Fontana takes, mixes and abstracts the sounds of the pigeons that used to flock on the site. As he did at Vals and the Swiss pavilion at Hanover (AR September 2000), Zumthor is trying to involve senses other than sight and touch. Surely scent will soon be included, for the ruins are still consecrated and services (presumably including incense) can be held in the great space.

From the luminous atmosphere of the ruin hall, you return to the foyer to take stairs to the first floor. A couple of short flights and landings take you to a long straight run of steps from the top between parallel walls like a medieval flight in the middle of a castle or Libeskind's long stairs at the Jewish Museum in Berlin (AR April 1999).

On the first floor, galleries are windowless, so intensely demonstrate the museum's hanging policy, which must be unique. Pictures are displayed with no attribution — though you do get a handle. They have no obvious organisational scheme, so for instance an early Renaissance wooden figure of Christ in torment can be found next to a couple of Warhols (there is little in the collections between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries). The aim is to stimulate contemplation and to open new perspectives. The most intense space on this floor is the treasury, where silver medieval reliquaries and crosses enriched with ivory, enamel and glittering jewels are exhibited in virginal, side by side with richly illuminated books of hours. In this dark room, light comes only from the displays, and distances between them are so small that you are virtually forced to examine the delicate work intently: your nose is inches away.

Another straight flight leads to the top level. Much larger than the one below because it covers the ruin hall, the floor is laid out like a medieval town centre with a linked series of central spaces fringed by individual galleries like houses round a marketplace. Up here, floor-to-ceiling windows generate pools of light, encouraging oblique visual axes across the central spaces, sometimes bringing the cathedral's magnificent nineteenth-century Neo-Gothic spires into play with paintings like the vibrant yellow Hanse in the Square by Joseph Albers. As on the first floor, walls are of plaster which, like the concrete of the Bregenz Kunsthalle (AR December 1997), offers no obvious means of mounting the pictures: each must be separately supported by drilling into the wall, and when there are changes in the hang in future, signs of previous arrangements will be apparent, patinas of the past echoing in a small way how traces of the previous are to be found in different ways throughout.