

QUALITY COLORS.



Case Study

Alp, Tokyo, Japan



Color for Life.



QUALITY WORKS.

LANXESS
Energizing Chemistry

IN HARMONY WITH NATURE.



- Apartments with nooks and crannies: From the roof down to the ground floor, the floor plans of the three residential floors are reminiscent of an Alpine mountain range.



A street becomes an inviting plaza again.

The word “environment” describes the relationship between an object and its surroundings, and it is the overarching concept behind Alp, an apartment building designed by Akihisa Hirata in Akabane, Tokyo. Located in the heart of the city, this area nevertheless is influenced by the natural hills surrounding it. It has the look of a place where you could expect at any time to encounter archaeologists on a dig. Akihisa Hirata abstracted this special topography for his design, with the goal of creating a new kind of harmony between the building and its urban environment.

To connect the building more closely to the original landscape, the concrete was colored to give it the appearance of charcoal. Alp not only blends in with the various roof styles of the surrounding buildings; the walls and roofs of the individual apartments simultaneously convey to observers and residents a sense of the building's immediate ties to the forces of nature.

- Balanced proportions, clear and simple lines, and the characteristic, charcoal-like coloring modeled on the natural surroundings combine the three-story apartment house Alp in Akabane, Tokyo, with its urban environment and the natural topography.



A DISTINCT WORLD IN THE MIDST OF THE CITY.

Valleys of light.

In urban Akabane, buildings stand close together, supporting roofs of varying styles and sizes. A large cubic object would not have fit in here, and so a building was designed with fractal structures, and both concave and convex surfaces. With their simple geometric shapes, the roofs, walls and stairways reflect the building's topographical context. Inside, the hallways form natural valleys, letting light and air into the lower floors and garden areas. Alp in this way expresses a deep understanding of the relationship between the natural and the artificial.

■ The color establishes a geographical context.



■ The roof looks as if it were creased and folded by the forces of nature.



“THIS CHARCOAL-COLORED BUILDING IS DIVIDED JUST LIKE THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE, LENDING THE CONCRETE A NEW FORM OF EXPRESSION AS A BUILDING MATERIAL.”

Akihisa Hirata

Akihisa Hirata, born in Osaka in 1971, received his degree from the Architecture Department of the Engineering Faculty at Kyoto University in 1994, and earned his master's degree from the Graduate School of Engineering in 1997. The recipient of numerous awards, Hirata established his own architecture firm in 2005, and is a national and international guest lecturer. His most significant works apart from “Alp” (2010) include “Masuya” (2006), “Bloomberg Pavilion” (2011) and “Kotoriku” (2014).



■ Residents move through hallways flooded with light and air.

A BODY OF COLOR IN A GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT.

A new relationship between architecture and the environment.

“Colored concrete is not simply concrete with colored paint on top,” says Akihisa Hirata. Merely painting the building therefore was not an option for his Alp project. He decided in favor of integral coloration with Bayferrox® color pigments. This process retains the characteristic surface structure and appearance of the concrete, which was Hirata’s objective. Furthermore, different color nuances and shades can be created as desired by varying the amount of pigment added, in this case Bayferrox® 4330/3. A color tone was created specifically for the Alp project that perfectly matches the surroundings and powerfully expresses the potential of the build-

ing site. And it will continue to do so for many years, because color pigments are exceptionally lightfast, as well as heat and weather resistant. And what will please current and future residents of the Alp apartments: In addition to all their other practical and aesthetic advantages, Bayferrox® color pigments are also safe and sustainable.

■ An expression of the relationship between the natural and the artificial.



■ Concave and convex surfaces turn one roof into many.



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PROJECT DATA

■ Clear lines for a new kind of harmony.



Location

Akabane, Tokyo, Japan

Architect

Akihisa Hirata

Construction Company

PRISMIC Corporation

Project Partners

Miura Koumuten Co., Ltd.

Construction period

July 2009 – March 2010

Amount of concrete

424.9 m³

Amount of pigment

ca. 9,000 kg

Form supplied

Powder

Supplier

Ozeki Co., Ltd.

Pigments

Bayferrox® 4330/3