stood alone. It's lot easier to be successful with the new things you add if we can work with things that already exist and have a history. By connecting, it forms a holistic atmosphere.

This research was a first attempt at understanding a new location as an outsider by fully immersing oneself in the environment. The proposed research approach and methods were a direct response to academic dogma surrounding architectural typologies and locations study. epetition has been put on a pedestal allowing it to become the primary viewpoint for the researched location. Through this methodology it was possible to capture the physicality of the sites allowing for the observation of minor shifts, variances, and nuances in their intensities.

Categorising a versatility of research methods gave way to focus on different elements that revealed themselves during the initial site visit. It was evident from the start that the study would not end up being a catalog or toolbox of research methods. Each site is unique and necessitates a distinct approach of observation. The fundamental goal of this research approach was to train oneself and become familiar with the location. The open structure of methods also allowed room for exploration on the site and flexibility of experiments. Ironically, putting thoughts on paper in the form of poetry has proven to be a really effective way of comprehending and making sense of the entire situation. Poetry is of course no academic or technical description for observations. Rather it's an intuitive way of dealing with what the beholder sees and how one tries to capture that essence in words.

Reflection

Instead of promoting a specific goal, Explore Lab allows students to focus on their interests. During prior studio sessions and workshops I attended, which were mostly in the department of Form & Modelling studies, I had a similar sense of liberation. Their techniques were frequently directed toward architectural composition and perception, with a focus on the research, visualisation, and explanation of basic phenomena using physical models. Throughout the master's program, a recurring theme was the study of proportional systems, scales, and material assemblage. This project takes on these multiple scales and sensitivities of the landscape in a similar fashion and tries to add to the idea of the model as a functioning research tool. I was able to follow my interests thanks to Explore Lab's platform and the help and advice of my teachers. This graduating year was the first time I was able to go my own way without being shackled, but rather put my personal framework into action, which was the result of many years of practicing, learning, making, and thinking.

With that said, this research could also be seen as one large, comprehensive site study that provides the minimal conditions and knowledge one should know before a suitable design proposal can be put on paper. I'll be honest and state that I set out with the intention of creating a design for a location in or near the villages of a specific valley in the Lower Engadine. The precise site would emerge while conducting the research itself, which it fortunately did in the end. Most importantly, it was more enjoyable for me to conduct a highly physical investigation using site visits, models, and drawings rather than a more standard literary research method. More philosophical and poetical essays helped to bridge the gap between the two sorts of inquiry, thereby justifying my efforts in some ways. This resulted in a wide range of knowledge related to the architecture and topography of the villages. Structuring this in one complete story sometime proved to be difficult. I have a tendency of explaining everything, which is not always necessary. With the guiding of my mentor it was nevertheless possible to order the different results while still retaining its layering.

My personal framework, which served as the foundation for the research, has evolved over time and will continue to do so in the years and experiences to come. As an architect, I believe it is critical to be able to determine which language best suits oneself. You can express a sense of life through buildings, paintings, music, and other mediums. Through careful consideration of location, methods, approaches, and documentation, I learnt how to explore these concepts.

Through this research the step towards a design proposal could be made. Two locations were chosen based on the findings and understanding of the locations. An addendum in the form of holding a lecture at the Fundaziun Nairs in Switzerland after this final portion of the graduation time might be an intriguing closing point of the graduation year in which the results are discussed in their direct context alongside

its inhabitants. Throughout the conducted research it was possible to, in a brief window of time, fathom the essence and intensity of the valley and its different villages. Simultaneously, it became evident that spending more time in the presence of the population was necessary to properly comprehend their cultural past and habits. This would further solidify the knowledge of the location and improve the positioning of a potential design. Additionally further research into local arts, music, poetry and vernacular building types could be conducted. It would not only provide nourishment for the researcher and serve as a token of appreciation for the residents of these communities, but it might also start a debate among the valley's residents. An outsider's perspective can elicit new sensations or concepts that are relevant to the communities' future growth.

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Image list

All photographs, models, and sketches in the thesis are my own work, with the exception of the images below.

- P. 23 Geogr.mapplus.ch.
- P. 24 'Relief der Urchweiz', 1762-1786 - Franz Ludwig Pfyffer.
- The Devil's Bridge, St Gotthard Pass, 1803 - Joseph Mallord William Turner.
- P. 26 Palace Hotel St. Moritz, 1922 - Emil Cardinaux.
- P. 29 Alpine fallow lands, p. 217 - ETH Zürich.
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- P. 97 'Urfränzlis' - <https://www.fraenzlis.ch/de/fraenzlis/geschichtliches/>.
- P. 136 Retracing of 'Schnitt 1:500' - Lorea Schonenberger.



Appendixes

I	Daily journal
II	Conversations
III	Doors
IV	Water fountains
V	Textures
VI	Additional maps

During the journey through the Lower Engadine a daily journey with notes, sketches, measurements and general observations was kept. This journal was mainly used to reflect on the findings after a day of conducting research and gathering personal thoughts. The journal starts in Susch and ends in Tschlin and shows the changing perspective on conducting field research as well as the tedious and agonizing parts of the repetitional qualities of the experiments.

The next pages hold 14 descriptions of 14 days of traversing, looking, observing and experiences of the 8 different villages. Each day is has been given a title depending on the findings of that day. Personal taken photographs support the written text. The images weren't necessarily taken on the same day of the journal description, but can have a date during the period of visiting the village. A detailed description of the location of each photograph is supplied.

Originally documented in softcover Moleskine 19x25 cm / 7.5x9.75 in.
Written in English using Muji Ballpoint pen knock type body

Each daily description was written in a loose telegram style based format. This format has not been adapted nor have sentences been changed. This has been done in order to keep the original observations intact. Grammatical or orthography errors should be ignored.

Appendix I

Daily journal

Karakterlose Zeit	I	11 October
Starting the narrative	II	12 October
Wooden room	III	13 October
Presence of the sun	IV	14 October
Discovering Gonda	V	15 October
What is Guarda?	VI	16 October
Quiet beauty	VII	17 October
Square in Ardez	VIII	18 October
Changing colours	IX	19 October
Feeling tired	X	20 October
Stars in the night	XI	21 October
Desolate living	XII	22 October
Engadine stories	XIII	23 October
The last day	XIV	24 October

Today the journey departed from Chur with the destination Susch. The first train; delayed. Waiting for 30 minutes. The day was sunny, but I slept through most of the journey itself. Arriving in Susch nobody left the train apart from me. I sat down and had some bread. Looking down at the village that lies in front of me, thinking of what to do. Being quite stunned and disoriented I have to say. Walking down from the train station along a gravel path I entered Susch. The village opened itself but was abruptly cut in tow by the asphalt road. There were no footpaths. I crossed the road only to find a closed door of the woodworker. I decided to walk to the closed museum. There, the street was just as beautiful as I remembered when I was there half a year before. I walked to the end and with a bit of resistance I took out my camera. Still feeling disoriented, unsure what to. Starting photographing and recording which didn't work for me. I went back to the woodworker who just called me. He opened the door and walked me to the other workplace. Here, the overseer Peider Müller greeted me and said I had to come back at 15:30. He would find some place for me to sleep. I went back to the street and the Not Vital structure. I photographed the area. At 15:30 I went back to Peider. He couldn't offer me space in his workshop but mentioned I should try at Claudio von Planta in the von Planta tower. I walked back to the same street for the fourth time. At the tower somebody opened the door and immediately invited me in. The enormous house was very dark and gloomy. The people were very friendly. I could stay as long as I want from Claudio. I talked to the guy who opened the door but who didn't give me his name at first. He told me some amazing stories that night about his life. Things you cannot imagine. He reminded me of Dan. I just caught his name while writing this: Gian Attilio. He mentioned that a friend of him thought of the world as a 'Karakterlose Zeit' where people don't know about certain stuff. He mentioned Nietzsche, foreign languages and important politicians: continuity. I have to admit I also didn't know many of the character he described. Probably I grew up in this time. I have to think on this. Now we go for a walk with the dog.

It was really dark outside. Pitch black. Seeing nothing, really nothing. Only a few stars, but with the light from those you still couldn't see a thing. The air was fresh. It was a nice evening, but I was shivering from the cold and therefore happy to go inside again. The day was over. What did I learn and see? Not as much as I would have wanted. Tomorrow needs to be better. Let's see...

Starting the narrative

12 October Day 2

I woke up at 8:30. The bed was a bit short, so the night was difficult. Breakfast was simple. Bacon, two fried eggs, bread, yoghurt and some coffee. The Peruvian guy who was living in the same house came into the living room singing. Later I went out to do my stuff. Measuring the whole street. Starting at the church and moving left and right. Slowly my hands were getting colder. Measuring, photographing, is this necessary? That is interesting! The story of the pavement and its thresholds. Niches, those doors, a gate, a leading towards the same street. Documenting and observing the important corners was a tedious task. Let's hope this was the biggest pavement session of this study trip.

The Sgraffito course was really nice. The guy as a bit in a rush, but the end result is was counted. It started to rain a bit. I finished my measurements and did some sound recordings. I went home and talked to an artist called 'Foxy'. He mentioned some interesting points. Also regarding transferring textures. He did this as well. The coloured stones in front of the house were his. What a coincidence! I till need to do the textures for Susch, but was too tired. It was already dark once we finished talking. Walking to Lavin tomorrow will be good. It's still quite cold. Also indoors. While sketching that day I confronted myself with the idea of memory and what you find important to remember..



Most southern building of Susch's east bank. Surpunt 75.
Taken from Sot Platz looking east.
11/10/2020, Susch. Tim Stoop.

Wooden room

13 October Day 3

At the square in front of the school I felt it. This presence. The same I got in Bellnizona or on the Kornplatz in Chur. Apparently a good square can make you feel this way. Make you feel important? I don't like the main square in Lavin. Too many cars and tourists. Too open maybe. I have too figure that one out still.

Today I finished my stuff in Susch. The snow was already gone by the time I woke up, but the stone were still wet. I had to find some dry spots to do the textures on. After this, I packed my stuff to walk to Lavin. Before, I did some quick sound and film recordings on the nearest hill and afterwards walked for one hour. The sun was out, but nevertheless happy that I brought some gloves. Along the way I stopped at a field with around 10 cows. I observed how the leader led the group. Slowly the village of Lavin popped up from in-between the trees. And then all of a sudden it was there. the buildings were placed high up at the hill, in the sunlight. I walked up the main road towards the centre. Immediately it was clear how different Lavin was in comparison with Susch. In Lavin there was no main road splitting the village into two. Rather, it functioned as a whole. Also the Sgraffito here was more painted on than scratched into the wall. The church was positioned on the edge of the village. Overall there was less ornamentation, but many more water fountains. I walked around the whole afternoon. Documenting everything I saw. Afterwards I went to meet the architect Urs Padrun. He showed me the office and place where I could spend the night. We also discussed some good topics to further explore in hotel Piz Linard.

I prepared myself for the night. Too many flies! The room was completely made out of wood. Floor, walls and ceiling all covered in thick wooden planks. The smell of the wood very much present. The beams cracked every now and again. I got a splinter in my finger and went to sleep.

Presence of the sun

14 October Day 4

I woke up after a hard night. My pillow had been quite uncomfortable and my neck hurt. I got some breakfast and packed my stuff. It was a really nice morning. The ground was frozen and the air was fresh. I set out to walk towards the edge of the village and walk higher up to film a wide shot of the village. At that point (9:00) the sun came from behind the mountain. You could see it gliding over the grass. There was a line visible on the mountain where the trees were still a bit frozen. After having sat down for a bit I went down again to record the sounds of the water fountains and transfer the textures. This time I felt even more 'watched' since I was in a more open village. One got the feeling of being in the open and not being able to 'hide' in between the buildings.

Afterwards I went to the office again to get a break. Urs gave me some books to read about the topics I'm researching. I went to get some dinner after and do the final measurements of the square. In the evening I scanned all the books. I found out that the square in front of the office, where I felt the presence on the first day, was the original main square of Lavin before the fire.



Most southern building of Susch's east bank. Surpunt 75.
Taken from Sot Platz looking east.
11/10/2020, Susch. Tim Stoop.

Discovering Gonda

15 October Day 5

Today I left Lavin. The route was a walk up to Guarda. Quite exhausting. I started to feel the strain of the backpacks on my shoulders. Halfway I discovered an old set of ruins from the settlement of Gonda. There were beautiful Birch, Ahorn and Spruce trees. After having taken of these ruins I continued on my way to Guarda. There the main street turned out to be a real climb. On my way I overtook many people. A lot of tourists. I put my stuff down at the B&B and took a bit longer of a break. I packed my camera and started traversing through the village. Too many people! I had made an appointment with Thomas Lampert in Garsun. For this I took the Postbus. In the bus trip I overheard a lady saying: 'so, that was Guarda. A bit different than I expected' Clearly a lot of day tourists come to this place.

Garsun has some interesting old parts and structures like the church, but this settlement was split in two by a main road just like in Susch. Thomas Lampert wasn't there. I forgot our appointment, so we rescheduled it to tomorrow. I had to wait for the bus again. About an hour. Back in the village I immediately went up the mountain to see it from higher up. It was a bit later on the day and one could notice how the streets were much emptier than before. I had the opportunity to document the typologies better now, but had to work quickly since it was getting dark quite fast. Exhausted, I went back to my room and fell asleep instantly.



House ruins from the old settlement of Gonda.
Taken from eastern meadow Curtins Sura, looking west.
15/10/2020, Lavin-Guarda. Tim Stoop

What is Guarda?

16 October Day 6

I slept well. It was already 8:30, I had to force myself out of bed. A bit reluctant to start with the work. For some reason I didn't like the repetition. Caminada wrote about this. I walked up the mountain again. A stone path leading to some trees. I watched the cows going from the stables to the meadows and people and tourists from their houses towards their daily hikes and work. I had breakfast up the mountain which was nice and did another movie. The shot wasn't that nice, but who cares!

Walking down, I sat down for some time at the graveyard and phone called home. I recorded the church bells at 11:00 instead of at 12:00 since I had to meet Thomas Lampert at 12:00 in Garsun. I again took the Postbus, but didn't pay for my ticket. At the bus stop I met Urs again. Together with his two sons he was going to St. Gallen for a week. In Garsun they went on a train. We said goodbye and I thanked him again for everything. It was a 10 minute walk from the station to Thoms Lampert, the blacksmith. At first I noticed how he was a bit distant. I got the feeling I was figuring me out and I had to take me serious or not. The questions went well; he liked them a lot! Later, he showed me around in the workshop. We shook hands and said goodbye.

Back in the village I had to do a few minor things. Textures, pavement sound recordings and measurements of the square. Afterwards I went to my room again. The village already appeared much nicer to me. The flock of tourists gathered themselves at the main hotel (Meisser Lodge) on the terraces and lounge chairs. I found it a bit snobbish or fake. What is Guarda? One big amusement park? A museum with more than 1 gift shop to keep it light for everyone, not just the museum-go'er? A village with a facade? Or is there maybe still live inside of it? The younger and older sheep I saw and heard in the stable showed me there was still some traditional village live left. Tomorrow I walk to Ardez. Hopefully I have a place to stay for the night. I'm looking forward to go back home as well I have to admit...

Quiet beauty

17 October Day 7

Sunday, I got a coffee and grabbed my stuff. After the straight walk through Bos-cha I sat down at a bench to have some breakfast. The weather was like it has been all the time: clear and sunny. After breakfast I continued my walk. It was not that far away. Going around a corner, first I thought it was another settlement like Bos-cha, but it turned out to be Ardez. It was hidden away behind a large hill; only showing itself at the last moment. I was to meet with Martin at this local bar at 18:00. I dropped off my bag at the bar and walked around the village. Taking pictures and making notes on where the fountains were. Halfway through I went up to a higher point near an old ruin. There I had some lunch. I took some time, calmed down and relaxed. Afterwards, I walked down again. Ardez was the largest village until now. Luckily it was as I expected. The beauty of Guarda with the quietness of Susch. It was a lovely Sunday to just walk around.

I was getting tired though. Martin messaged me that he was half an hour later. I therefore continued strolling around and went to an exposition of Studio Boltshauser. The sun was behind the mountain and the temperature dropped rapidly. My hands were getting cold.

At around 18:30 I met Martin at the bar. We sat down at a round table. There were 4 men and 1 woman already sitting around it. They were really friendly. Sometimes speaking Romansh. We talked about some interesting things. About people from the city and the country side. At around 11:30 after a few beers I was tired, but happy to have met these people. Martin and I went home. I went to bed immediately. The space was unheated and my sleeping bag wasn't that warm. I was shivering the whole night, but eventually fell asleep.

Square in Ardez

18 October Day 8

I was up at 5:00 and 6:00 because of the cold. I was able to sleep again and woke up at 8:00. The house was empty. Martin was already gone to his work. You could still smell the smoke of his cigarettes. I went to the shop and bought ome breakfast and lunch in advance. Starting with the water fountains was very easy. I started to mark them down on a map. Afterwards I walked up to the ruined tower to have a lunch and take in the view. Again, a very nice experience of walking, sitting, viewing and reflecting. I noticed how a lot of people had their front doors opened all the time. An inviting gesture. I sat down at the same granite bench at the square near the church as yesterday. The organ was playing, the fountain nearby. Two old ladies sitting and chatting. Somebody working with a chainsaw nearby, a car passed by. The ladies stood up, greeting me and walking off. Silence again. More wanderers crossed the square. A small group of four tourists, a dog barking, some doors opening and a car passing by again. A nice feeling. It was starting to get very warm. The square was radiating. I will go home for a minute now.

I was home for quite some time. Disoriented again about what had to happen. I went to the carpenter with which I made an appointment. It was a small talk, just 15 minutes long. He was the type of craftsman that is not really focussed on continuity of tradition. Still a good balance when compared to Thomas Lampert. I went home and started cooking. It was my birthday.



Ardez' main square. Church on the left.
Taken from upper Fuschina, looking south.
19/10/2020, Ardez. Tim Stoop

I woke up shivering. Despite the three layers of clothes I was still cold. Before breakfast I went out to measure the church's square. It was a cloudy day. Perfect for pictures and the temperature was comfortable too. The people in Ardez were always friendly. Greeting me: 'Allegra!' 'Bundi!'. I greeted back of course. My breakfast was simple: two eggs, some tomatoes, two croissants and a cup of coffee. Ardez, a beautiful village, but it was time to go. I walked east, towards the ruin tower on an asphalt road. Cars and bikes were not allowed since somewhere they were working. The road ahead was 1.5 hours. Quite steep in the beginning and afterwards levelled again. Whilst walking, I began to notice how the colour of the trees had changed. Upon first arrival in Engadine most of the trees were still green. Only a few were yellow. This time however almost all of them had turned into a yellow and orange hue. A beautiful landscape that is simply mesmerizing each time you see and wander through it.

Ftan was up ahead, but I couldn't see it yet. The first signs of life were bales of hay and some cows. Only after a few turns I saw the bell tower. I was not expecting much of Ftan to be honest. The images I have seen were of a holiday home village with just a few old streets. I would stay at a farmer's house in Ftan Pitschen, the northern, original part of Ftan. Arrival was from the south. I passed some hotels and wondered who would want to have a holiday in this village? What could it be that pulls them to this place? There wasn't a real centre or a main square to meet people or go to to read a newspaper. I continued upwards. My backpack getting heavier by the minute.

I decided beforehand to only stay in Ftan for 1 night. That meant I had to do my research quicker as I was used to do. Along the way I took photographs and marked the fountains locations. Upon arriving in Ftan Pitschen I was amazed by the amount of farmers and people working. Where the other four villages were much more quiet, Ftan was a busy bee. Construction workers had trucks coming and going. Farmers were driving their small trucks full of manure from A to B. So much was going on. There was no rest. So many different sounds. A complete surprise. I went to Giovanin Josty, a local bio-farmer. He showed me around his house and the room I could stay, but had to leave again for his work.

I went outside to walk more through the village and recorded almost all of the sounds of the fountains and documented the different typologies. Although the new part of Ftan had many new holiday homes, the old part was home of many old Engadiner Houses like seen in Guarda and Ardez. The pavement was different. No stones, just sand and gravel. During dinner Giovanin explained how when he was young he remembered how he played in the sand on the streets and dug canals to let the water flow through. He misses the dust that came from the sand.

Feeling tired

20 October Day 10

Waking up late. Outside a burning smell. It was a bit quieter compared to yesterday, but still very busy. I recorded the final fountain and bought breakfast at Volg. I walked up a road to get an overview of Ftan. There were many people doing the same thing. There was a group of Dutch tourists. I greeted them, they didn't greet me back. Again yellow trees, but this time the sky wasn't that clear. I could hardly see the other side of the valley.

The rest of the day I filled with walking around the village. At around 15:00 I took off. The road would be long: from Ftan down towards Scuol, afterwards up again to Tarasp. It was sunny, no jacket necessary. A gravel path, more people coming down by bike. How fast they were going! Also the smaller kids. At the station I had to walk up. However the previous trips started to have their influence on my dexterity. I told myself to at least go to the first bus stop after the station in the settlement of Vulpera. A small group of buildings focussed along a street. There I took a bus. The road towards Tarasp was curvy. I'm still amazed by how the bus drivers know these roads so well and can drive that fast. Tarasp itself is a scattered village, no homogeneity. Small patches of houses laying in the landscape. At the end of the afternoon the sun was already gone behind the mountain. It started to get cold quickly. Therefore, I went to my host. A nice apartment in the middle of one of the patches.



Ftan's detached bell tower.
Taken from Suot Muriütsch, looking south.
19/10/2020, Ftan. Tim Stoop

Stars in the night

21 October Day 11

After a long sleep I had breakfast at around 10:00. Then I started to call people in Tshclin for my final place of stay. Almost none of the people I called picked up the phone. I thus went outside to record the water fountains and take photographs. Since this village is so small I took my time and worked slowly, taking breaks in between. It was already late afternoon when I was finished. I quickly went for groceries before the shop closed and took a bus to Vulpera. From there I walked for 20 minutes down to Fundaziun Nairs. This place was beautiful. An old water drinking hall. At that evening there would be a lecture about the presence of village in the Lower Engadine hosted by Boltshauser. It was a perfect coincidence since the topic fit right in with my own research. On walking down the staircase, Gion Caminada passed me. A bit surreal. The lecture itself was interesting and fruitful. One could notice the difference of thought between Gion Caminada and the younger architect Chasper Schmidlin. The first had a strong thought out position and view of the world, where the latter had a less coherent story or maybe more superficial. When the lecture finished I went back to Tarasp by taxi. It was pitch black outside, curving roads and stars. Walking the last part on foot home I noticed the stars. You could even see Jupiter. The darkness of the sky, the stars and the fresh night air gave me an amazing feeling.

Desolate living

22 October Day 12

I woke up late again. I began to notice how I felt more and more tired by every day. Luckily I found a place to stay in Tschlin for my last days there. It turned out to be a good idea to stay a bit longer in Tarasp. Since the village itself was so small I was relatively quick with my researches. The also gave the opportunity for the two lectures and a visit to the castle of Not Vital. Inside were some great artworks and outside sculptures one could visit. One of them was a concrete tower with three stairs: a house to watch the sunset. The climb was quite steep and the descend therefore just as scary. After the visit to the castle I bought some groceries and put them walked around the farthest part of Tarasp. Wondering what it would be to live here, so desolate, away from everybody else. I stumbled upon a nice dog and drank some water from a fountain. Afterwards I went back again to put the groceries in the fridge. At that time it was already late and time to go to the second lecture. There I met Urs again and talked to Momoyo Kaijima. The lecture itself was less interesting than the one from the day before, but still it was an inspiring topic. I also met Mayo Bucher, a local art foundation owner and son of Heidi Bucher. I emailed him before my visit already. Maybe once graduation is finished, he could be the next step forward. Once the lecture was finished, Urs brought me back to Tarasp. There we said a final goodbye. I wouldn't see him anymore for the rest of the trip.



Not Vitals' 'House to watch the sunset', 2018
Taken from a nearby hill, looking north.
22/10/2020, Tarasp Sparsels. Tim Stoop

I woke up very early and went out before breakfast to draw the textures and measure the square in front of the church. The sun was only partially over the mountain and therefore it was still cold and a little bit gloomy. The air was fresh, cold a light. Nice to walk through, but cold for the hands. I finished within an hour and went back to the apartment. There I had breakfast with Riet Fanzun, former employee of my internship office. We talked about Men Duri, my former boss, the Engadine and graduating. Riet mentioned two stories: one of the grandhotelss and how they are now almost all empty because they are too big. Better it would be to make something smaller and exclusive to the place to survive. The other story was about the water-drinking sources. Stone with a certain type of minerals are right at the surface here in Lower Engadine. Apparently this is unique in Europe. In the past people used to travel to the Engadine, stay in these Grand hotels and drinkinghalls to consume and bath in the mineral water. Nowadays however, this is no longer the case.

I took a bus to Scuol-Tarasp station and switched to get on a bus to Ramosch that would bring me to Vna. A lot of people were with me on the bus. Apparently there was a beer-walking-route from Vna to Tschlin. The only bus was full however and we had to wait. Luckily the bus driver returned quickly since he couldn't let the people wait. That would never happen in the Netherlands.

The route from Vna to Tschlin took four hours, it was difficult. My backpacks were heavy and straining. Some parts were going up really steep. I had to balance my steps to not fall. At the start many people were walking alongside me. They were stopping for beers, but I continued. I continued however and eventually arrived at the last part of my walk. I was exhausted, but glad to see the bell-tower of Tschlin. I settled in my room and took a quite nap. Afterwards I went out and started to take photographs of the village. What an amazing village Tschlin was. It was amazing to just take a stroll on the pavement, up and down, past the water fountains, greeting some locals and asking them about how they live. It became dark fast, therefore I went back, bought some groceries and cooked. Afterwards, I went to bed.

The last day

24 October Day 14

On the last full day in Tschlin I had an appointment with Curdin. We met at his home. He was an artist foundation owner and did several projects in Tschlin. We spoke Dutch, since he lectured and taught at the Harman Brood Academy. He showed me around and afterwards we went up on an Alp where he showed me around. He explained how the water came down in small canals carved in the landscape and how the Romans used to travel up on the mountain. He asked me to help him with chopping and moving some wood he had laying around. Of course I did. There we found a few of these old Roman roads, hidden in the landscape. After we drove back we had a beer in his garden and I helped him with a cow that had set free. I thanked him for the morning and wished him goodbye.

My last afternoon in Tschlin and the Lower Engadine was filled with measuring and taking pictures. Filled with images, ideas, thoughts and experiences I was slowly arriving at the end of my research journey. With all this information I could start the second part of my research and slowly start to think about my design. A hotel and a theatre seemed to be two options I could explore further. After having spoken to local people these two typologies seemed to be a logical topic to explore. Combining these types with the act of walking from point A to point B and connecting them to the history of the landscape and the story of the Grand hotels will probably be the main path I will take next.

Tomorrow I will travel back to Chur via train. I will see the landscape one last time, before winter will cover it in a thick pack of snow. On my way I have to collect the piece of Sgraffito from Josin in Susch. Then I can see my friends in Chur again and travel back on Tuesday. It had been beautiful to stay in this valley. Meeting different people and learning about this place. But it has also been exhausting and intense. Of course this was to be expected, but I could do with a few days rest. Unfortunately, I do not have them...



Narrow street in Tschlin's main street.
Taken from Bügl Sura looking northeast.
23/10/2020, Tschlin. Tim Stoop

The following pages hold the transcriptions of the most prominent conversations held during the visits of the villages. In the planning of the visit some contacts and appointments were already scheduled, but in some cases the interviews were arranged during the trip itself. Questions specific to craft were pre-formulated and taken as a structure in the dialogues with these craftsmen. This structure was however loose and open for interpretation as the interview went on. Questions were adapted and reformulated on the go.

The conversations with Lüzzi Koch and Foxy were spontaneous and therefore no pre-formulated questions were conducted nor asked. Those transcriptions therefore also appear more unstructured and start in the middle of a conversation. The reformulating and transcription of the conversation with Lüzzi Koch in the bar in Ardez appeared to be specifically difficult to perform due to the amounts of background noise and the constant switching between German, Swiss-German and Romansh, therefore resulting in a certain brevity and telegraphic style in comparison with other conversations.

The evening at the Fundaziun Nairs in Scuol hosted by Roger Boltshauser who was interviewing Gion Caminada, Aita Flury and Chasper Schimidlin hasn't been translated into English. Some words, sentences and paragraphs of Gion Caminada make the most sense in the original language. Additionally, this lecture was compacted to focus only on the most relevant topics.

All transcriptions start without an introduction and are written down exactly as the conversation happened.

Recorded on: Tascam DR-05X and OnePlus 6T

Total duration: 485 minutes

Format: wav. and mp3.

Original language: German with parts in Swiss German

Transcribed to: English

All conversations were held in an informal format in which the interviewed gave permission for their voice to be recorded and stored digitally.

Appendix II

Conversations

Landscape colours	Josin Neuhäusler	Sgraffito artist
Stone patterns	Foxy	Artist
Grundhaltung	Urs Padrun	Architect
Mediation of Craft	Thoms Lampert	Blacksmith
Privatisation	Lüzzu Koch	Retired hunter
Local Potential	Andri Riatsch	Carpenter

Tradition und Gegenwart des Engadins Fundaziun Nairs

Josin Neuhäusler, Sgraffito artist
Workshop in Susch
October 12, 2021

TIM STOOP:

Thanks you very much, it was really fun. You were always speaking of the scratching about the sound of it. Now I understand what you mean. I know why you think it's beautiful, because it is! It's almost meditative.

JOSIN NEUHÄUSLER:

It's really meditative, that's what a lot of people say

TS:

How long are you working as a Sgraffito artist?

JN:

30 years

TS:

And always from Susch?

JN:

Yes, always from here, the kitchen, but in many places in Lower Engadine, Higher Engadine, the whole Canton of Graubünden. Not just in Susch or Zernez, everywhere.

TS:

Why are you here in Susch?

JN:

I grew up here and then had a basic education, a mason apprenticeship

–‘maurerlehre’. That is important. Then you know the products, what kind of materials to use. I did it here in Susch

TS:

You are speaking of these materials. Do these materials change or are they always the same?

JN:

No, they are and will always be the same. It’s lime plaster –‘Kalkputz’-. Lime plaster is the best. The houses in Guarda are 800 years and using this type of plaster. With it you can guarantee a type of quality. It will not crack or shrink. Absolutely lime plaster. It shouldn’t change.

TS:

What is this material exactly?

JN:

Sand from the river, sifted, lime and a little bit of cement. You can also pigment it which is really expensive or paint it with lime-pigments –‘Kalkpigmenten’-.

TS:

The materials don’t change, the patterns don’t change and neither does the technique itself. Is that difficult in our modern times?

JN:

It’s simply a tradition that has to continue. The tradition cannot die out. With the courses I hope to motivate young people to learn this craft. The story has to live on and shouldn’t just stop. It’s important, very important.

TS:

During the workshop you were speaking about the amounts of time it takes to make up a façade. Is there time-pressure when working on a project?

JN:

There’s no pressure. You cannot afford yourself to work under pressure, otherwise it will not work. It’s a process. It takes a lot of months to finish one house but you have to do it without pressure, without stress. You build it up, slowly over time. You have to take the right day in the year and then there is no stress of working with the material, if it will harden or stay soft. On a sunny day you do not work, then it dries out way too quickly. You take a rainy day, a humid day in summer not during winter. In winter everything freezes in no time.

TS:

Could you describe your working process?

JN:

You make a template -points towards a big hand drawn façade of a house- and talk with the owners. The drawing is scaleless; the bigger the better for me and for the owners to decide what we want. Then we work in a small team of 4 to 5 people each one of them having their own working step.

TS:

What do you find important in your work?

JN:

Proudness. In the end you leave behind an unique piece – ‘Einzelstück’-. You are proud to be a part of the generation who passes on this tradition. You are proud when you are finished and you look at your work. Nobody can take it from you. Nobody can copy it. You are simply proud, very proud.

TS:

How important is the relation with the landscape for you?

JN:

With the landscape, everything has to be right. Look at the colours outside. The old houses in Engadine have these colours -points outside to the trees-: the red, the yellow. Have you been to Guarda yet? When you look at those houses, you will see that many houses take over the colours of the trees, the larches; the yellow the ochre. Look at these calm colour hues.

TS:

How do you see the future of Sgraffito?

JN:

I hope that I find people who want to learn this techniques. But it has to happen now. These people has to learn it now since it takes 30 years to master. I have 2 ladies who are coming over and I'm sure one of them can do it, but it takes time and patience. They can start on big façades. But it has to continue. There are only 3 Sgraffito artist left: me and 2 other. The other two are both 65 years old. So something has to happen otherwise all the indigenous people are like ‘where are your successors?’

Foxy, artist

Living room in Tuor von Planta

October 12, 2021

The conversation starts of by Foxy showing some of his work. Mostly prints on canvas which he made himself in different locations and for certain occasions. Once of them was for a party for the Von Planta family. From there the conversations develops to other topics.

Foxy:

Then we had these pieces of cloth and the shirt we had hanging on a wire from the tower down and across the river. And then I also started making table cloths and T-shirts.

TS:

Are you still making them?

F:

Yes, but in Autumn there's no time to make them. -Shows pictures of Claudio's father in a similar patterned pair of trousers-. I didn't make them, Claudio's daughter made them for the father, but they go well together. I had the T-shirts from here, until the whole museum and across the whole river. You see the pattern, it's a railing, also on the shirts. You first have the get the idea to do it.

-Shows a T-shirt with a colourful pattern on it-. It's the structure of stone. This place where there wasn't really something going on. Near this place, part of a mountain broke off and came together with ice, water, gravel

and stone and became sort of stone lubricant. And demolished the whole village. You can look it up: Bondo, Bergsturz. But before that happened, I made tablecloths we have here at the table. So the landscape now is completely different.

The whole country is full of these stories of stone and devastation, but also about creating with stone. Therefore, you have to go to this stone constructor in Zernez. He will explain a lot about working with these river stones. Then you will see it. Probably when you ask him, he will tell you about some profession almost forgotten but somewhere still practiced. That is the art, it's everywhere the same. For example what was there first? Art or courtesans? What was there before the courtesans? Something existing. A courtesan is something existing. A stone is even more existing and art one stone is something really old, not? Finding rare or outdated professions is something you can do anywhere, but I doesn't end with just looking around. Go to this old stone manufacturer in Zernez. His name is Dino.

T:

Why do you choose to let your work be so unnoticed?

F:

In this house, everywhere there's something I made. You might see it in other places as well, but I don't care. I make it for myself and not for others. You won't find my name anywhere. I don't need it. Just my work. He who can do something with my work can do it, he who can't should leave it in peace. I'm doing it for myself not for somebody else. The point I have to do something for somebody, the result turns into shit. I cannot work for someone, just for myself.

Urs Padrun, Local architect
Hotel Piz Linard in Lavin
October 13, 2021

URS PADRUN:

One has an image of the Netherlands and one reads and sees these architects. I have the feeling it would really interest me to work in Holland, since you always have had something progressive and still have it. I think it has something to do with your multi-cultural society. When I compare this with Switzerland this is a bit different. Here it takes much longer before one is established. Therefore we have a high amount of foreign people who also stay foreign. That alienates me a bit because these always where chances for society. When we speak of place, not just in architecture, you see it everywhere, there's this disintegration of society. What I like about the Dutch architectural language that it is one of imperfection. Improvised stories. Maybe it also has to do that there's not really that much money there. Of course, your country isn't poor, on the contrary, but you notice these small differences when you compare it with Switzerland. This improvised 'cheap' architecture you slowly start to see it also in Switzerland. Today I was in a newly built house in Zurich with rough exposed concrete and unplastered bricks. It's completely not Swiss, much more Dutch or Belgian, but nevertheless an interesting story from which we can learn a lot.

Long we had the feeling that we had this amazing craftsmanship. I fully support the craftsmen and love to work with them and in my own work I try to maintain this 'Handwerkkultur', that is important. An important history from which we have plenty of here. That also has to do how our

education is organised. When foreign architects look at how we make stuff here they always say: 'Mein Gott, macht ihr das schon und macht ihr hier noch die Sache so'. I also find it beautiful and important, but you have to be careful that it isn't just beautiful. It has to fit. This is also a form of gentrification. Also in Engadine. People can hardly afford to renovate their houses and if these houses are renovated who is doing it, what kind of people? I'm on a point that I think it can flip to the other side. When I renovate an old 'Engadiner Haus' there's a nice client, a good story but the price of the house itself was already high and the additional costs are also high. This is a form of gentrification. Then I notice that I do not want to do these kind of projects that are now going on everywhere. The stories of building for locals, cooperative apartment, cultural organisations that is what I like more.

TS:

So are you now mostly interested in projects with a social character?

UP:

I think you can say it like that. You have to correct me if we go off-topic by the way. It always has to do with roots and responsibility and how you behave to certain situation and which direction you go into. I have let's say two stories. The first one I could see myself having a big office focussing on big projects. In the second one I would rather be a photographer or an artist working in an atelier. Making stuff, small projects. A position of a single actor. That I like also. Those are the first few decisions I took to decide why I wanted to come to here.

TS:

You didn't grow up here right?

UP:

No, I grew up in Chur. My father grew up here and after his death I inherited an empty house in Guarda, but I wasn't so bothered by this old house while I was 20 years old at that time. After I finished my studies when I was 26 I moved to Guarda with the thought that I would stay there for two years or so. Then you lose the track of time and notice that everything goes well and that you could easily stay at one place. Then I had this strong urge to build like many young architects have after study. I didn't focus on social projects; just the notion of building.

TS:

This is now you reflecting on your own path that you took.

UP:

Of course, it's a story of positioning. To notice how you start to develop a position. The theme of positioning is something I learned a bit from Peter Zumthor. In the late 90's he was an important unknown figure. After I finished my high school I didn't want to go to university. I wanted to do an apprenticeship, get a diploma and then move away from the valley towards the city. Then somebody said to me I had to go to this Peter Zumthor. He had just won a competition of a school. Nobody knows him, but you will like what he does. It was a coincidence. I was the second apprentice. The one before me was Jürg Conzett. This is one of those roads

you don't really choose, but comes at you by coincidence. It is important for everybody to find their basic attitude -Grundhaltung- to find a way to live life. What is your intuition? After Peter Zumthor, it wasn't certain that I would become an architect. I was doing a design education and I noticed I didn't want to do that either. It is a simple attitude of thinking, making and producing a product and leaving it behind after a year or two.

When we look at the Engadine. Here I'm still feel a bit like being a guest. I don't like to be a big part of the system. I like to be independent and work how I like to work. I and we are lucky that we are in a valley in which people find it important to renovate existing buildings in a good way. There are also other valleys in Switzerland where this importance is not present. This is an advantage of working here. It has also to do with freedom. Freedom to do more expensive designs or sometimes cheaper stuff. It's an everlasting discussion that forms a project. That I find exciting.

TS:

This attitude you are describing. Looks quite a lot like the attitude Zumthor has right now.

UP:

I think I agree. Of course an attitude like this is embedded in this area since forever. Of course you can't get around him as a person. But I notice that for a long period of time I wasn't able to work like that. I believe when you take the work seriously this basic attitude he has and shared with me is a strong attitude that can develop over time to fit the needs of the present. Once becomes conscious about this over time.

TS:

This is also a luxurious position of course.

UP:

Yes definitely. I think that creating this attitude is all about appreciate what is feasible for one to do. For certain people big stuff is doable, but when I was learning and choosing my position and attitude this small scale stuff was the norm and therefore feasible and nice for me to do between 17 and 21.

TS:

You have been talking about the attitude of people and how the attitude here is important to come to a certain quality. Do you think it also has to do with place? And the relation with people and place?

UP:

Yes, also. I believe it is a different form of respect and maybe also while it's easy to convey. Of course Switzerland has a different history compared to Holland after the second world war. It's a political story. The Lower Engadine is now well connected with the rest of Switzerland, but only from 1850. Of course the Upper Engadine was already well known for being a winter palace. A good example are the railway tracks in Engadine. When they were built when the Engadine was discovered by tourists they were built in the most beautiful way and not the fastest or cheapest way. You wouldn't do that anymore now. Curves were coming from the view

from the train and the perception of the train in the landscape. It also has to do with the expression and validation of beauty and a ground attitude of luxuriousness. That has proven to be important for the development of the Engadine. It's a curse and a blessing simultaneously. It's a story of perception. When I walk with students through for example Guarda, one has to ask why is it like this and how did it develop itself? But we can make it work here. One has to understand the persistence, look at the present and understand how something developed and then it also is about a look at the future. And with the future, that is difficult, since villages become like museums.

TS:

That is of course the question you are dealing with here: should these villages be seen as museum or a living organism that develops themselves?

UP:

That is a very important question here in this area. I always like to ask the question what something can do. When one is developing a house or a place one should ask what can the house do or what can the place do? Then of course it has a form which should be grounded.

TS:

Why do we find this character or presence of villages so important then?

UP:

It is simply important that people live here. People who are here and who develop something together rather than always people coming from outside. The people who come here for their holidays do not want that much change. They come here for the picturesque. But the people who live here simply live here. They use their space.

TS:

What do you hope that happens in the future? Do you think the Lower Engadine will have developed itself like the Upper part or is it maybe still a mix between contemporary and traditionalism?

UP:

One really wonders. The pressure is enormous. The danger is that it becomes like in Upper Engadine. Of course they have this winter culture there for a long time now. This pressure is quite big. Of course one could say: Susch was nothing for 10 years and now it is fantastic with the clinic and the modern art museum. They create jobs and opportunities. This now also leads to the building of a tunnel that goes underneath the village that leads to Zernez. Therefore the village will not be cut in two anymore and that is due to the development of the museum and the clinic.

Again, it has always winners and losers. For example Corona changed the housing market in Lower Engadine completely. Cheap and affordable houses are rented to people who pay more who want to get away from all the people and the cities. The market dried up completely.

This hotel -Hotel Piz Linard- is a good example of a group of people with a good balance between local, tradition, land, city etc. Here I take of my hat, great job. They don't just feed on the locality; they bring jazz, they

bring the world inside and make overall just good stuff. I think it is such a balance that we need.

End notions about Lavin:

Because of the fire in Lavin something new developed itself. Bigger houses, new squares a new situation changed a lot. One has to be aware to not praise the old village structures too much. Lavin become much fresher and livelier in comparison with Guarda. Lavin is now also a village that is under protection.

Thomas Lampert, Blacksmith
Workshop in Garsun
October 16, 2021

TIM STOOP:

Good morning thank you for having me here today. Nice to finally see each other in person. I watched a few videos online from when you still where up -in Guarda-

THOMAS LAMPERT:

I'm still there! [laughing]

TS:

You started there from 2002 am I correct? And this here is now very new?

TL:

We are now started working here down in the valley since 2 years. Firstly provisionally in a double garage and a house in the basement. So now since two years, but this is now all finished since last spring.

TS:

You are originally from Basel, how did you landed here in Lower Engadine?

TL:

The workshop from Guarda belongs to the municipality and was being renovated and they were looking for somebody to take it over. And that was me.

TS:

And it always used to be a blacksmith workshop?

TL:

Yes

TS:

I was there this morning, I've seen it. There's still equipment there, but also a few notes on how the new workshop is down here in Garsun. Are you still working and producing in the old workshop?

TL:

Yes, certain objects we still produce there, but not everything. Some small things. In the beginning we just worked from the small workshop in the village, but quickly after we also went down here for forge and metal construction

TS:

Do you than now have a different relationship with the village in comparison with before? Working from within the village of Guarda and now outside in the lower settlement of Garsun?

TL:

[thinks] Not really. We always worked for the whole village and relatively little for Guarda. We've had a long history in the export of all these kitchen products [points to the knives and pans on the walls].

TS:

Your education, was it more classical or more artistic?

TL:

The first education was clearly that of a classic craftsman profession. And then afterwards multiple other further educations.

TS:

How do you then see in relation to this classical craft and education the relation between tradition and the contemporary? We are now in the here and now, is there maybe a change to be detected?

TL:

Certain important buildings -also the blacksmith workshop- always belonged to the municipality. So it was their task to find a suitable blacksmith. Later this changed where the municipality doesn't own a blacksmith anymore, with the exception of Guarda. The importance of this profession decreased. The classical village blacksmith one could is nowadays the agricultural machine mechanic. The classical village blacksmith used to make horseshoes and tools, maybe also a window grill. In this day and age, the tools of the farmer are for the most part big machines and therefore a blacksmith is not really necessary anymore. Many colleagues of mine also combine these two types of work. But we don't do that. We also focus of knives, pans and pots, railings and also metal façades and roofs.

TS:

I would like to return to the notion of craftsmanship. As I hear it from you it changed quite drastically. It used to be like this, now it's like that. I'm trying to position you a bit. To me you are a bit in the middle of these

two worlds right?

TL:

Yes, a little bit. Purely from the logical sequence: how did a profession develop itself? In that view, I'm really not that classical. Especially not in the rural sense, in the urban sense yes. Take for example the blacksmith from the past. He was the 'all-rounder', like in Guarda. He did the things I just described you- horseshoes and tools-. In the city it was much more special. Let's take a blacksmith in a big city. He didn't make any tools. He made locks, portals, window grilles and so on. These companies were of course also much bigger in comparison with the ones from the village. And we are much more in this direction.

There were also specialised blacksmiths, for example ones who just made nails or scythe smiths; real manufacturers. This it did have somewhere I believe in the 1700's and 1800's. And what I'm definitely not is the succession of the typical village blacksmith. Since I'm not agricultural machine mechanic. I'm a metalworker – 'Metalbauer'-. And a metalworker with an additional blacksmith training.

TS:

Of course you started small and now you work also on much larger scales and commissions. Did your work also change over time when we look at the way in which you construct?

TL:

I would say it like this: when we forge, we need to step away from the ideas of craftsmanship and profession. We just go into the pure techniques of metal processing. When we forge, we produce a non-cutting cross-section change – 'nicht spanabhebende querschnittsveränderung' - That is the definition of forging according to the handbook. When we forge nothing really changed. We work like we always did with big hammers -now air driven and previously with water- and by hand on the anvil. There we work like before. The thing that of course changed massively are the other techniques. They changed a lot since my education for 30 years. Also in our profession a digitalisation entered that is revolutionary. For example the laser techniques. Nowadays much less is being punched, rather more lasered and so on.

TS:

These, I would say iconic, knives you are making -draws the shape of the knife on a piece of paper- the 'Salsizmesser' you still make it by hand?

TL:

Yes, we still make those traditionally, no laser or plasma cutter involved.

TS:

What do you think of this digitalisation?

TL:

You have to keep up with the time. You have to live with it and use it. Without it I think the craft as a whole has no possibility of survival. There I might be a bit extreme. But here in the periphery we do not have the extreme or enormous assignments like one could have in a city

environment. For this reason I'm more open for these new techniques also to produce something a bit more cheaper. And this road is the road of digitalisation, using laser and optimisation. When it's like this and there is still much craft involved, then I'm a complete advocate of all these new techniques.

You also have these fundamentalistic blacksmiths, but luckily I didn't work at one of those neither am I shaped by them. From the start I was embossed differently. The fundamentalistic blacksmith says that when you are producing something forged it has to be a forged product through and through. This means no welding. My tutor always said that when these fundamentalist in 1800 had the means of using a electronic welder, they definitely would have welded. That is logical. When wouldn't we weld nowadays? We possess the ability to use this technique. And like this I also think. Certain things one has to forge, but you have to keep up with the time. One welds and one screws and so on.

TS:

Nevertheless, your direct surroundings are still, despite becoming more modern slowly, very traditional for example in building type. I was wondering how important the landscape, the place the topography or the climate is in your work.

TL:

Good question. Overall all your questions are good. Interesting questions. Yes, the landscape shapes one a little, true. Influenced to a certain graphical shaping. One could also do this work somewhere else I have to say. What one couldn't necessarily do somewhere else is the selling of these products. The knives for example, there the name 'Guarda' has an influence. A positive influence. That is clear. Those I couldn't easily make and sell in Zurich if I wanted to.

TS:

But that isn't just a quality you bring, that is something the whole village makes. This image of Guarda that is really important. When I was in Susch and Lavin one notices how they lack this notion. In the bus I heard people saying 'alright, that was Guarda, a peculiar village'. I wouldn't want to say it's a touristic spot but...

TL:

It sort of is... [laughs nervously]

TS:

It's more and more about this touristic notion. How do you see the future of Guarda?

TL:

I believe it will not increase that much more. In the 90's it was much more than nowadays. I look at it very neutral also for our work. It will simply continue. We are now down here. When someone wants to visit us, they also come down here. That is much more interesting. Here we can show much more. I believe it will probably even reduce. When the whole Corona thing is normalized again it will be like for 3 years.

TS:
How was it 3 years ago?

TL:
Much less visitors. Maybe much more Germans and therefore a little less Swiss.

TS:
Less guests?

TL:
It's normal. In general, the rural tourism benefited from not being able to travel abroad. The people looked a bit better at their own country.

TS:
What do you in your work find the most important and the most beautiful?

TL:
The most beautiful is difficult to say. I couldn't really say. That can be something, somewhere. I'm sorry but I really can't say. The most interesting I can answer: the drafts of the design for a gravestone. Sounds funny I know. But it's really interesting to be in this process of relatives of the deceased where the question arises how one could visualize the life of a person. That I find the most interesting. The most important thing I would say is the mediation of craft in a fast moving, digitalising time and to make sure it doesn't fully die out. That for me is the most important. More important than the production.

Luzzi Koch, (retired) hunter
Usteria Spluga bar in Ardez
October 17, 2021

Viva!

MARTIN BREITER:

And than people with money came and privatised everything. You have to park here, not there. And its happening everywhere, also here.

TIM STOOP:

You have to correct me if I'm wrong, but is it not a tendency from the last 10 years or so that people from the outside come here and buy property? Or is it already much older?

LUZZI KOCH:

Yes, I think 15 till 20 years or so. When you grew up here as a child and studied in a city somewhere and want to come back to where you grew up you don't have a chance of finding a place to live for yourself

MB:

Yes it is really bad now. For me it is almost impossible to start a family. I first have to buy a house for a million which is already impossible and then I have to renovate it. I could rent my whole life of course, but at some point I want something for myself.

LK:

When I was young the government, the Canton was helping these small villages. But now, cities are growing and growing and they couldn't care less about these villages and the people living in them. The natives are

therefore forced to abandon their homes.

TS:

What do you think it will look like here in 10 years Lüzzi?

LK:

That is a really good question, but honestly I couldn't answer it. I'm still just staggered by the situation. You have to be lucky. Even if you have a steady job and earn 5000 francs a month you have to pay rent and taxes and are in no position to save money to buy a house one day. Then what you see happening is that somebody from Germany buys the house for 3-4 million, but only stays here in the village for a few weeks a year. I'm a bit pessimistic, but it could really well be that in a few years just millionaires live in these houses.

In the end it's all about money. Of course it would nice to be rich, but in the end you are also happy when you earn less. What do you have to do with that much money? Our Swiss Lotto is now also 70 million... it's crazy. It seems everybody is going crazy in these times. Those people also don't think about dying. Something that is part of life. That's my opinion. I'm happy when I go home at night and when I wake up in the morning.

MB:

Do you want another beer Tim?

TS:

Yes please!

Andri Riatsch, Carpenter
Workshop in Ardez
October 18, 2021

TIM STOOP:

You are a carpenter. Since how long are you working in Ardez?

ANDRI RIATSCH:

Me myself I started in 2015. The company used to be from my grandfather and then my father. He also still works in the shop. I was 2008 until 2009 here and then had another education. I worked in Higher Engadine for four years and then returned to Ardez, the village I grew up.

TS:

Your father and grandfather are also from here?

AR:

My father is, but my grandfather is from Ramosch. He moved to Ardez. The father of my grandmother had here outside the sawmill, you can still see it. The father of my grandfather came up here and worked in the sawmill but first learned carpentry and then in 1965 they build the workshop.

TS:

And you like it here to work in such a small village?

AR:

Yes, very much. You have a lot of customer contact. I know all the inhabitants from the village. That's really nice. From every second home I have the key in the safe, that is something special. When you work in the

city it's different. When you make a mistake there, it's a shame and you move on to the next, nobody knows about the mistake, but here you are not allowed to make a mistake. There is talk and a lot of gossip. There are many advantage but also a few disadvantage of working in a small village.

TS:

Do you work in just Ardez or also in other parts of Lower Engadine?

AR:

Mostly in Ardez, Ftan, Scuol, Sent, Tarasp. Guarda not that much, but currently I have a big construction site there. Most of the time in Higher Engadine also something and sometimes in 'Oberland' in the region of Zurich a little bit of furniture, but not much.

TS:

You work with wood. Larch, spruce, but also special types of wood?

AR:

Not many special types. I try to use wood that also grows in the direct area.

TS:

How do you see the relation between tradition and contemporary?

AR:

I think of the spruce wood. Traditionally you had the patterns, the profiles, the bookmatched panels that was the standard like in this room. And nowadays it's like this -points to a picture on the wall of a project with no 'ornamentation'. Now everything is straight and smooth. Nothing has a profile. I like that more than the old version. It looks nice, but it takes more skill, time and craft.

TS:

Is this notion of time difficult to work with in your profession in the contemporary world?

AR:

When I look at what we do and think of time... money is not an issue. When somebody buys a house, money is no problem. Although it is a shame in the villages that many houses are holiday houses. When you are here during Christmas, there are more cars with ZH-numberplates than indigenous people. But for us, we can make a living out of them.

TS:

Do you find it a shame that the people and therefore also the villages are changing?

AR:

When I look strictly business, there's no doubt about it that we need these kind of people. But of course it is a shame when all the houses are sold and just being used for 2 weeks per year.

TS:

Did your type of work change over the years?

AR:

Yes of course. Every year we try to invest in a new machine. Until now, no CNC. I'm not the computer type, that's why.

TS:

You do everything by hand?

AR:

No, no. I draw with CAD, but I do not have the time to use a CNC and you can also do your work without CNC. When I need it I go to Peider in Susch, we work together there.

TS:

We already talked about it a bit, but how important is your direct surrounding, topography and climate in your work?

AR:

The climate?

TS:

Yes, sun, light, humidity how do you work with it?

AR:

With wood you have moonwood –'Mondholz'- that during a certain time is being cut. The wood than works a lot less, but it costs double as much. That has something to do with the moon and the direct nature.

TS:

How do you see the future of craftsmanship generally and specifically for your work?

AR:

I hope we can continue. I think the next years will it also continue like I described before. Hardly any new buildings are being build. It's mostly renovation. In these old houses we have a lot to do. Nothing is straight there, everything is different. An Ikea cupboard doesn't fit in there, so that is our chance.

TS:

What do you find most important in your work?

AR:

That what I said in the beginning. You know all you customers and you have a connection with them. You need to know them well before you can start your work. It's a feeling of locality. I cannot say I don't have the time to them. This brings me the most pleasure.

Moderation: Roger Boltshauser

Participants: Gion Caminada, Aita Flury and Chasper Schmidlin

Lecture hall in Fundaziun Nairs, Scuol

October 21, 2021

ROGER BOLTSHAUSER:

Danke Chapser für die Einleitung. Gion möchtest hast du noch etwas bevor wir anfangen?

GION CAMINADA:

Ich habe nichts mitgenommen, ich bin gekommen

Ich freue mich schon auf das Gespräch mit euch und konnte schon mit einen Provokation anfangen. Wir reden über Tradition, über Identität. Jeden meint etwas anders, jeden versteht etwas anderes da unter. Man muss vielleicht die Frage stellen, wie ist Tradition entstanden? Tradition ist eigentlich, das was sich bewert hat. Wenn jemand etwas gemacht hat, und das wird immer weiter getragen, immer wiederholt wird das zum Tradition.

In dem Bergdorf ist nach dem Verschwinden der Bauern, die Tradition zusammen gebrochen. Die Bauern haben festen gefeiert (ein Teil des Alltag). Dann war im Dorf plötzlich nur 3 Bauern und 50 Züricher oder Aargauer. Die Bauern haben das gelebt und die andere waren am Strassenrand und haben mit geklatscht. Das ist so zu sagen, den Untergang dem Tradition. Auch nach dem Zusammenbruch den Religion ist vielen verschwunden.

Est ist auch schon das man sich aus diesen festen befreien konnten natürlich. Das was ein Ort seinem Kraft gibt. Es ist nicht nur von innen

entstanden. Einerseits den Religion oder auch wenn wenig verfügbar war. Die Leute mussten einfach mit etwas heraus kommen. Und das hat sich zum einem Quantum des fast gleiche gefüllt. (über Ardez) Am ersten Blick sieht es aus ob die Hauser stehen unterschiedlich sind. Unterschiedliche Proportionen, unterschiedliche massstaben, aber irgendwo soll dass funktionieren weil sie sind aus dem gleiche Material, mit dem gleichen material gebaut worden. Mann hat das Gefühl. Das sei das Gleiche. Schlimm wenn es kongruent werde, aber fein nuanciert ist eigentlich unglaublich schön

Ich habe gelernt Tradition als Kontinuität zu betrachten. Sie versuchen immer noch aus zu kommen was da ist. Mit einem bestimmten Material zu bauen. Die meisten haben einen einige Lebenshaltung. Heute wenn wir über Tradition reden, reden wir von Bilder. Erinnerung ist natürlich auch unglaublich wichtig. Nietzsche sagt: Eing Bild über Name wird etwas antiquarisches. Vor mich ist das viel zu wenig. Wenn jemanden sagt, ich erhalte das Bild von Stall aber von innen wird gewohnt, dann hat das nichts mit Tradition zu tun sonst das ist absolute Zerstörung von Tradition. Heute macht jeder was er will. Um mit diese Freiheit um zu gehen, ist unglaublich schwierig. Die Wahl des Material ist nicht einfach

RB:

Über Baukultur weiter. Gion was ist deine Beziehung zum Unter Engadin? Wie siehst du das und auch die Baukultur?

GC:

die Kriterien die wichtig waren sind eigentlich ähnlich wie Vrin. Früher gab es diese Trennung zwischen Natur und Kultur nicht. Ich sehen Differenzen. Die sind vorhanden. Differenzen sind grossartig. Ich versuche zu spüren was einen Ort seinen Kraft gibt und wie ich das vermehren kann. Dass schafft dann vielleicht Identität. Identität ist das vielleicht was formbildend ist oder irgendwie eine Zu Hörigkeit schafft. Aber Identität kann man auch verstehen als Identisch zu etwas. Ich finde auch schön das das Untere Engadin nicht gleich aussieht wie das obere Engadin. Ich weiss nicht die Unter Engadin die obere Engadiner nicht mögen. Das ober Engadin ist geprägt durch ein unglaubliche Touristischen Innovation... Innovation ist ein miserable Begriff.... Qualität.

Wir versuchen auf diese Wurzeln zurück zu gehen. Ich glaube vielleicht in einer nach-ästhetische Zeit. In die Dorfer gab es eine vor-ästhetische Zeit. Da interessierte es kein Mensch wie es aussah. Schon aber nicht so wie wir Architekten heute. Dann kam die ästhetische Zeit. Das hat vieles zerstört. Ich glaube wir müssen jetzt ein Sprung vorwärts machen nach eine nach- ästhetische Zeit und uns an zu docken an dieser vor-ästhetische Zeit wo in es um diese Grund Phänomenen ging. Ich glaube wir müssen einfach eins Bewusstsein wie Dorfen bauen. Zuerst bauen wird das Dorf und nachdem bauen wir das Haus. Ein schönes Gebäude macht noch keinen Ort. Ort ist ein Dink als verschiedene Entitäten zusammen kommen. Es geht immer um mehr als das ästhetische einem Haus. Die Schönheit ist natürlich das Ziel der Architektur.

RB:

Stört es dir das oben und unten ganz anders ist. Wenn man das ganze Engadin anschaut was kannst du sagen über Bau Kultur?

CHASPER SCHMIDLIN:

Schon das es sich entwickelt hat. Unter ist es noch Authentisch und oben sucht man vielleicht nach diese Identität. Die im Grundgedanke da ist. Es hat viel mit Material Echtheit zu tun. Die gute Bau Kultur entsteht wenn man die Freiheit eingrenzt. Die alte Engadiner hause sind so ehrlich und erzählen Geschichte von diesen Alte Zeit. Ich bin auch dafür das man die neu oder weiter entwickeln muss. Aber immer mit diesen Eingrenzung. Ein Collage von zu viel Freiheiten finden wir allen schrecklich. Die wichtige und interessante Sachen sind durch die Bauern entstanden. Ein Laviner geht nicht nach Susch oder umgekehrt. In diese Dorfer gibt es auch noch unterschiedliche Identitäten.

GC:

Ich wurde niemals sagen, die Menschen den Freiheit nehmen, aber viel mehr Freiheit geben. Ihnen einfach zeigen das andere Qualitäten gibt statt über den Verdammte Klimawandel immer den Kinder zu sagen, schau den Welt geht unten.

RB:

Gibt es eigentlich den Baukultur im Engadin?

Aita Flury:

Baukultur per se werden wir als Begriff nicht lösen lösen. Schlussendlich ist es so dass wir nicht mehr die Bauerngemeinschaft sind. Darum müssen wir uns richtig überlegen, wie kann man die neu transformieren. Was kann man draus machen. Kultur war immer ein Transformationsprozess. Die frage ist mehr, funktioniert den Ort noch? Was reanimieren wir?

CG:

Bist du sicher das die Engadiner Hauser schön sind?

AF:

ja

CG:

Da kommen viel Leute die sagen es ist schön. Aber wenn ich die sehr genau anschauen dann sage ich die sind proportional schrecklich und wirklich nicht schön. Das ist das Dilemma. Wenn ich durch Ardez gehe, dann ist das grossartig. Ein phänomenale Atmosphäre. Darum ist es unglaublich schwierige solche Orte zu planen. Solche Orte sind nicht geplant worden, sie sind einfach entstanden. Und wir reden jetzt von schöne Dörfer und schöne Häuser

AF:

Es lebt von dem Bilder des Freiraums zwischen dem Häuser

CG:

Ja ja, das auch. Ich glaube es ist die Kraft das gesamte das auf uns wirkt. Die Kraft des Erscheinens. Es ist nicht nur die ästhetische Produktion sondern es geht um die Ästhetik des Erscheinens. Das ist noch etwas ganz

anderes und müssen wir an dem Punkt kommen und fragen wie können wir das umsetzen. Andererseits ich bin nicht einverstanden wenn man sagt, man muss schauen was möglich ist. Wenn wir von Baukultur reden dann müssen wir sagen das wollen wir.

Natürlich muss man die Ställe nutzen, weil die Ställe sind das Potenzial der Zukunft; der Entwicklung des Dorfers. Es gibt in diesen Dörfern einfach auch Dingen die wir stehen lassen muss. Wir müssen aufhören mit zu sagen wir müssen alles nutzen bis am Schluss. Gewissen Dingen muss man stehen lassen. Nicht fragen was ist in eine Gesetzgebung möglich, sonst was wollen wir? Nur so kommen wir einen Schritt weiter.

CS:

Alles was für mich eine starke Identität hat ist auch schön. Die Fassade und die Häuser sprechen so diese Geschichte und wenn ein Ort keine Geschichte mehr erzählt dann ist etwas falsch gegangen. Auch die jungen Architekten in Graubünden machen so was die Kunden möchten aber für die starken Ideen gibt es keinen Platz.

CG:

Das Dorf will in der Nacht schlafen, will seine Ruhe haben. Und jetzt sind alle Lampen am Abend an in den Ställen. Das Schreckliche ist tun als ob es etwas anderes werde. Umnutzung Änderungen sind okay. Umgehen mit dem Stall ist keine architektonisches Problem, sondern ein kulturelles Problem. Dörfer haben bestimmte Hierarchien und wenn diese Hierarchien nicht mehr vorhanden sind, existiert das Dorf nicht mehr. Es ist kein Dorf mehr, es ist eine Ansammlung von Objekten.

AF:

Aber kann man nicht sagen, wohnen tun wir immer noch. Wir sind immer noch Menschen mit 2 Beinen und ähnliche Sachen tun wie die Gleichen vor 200 Jahren. Vielleicht nicht mehr gleich im Arbeiten.

CG:

Die Ställe sind unglaublich wichtig. Hans-Jürg Ruch hat mir gesagt: die Ställe sind die Kathedralen des Engadins. Wenn wir jetzt so versuchen Typologien begrifflich zu vermischen oder eine Umordnung machen dann kommen wir überhaupt nicht mehr weiter. Mit gewissen Hierarchien müssen wir einfach einhalten. Ich habe immer Kühe gesehen in und rundum diese Ställe und jetzt sehe ich ein paar Touristen. Das schmerzt mich sehr. Aber vielleicht ist das auch mein Problem.

AF:

Ich verstehe jetzt was Gion meint. Ich sehe Verglasung hinter Holz Bretter. Das ist kein weiter bauen oder behalten. Ich rede von Transformationen von Strukturen und davon ein ganzes Eines zu machen.

CG:

Die Dörfer bestehen eigentlich aus einem Material. Damit meine ich, wir müssen die Menschen den Freiheit lassen sich auszuzeichnen mit diesen Konstruktionen. Wenn ich Ardez anschauen sehe ich einfach ein Material. Die Öffnungen spielen überhaupt keine Rollen. Die Lebenshaltung natürlich. Die Menschen hatten eine bestimmte Lebenshaltung zur Natur. Sie brauchte kein blödes Panorama Fenster, sondern Öffnung wo Licht rein

kommt oder Aussichten. Und irgendwie wenn ich das anschauen dann ist es die Massen, die ist bestimmend. Die gibt es diese Erscheinung der Kraft. Das ist totale Freiheit. Wenn man lange genug mit dem Leute redet dann findet man etwas das uns verbindet.

AF:

Ob der Stall Museum behalten bleibt oder gut oder Schlecht umgebaut ist.

CG:

Weniger schützen, mehr lieben. Meine Frau sagt mir immer ich will nicht geschützt werden, ich will geliebt werden.

RB:

Nehmen wir das als Schlosswort?

CG:

Nein, nein....

Appendix III
House and stabledoors

Susch

Lavin

Guarda

Ardez

Ftan

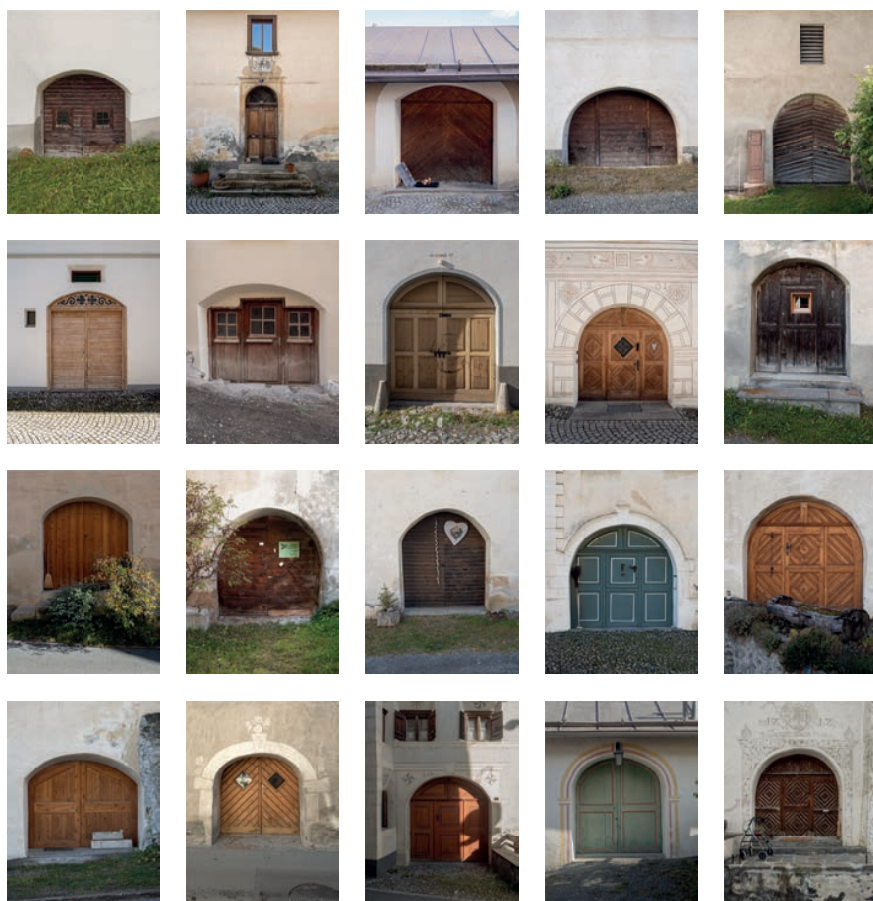
Tarasp

Vnà

Tschlin



House- and Stabledoors Lavin 13th until 15th of October 2021
chronological

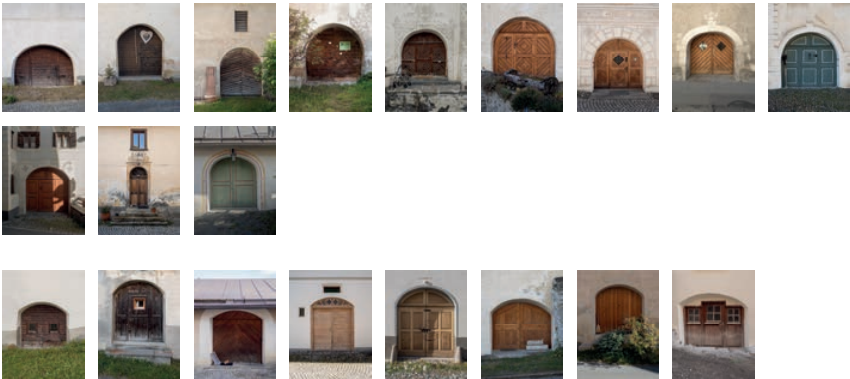


House- and Stabledoors Lavin 13th until 15th of October 2021
structured

door size



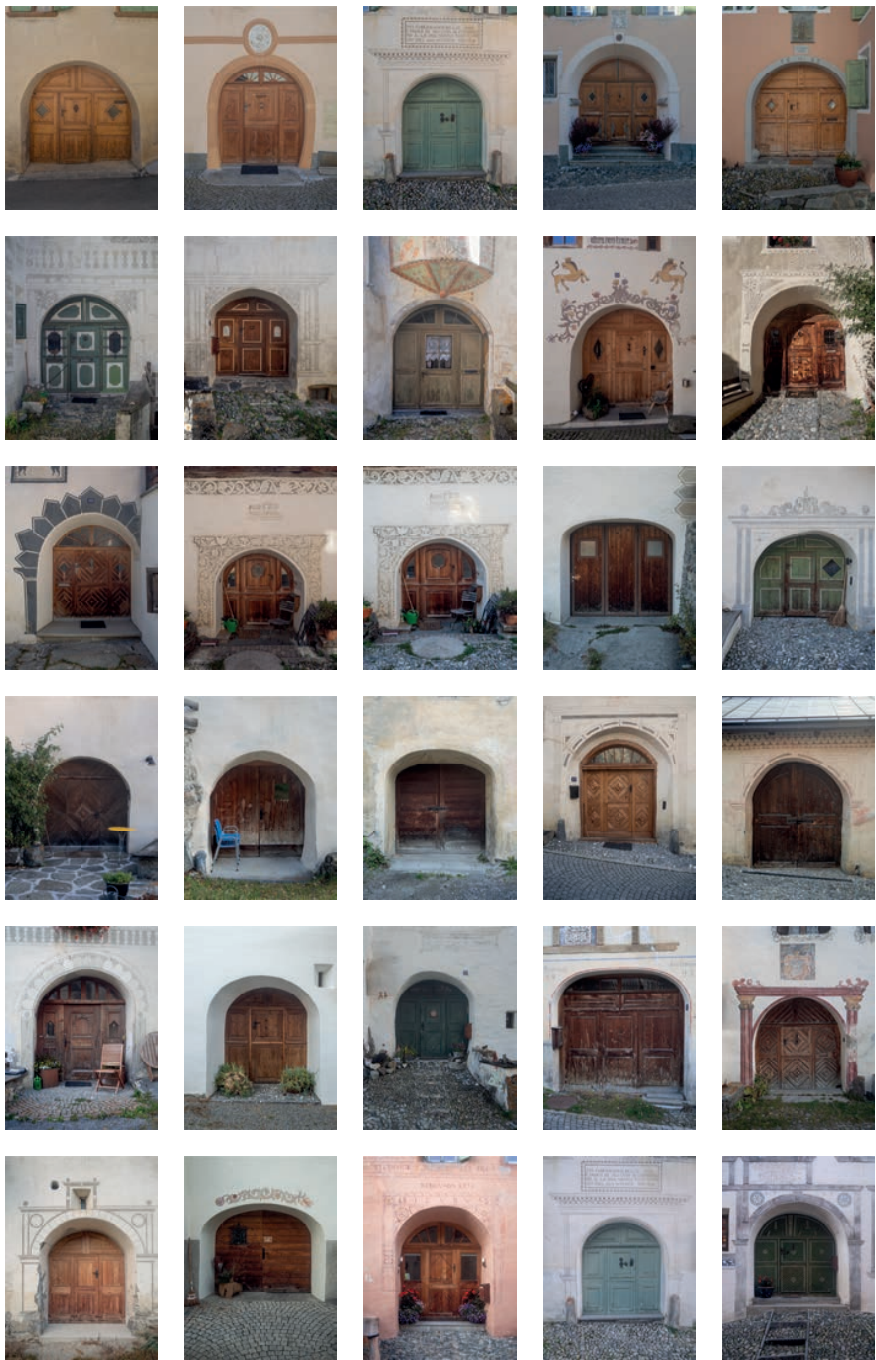
arch shape



door openings

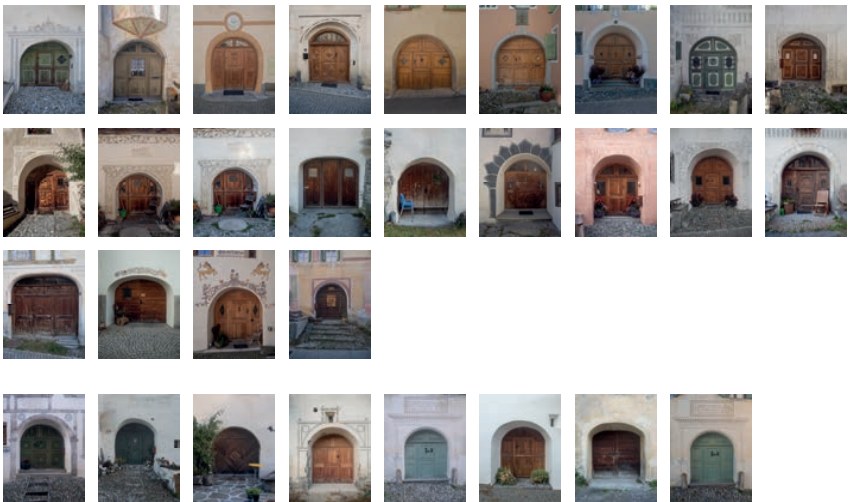


House- and Stabledoors Guarda 15th until 17th of October 2021
chronological

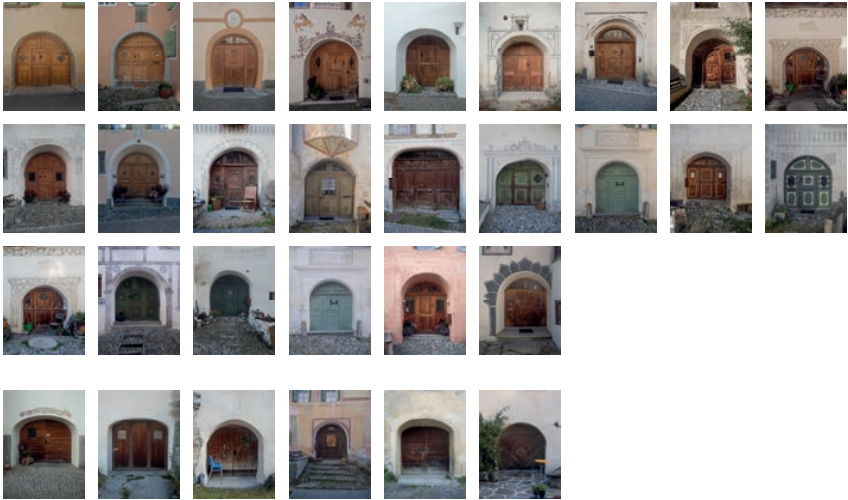


House- and Stabledoors Guarda 15th until 17th of October 2021
structured

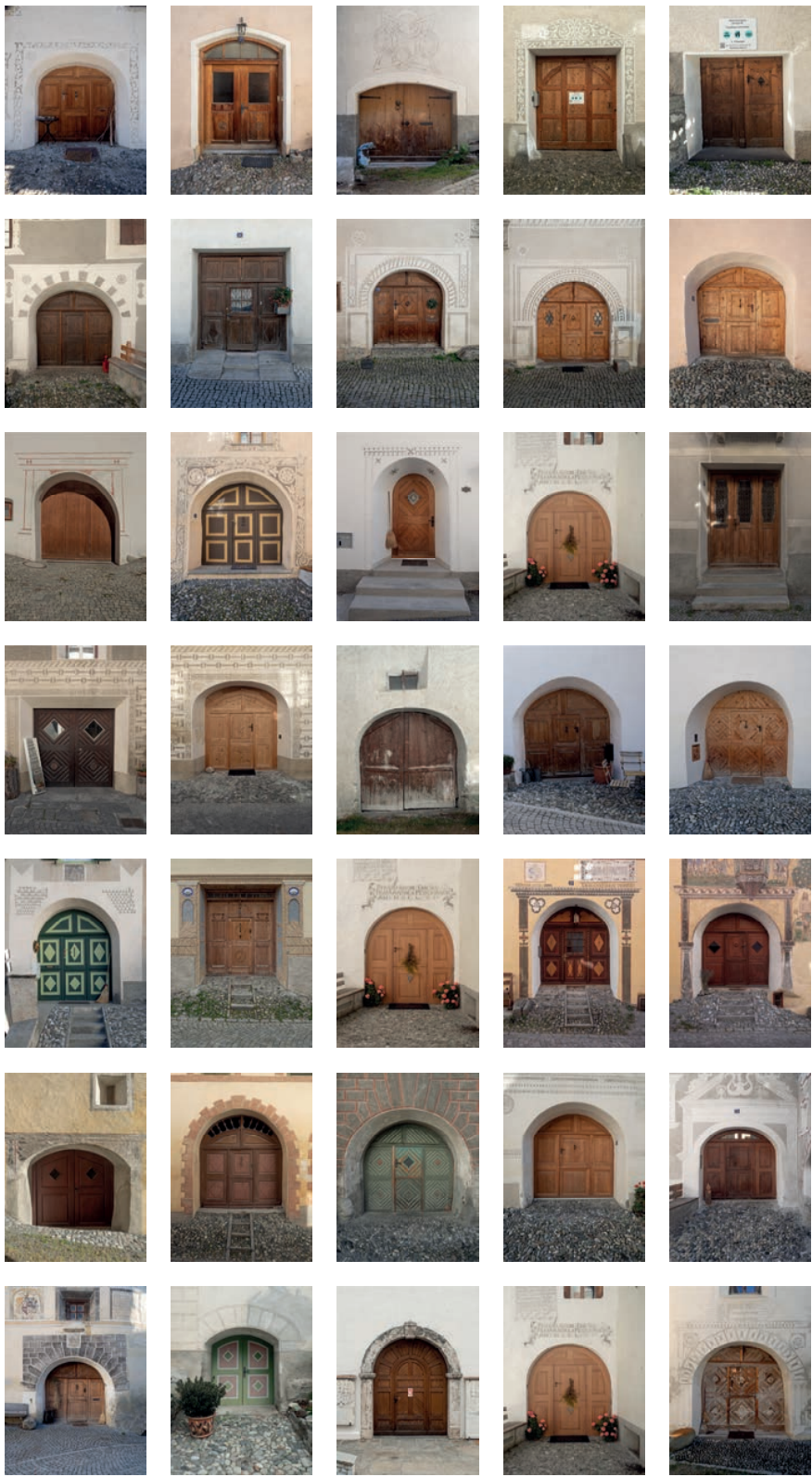
door openings



door construction type

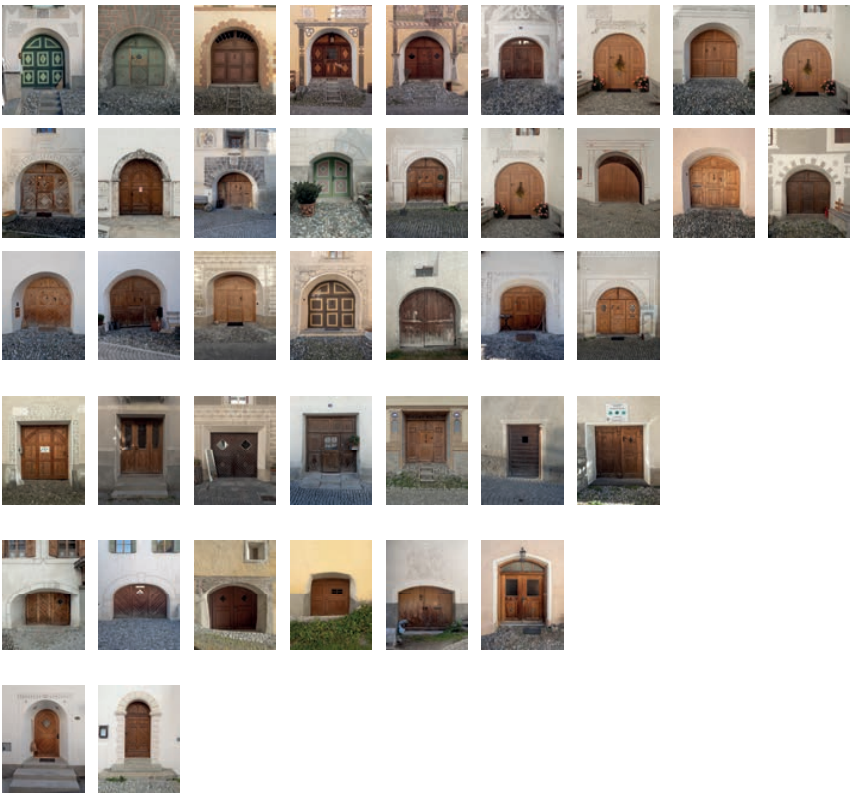


House- and Stabledoors Ardez 17th until 19th of October 2021
chronological

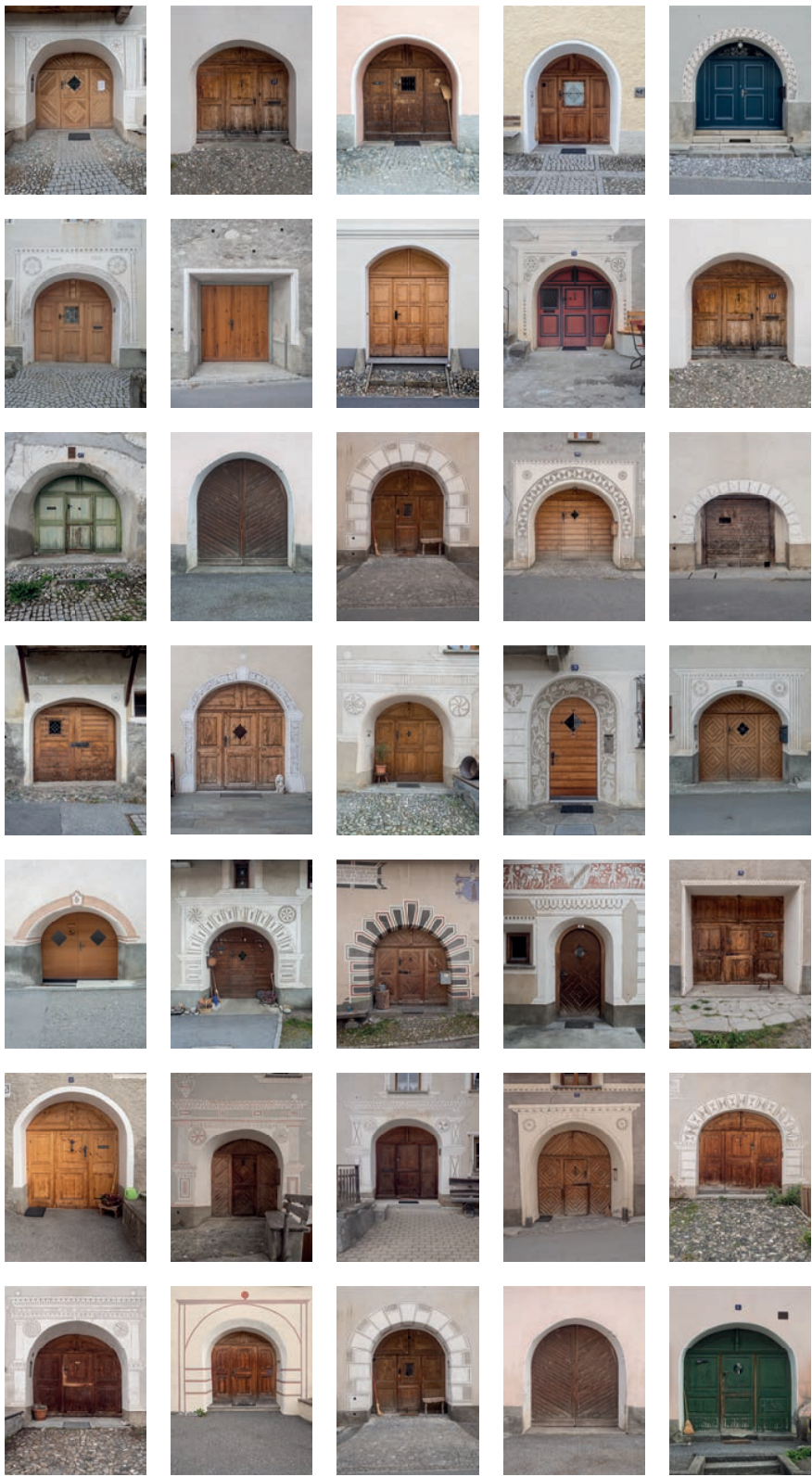


House- and Stabledoors Ardez 17th until 19th of October 2021
structured

arch type

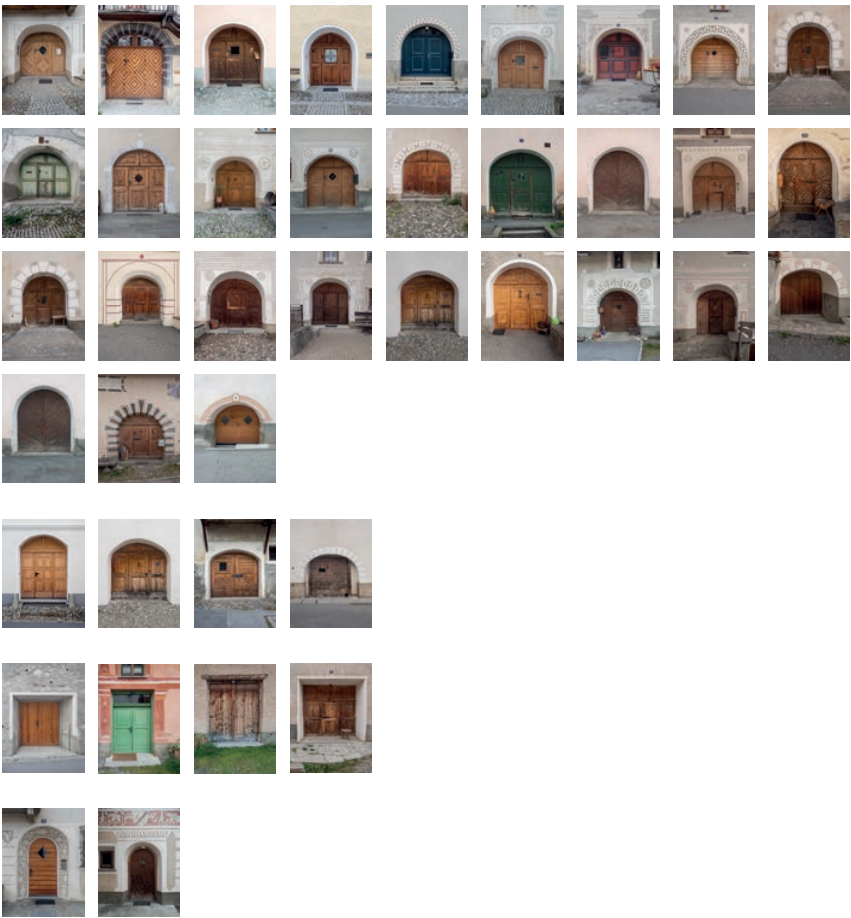


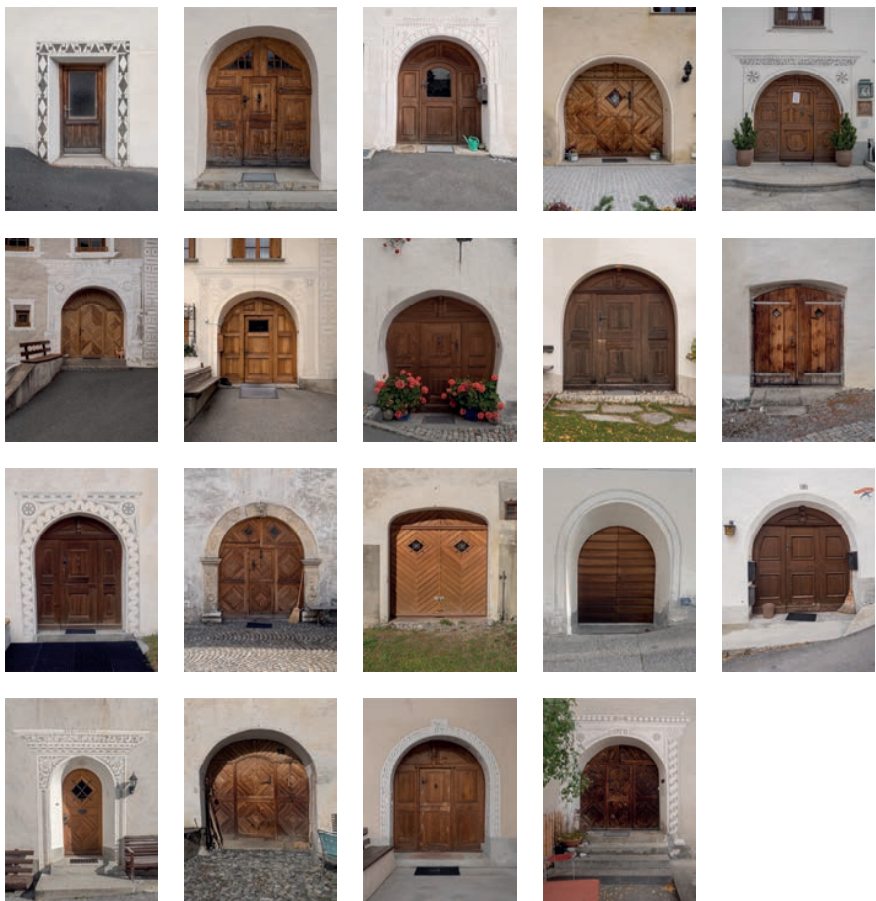
House- and Stabledoors Ftan 19th until 20th of October 2021
chronological



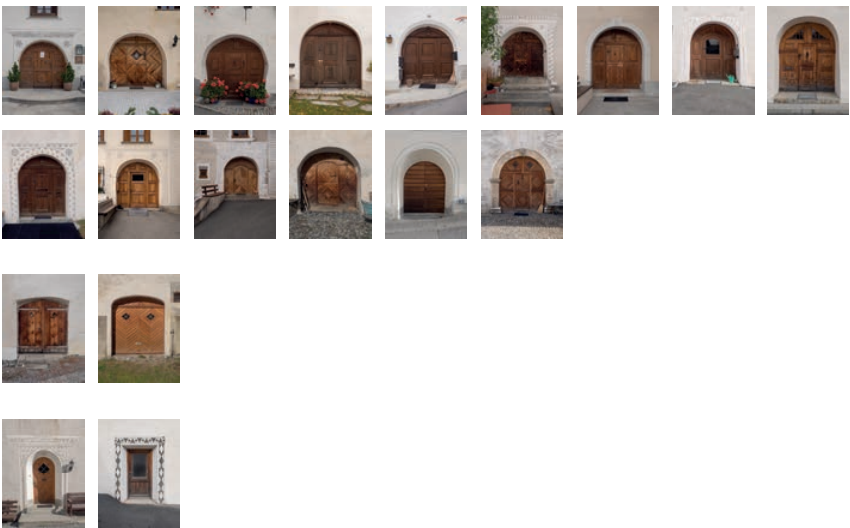
House- and Stabledoors Ftan 19th until 20th of October 2021
structured

arch type





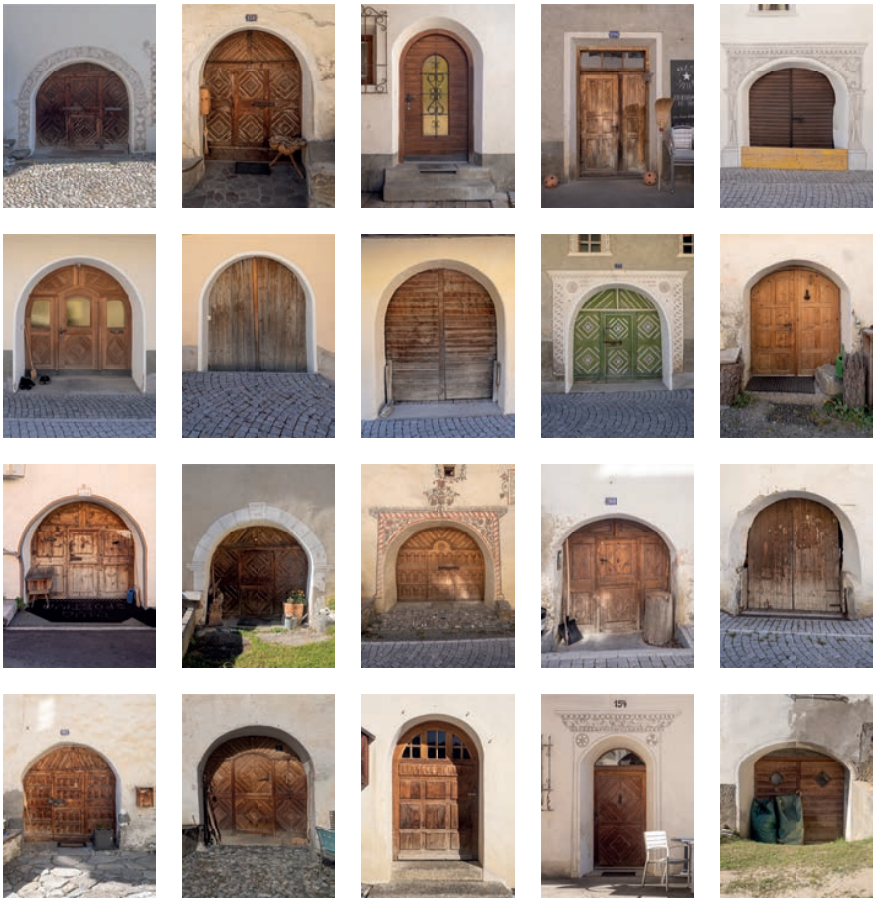
arch type



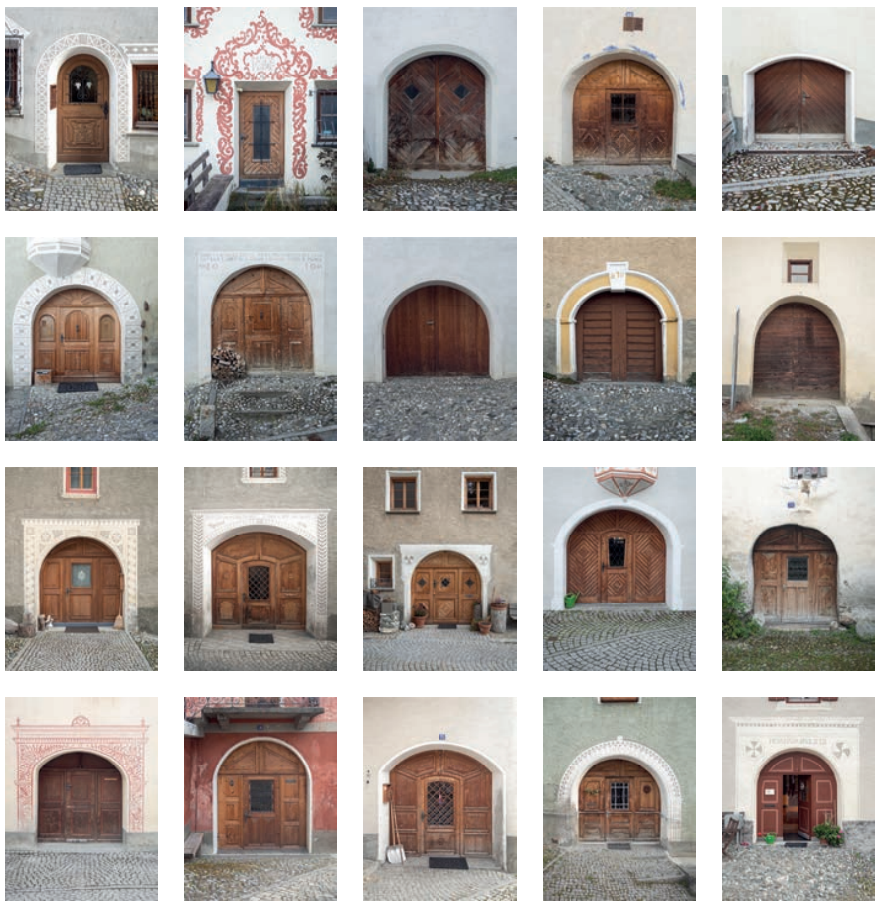
door opening



House- and Stabledoors Vnà 23th of October 2021
chronological



House- and Stabledoors Tschlin 23th until 25th of October 2021
chronological



Appendix IV
Water fountains

Susch

Lavin

Guarda

Ardez

Ftan

Tarasp

Vnà

Tschlin



Susch



Lavin



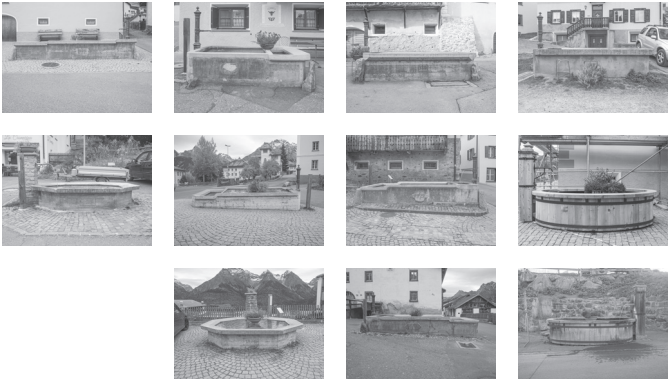
Guarda



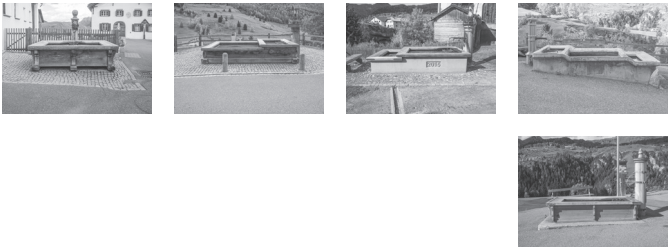
Ardez



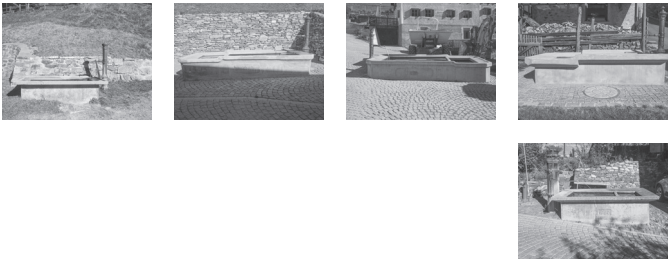
Ftan



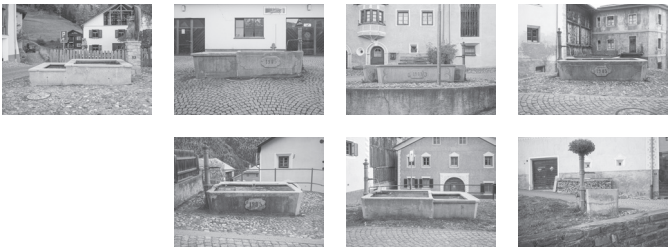
Tarasp



Vnà



Tschlin



Appendix V
Texture drawings

Susch

Lavin

Guarda

Ardez

Ftan

Tarasp

Vnà

Tschlin

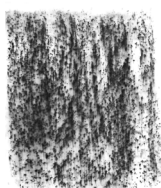


sgraffito
plaster rough
plaster fine

Susch

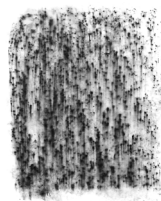


paving stones
river stones
wood



lava stone
plaster
gneiss marble

Lavin



wood
wood
plaster

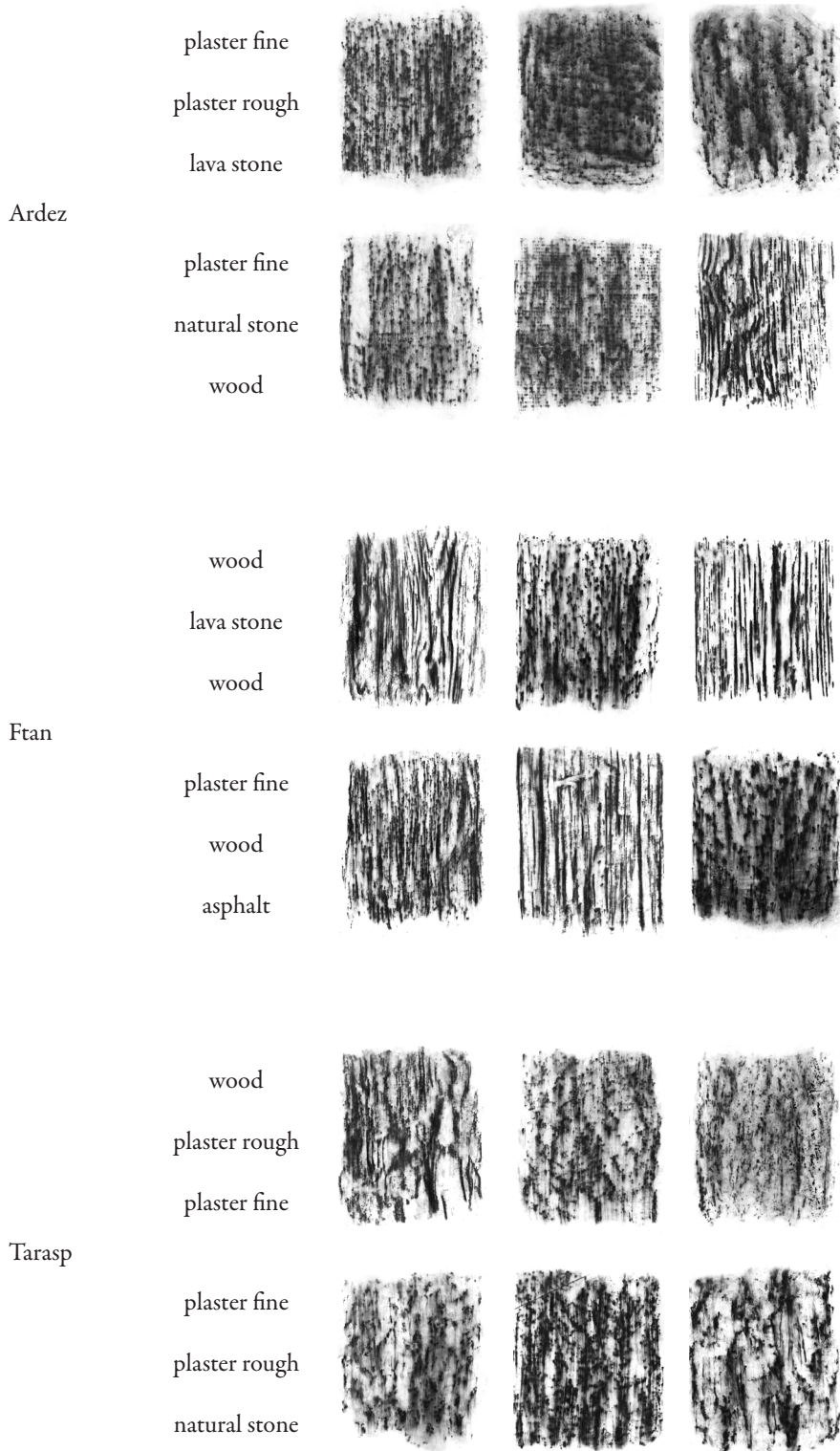


plaster rough
plaster rough
plaster fine

Guarda



plaster rough
natural stone
plaster fine



Appendix VI

Additional maps and drawings of Vnà and Tschlin

Overview plan 1:3000

Brunnenkomunne Tschlin

Paving plan

הוא מנסה להבין את המציאות
הוא מנסה להבין את המציאות
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הוא מנסה להבין את המציאות
הוא מנסה להבין את המציאות

Typologies

Basement windows



vertical

gloomy

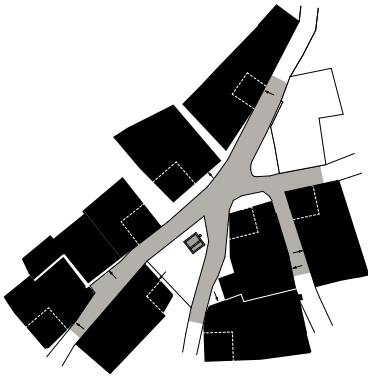
sunset

empty

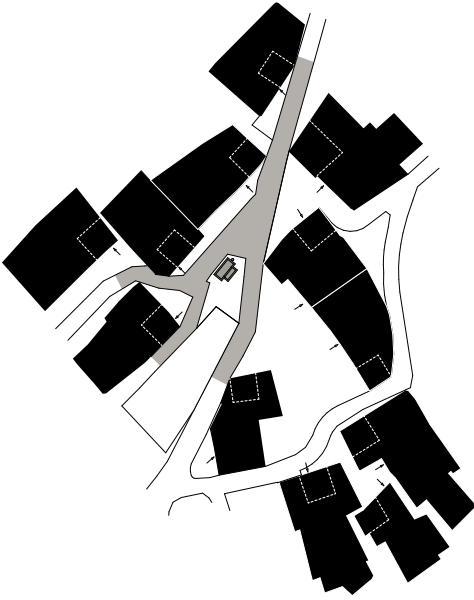
easy-going

breeze

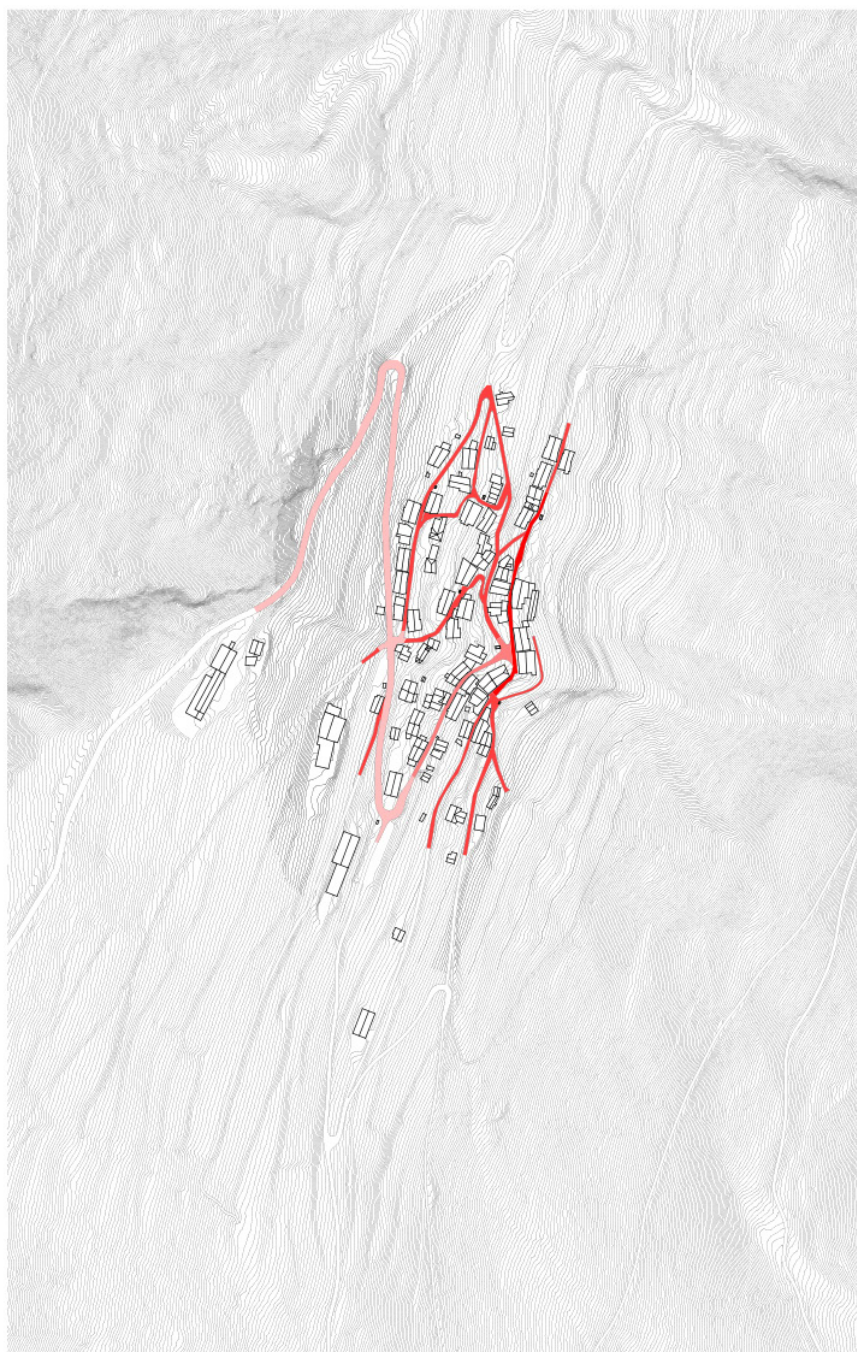
cobblestones









Bügl Sot

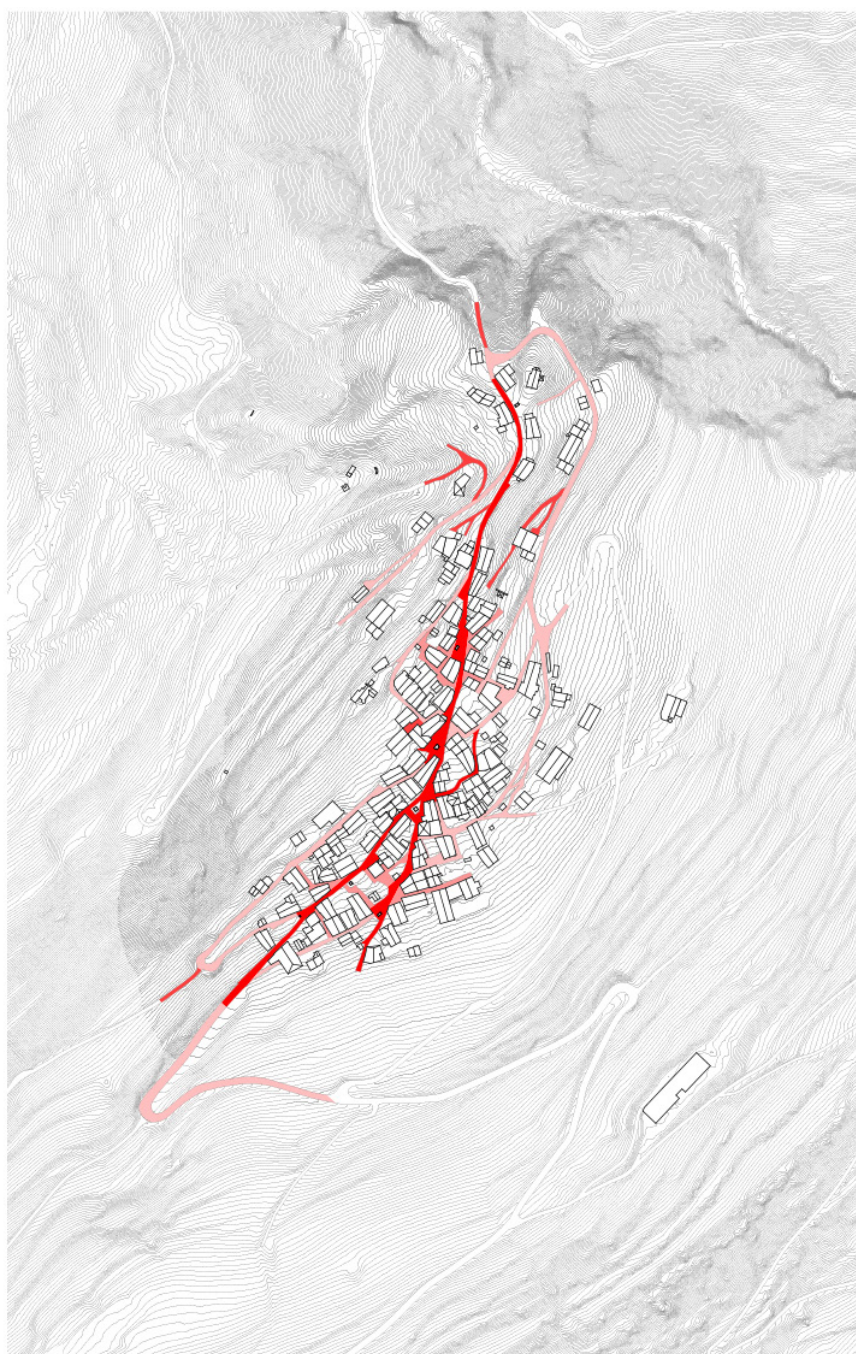


Bügl Sura



- | | |
|---|---|
|  |  |
| Paving plan Vnà | |
|  |  |
| Arch paving | Asphalt surface |
|  |  |
| Gravel surface | Row paving |

— z



Paving plan Tschlin

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Arch paving | ■ Asphalt surface |
| ■ Gravel surface | ■ Row paving |

