



COMMEDED
HOUSE, COLIUMO
PENINSULA, CHILE
ARCHITECT
PEZO VON
ELLRICHSHAUSEN
ARCHITECTS

CLIFFTOP MONOLITH

Poised on a cliff, this simple concrete house boldly confronts nature and the elements.

Encompassing deserts and glaciers in an intoxicating, longitudinal sweep, Chile's mad geography has been a crucible for a particular kind of Modernism informed by abstraction, climate and nature. Many of the younger generation of South American architects are reconnecting with these currents (Mathias Klotz is an obvious example) to produce strong, distinctive work that resonates with place. Such exploration is also apparent in the work of the young Chilean/Argentinian partnership of Mauricio Pezo and Sofia von Ellrichshausen who are based in the coastal city of Concepcion. Commissioned by a local cultural organisation

this dramatic cliffside house on the Coliumo Peninsula, was commended for its response to site and the strong, monolithic quality of its architecture.

Some 550km south of Santiago, the Coliumo Peninsula is a breathtaking but remote rural setting populated by farmers, fishermen and the occasional summer tourist. The difficulties of transporting materials and a largely unskilled local labour force limited the scope of the project, but the architects exploit these limitations to create an architecture of great simplicity and power. Poised vertiginously on the edge of the cliff, the house is an elemental concrete cube perforated by large

square openings. Used both as a summer house and informal cultural centre, the building had to be at once domestic and monumental, apparently contradictory propositions which are skillfully resolved.

Service elements such as kitchen, bathroom, storage and staircases are relegated to the perimeter, contained within a 1m wide zone that acts as thermal buffer. This frees up the rest of the house, so the living area, for instance, is a grandly scaled triple-height volume. The house steps down the site, from bedrooms at the top, through kitchen and dining at intermediate level, to the podium of the living area that directly overlooks the cliff and

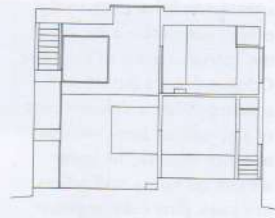
sea below. The roof also acts as a terrace.

Construction was extremely simple, with in-situ concrete cast by hand in untreated timber frames. Labour was provided by local farmers and fishermen who only had a small concrete mixer and four wheelbarrows at their disposal. In a spirit of inventive economy, the timber shuttering was recycled to make robust sliding panels that screen the service areas and windows when the house is not in use. Yet the engaging roughness of the construction only adds to the building's primitive allure. C 5

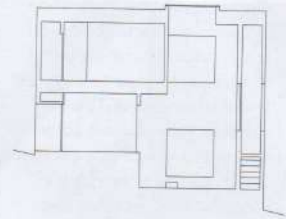
Architect
PVE Architects, Concepcion
Photographs
Cristóbal Palma



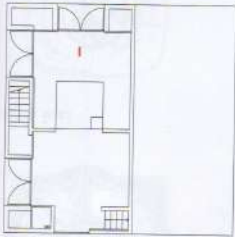
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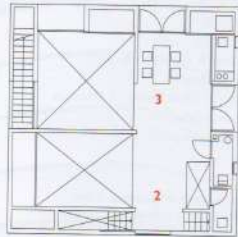
cross section looking east



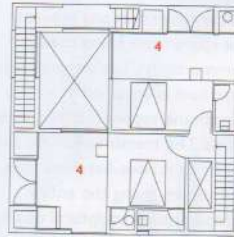
cross section looking north



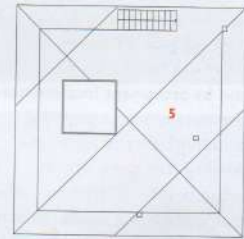
ground floor (living) plan
(scale approx 1:250)



first floor (kitchen/dining)



second floor (bedrooms)



roof plan



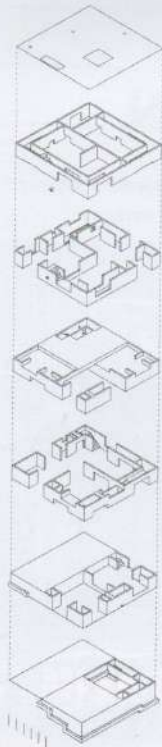
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- 1 living room
- 2 kitchen
- 3 dining room
- 4 bedroom
- 5 terrace

1
Cast by hand using the most basic techniques, the concrete house has a primitive allure.

2
The raw concrete cube clings precipitously to the hillside.

3, 4
The triple-height living room – spaces are at once quite grand, yet domestic.



exploded isometric projection



4