

sSTEFAN BANZ — ALTERNATIVE LOGO

Alternative Bank ABS, Olten, 2006–2009

The building at Amthausquai 21 in Olten was for many years the home of the Walter Verlag, the publishing house famous for its long and rich tradition of responsible and future-oriented thinking. Worthy of mention here are the pioneering writings of the psychologists C.G. Jung, Wilhelm Reich and Jacques Lacan or the famous literary works of Peter Bichsel and Alfred Döblin, all of which were printed and published by the Walter Verlag.

As the Alternative Bank ABS specializes in the funding of ecological projects, the form and aim of the project was obvious, namely to reproduce the logo of the bank with environmentally friendly light boxes, thus visualizing the corporate philosophy of the bank in the directest way possible. In other words, the light boxes used for the project produced their own illuminating energy by means of environmentally friendly photovoltaic cells.

Measuring 90 x 60 cm, the large light boxes spelling the word ALTERNATIVE rotate slowly around their own axis during the daytime, facing the sun all the time and absorbing the energy they need to be able to shine at night.

The project is thus a subtle play—in both form and content—on the word ALTERNATIVE, which remains invisible during the daytime, while the blue photovoltaic panels—as symbols of alternative energy production—are visible and look vaguely like monochrome paintings. Not until the evening, once the panels have slowly come round full circle, does the logo ALTERNATIVE become visible, shining in the darkness in full radiance.

What is more, with this “alternative” rendering of the bank’s logo, it was possible to combine several different aspects:

- Reproduction of the bank’s logo in a clear and pragmatic form
- Expressing the bank’s alternative and environmentally friendly commitment directly through the logo
- Making the logo itself a symbol of ecological commitment
- Artistic expression of future-oriented commitment in the guise of advertizing

ALTERNATIVE is a prototype, a pioneer in the field of building signs that draws attention to the possibilities that ought to be utilized to an ever increasing extent in the future.

Stefan Banz, Cully, October 23, 2009