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Photographic Studio Frei

Edited by Florian Stroh

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- The first comprehensive documentation of Herzog & de Meuron's Project 014 Photographic Studi Frei in Weil am Rhein, Germany, one of the firm's early key designs
- Richly illustrated with previously unpublished photographs and original plans from Herzog & de Meuron's archives as well as newly taken photographs of the recently restored and transformed Photographic Studio Frei
- Presents the act of building on what is there as a contemporary architectural stance, using an iconic contemporary building as a case study

In 1981–82, the then up-and-coming architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron designed a studio for photographer Rolf Frei in the German town of Weil am Rhein, on the German–Swiss border near Basel. The building became widely known as Project 014 Photographic Studio Frei and was revered as one of Herzog & de Meuron's early key designs. It is a space for light, shadow, and staging, constructed with great precision: architecture as an instrument of photography. Over time, it fell somewhat into oblivion and narrowly escaped demolition. In 2023–25, Basel-based architectural firm studio ne restored and carefully transformed it for new cultural and public uses.

Photographic Studio Frei uses previously unpublished images and original plans from Herzog & de Meuron's archives, as well as new photographs, to form a multilayered visual narrative about the building, its use, transformation, and atmosphere, bringing the restored space's presence to life. This is supplemented by a conversation between architect Jacques Herzog, entrepreneur and collector Rolf Fehlbaum, and author and journalist Niklas Maak about Photographic Studio Frei's origins and its importance today, and on how a building continues to live once it has lost its original purpose.

Florian Stroh is an architect who runs his own firm, studio ne, in Basel, Switzerland. A graduate of ETH Zürich, he also studied at Yale School of Architecture and KTH Stockholm and worked with Herzog & de Meuron in 2012–18.

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