

PROCEEDINGS

of the

FIFTH  
INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE

of the

EUROPEAN  
ARCHITECTURAL  
HISTORY  
NETWORK



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# FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

of the

# EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY NETWORK

Edited by  
Andres Kurg & Karin Vicente

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This electronic publication brings together papers and abstracts from the Fifth International Meeting of the European Architectural History Network (EAHN), held in Tallinn between 13-16 June 2018. The organization's biannual international meeting, is its largest gathering, and has previously been held in Guimarães (2010), Brussels (2012), Turin (2014), and Dublin (2016). As EAHN's first meeting in north-eastern Europe, this year's Tallinn conference continues to expand the organization's geographical reach, reflecting its aspiration to critically address centre-periphery relations within Europe.

Unlike many other large conventions of professional associations, the EAHN international meeting does not have an overarching theme, instead it aims to map the present state of research, whilst actively promoting critical discussion and expanding the field of architectural history through embracing new research trajectories. As such, the conference chooses not to limit itself to any one particular historical period or geographical region, but instead tries to include the widest possible variety of approaches to the built environment.

The final program of this year's Tallinn conference was put together through two consecutive open calls. In December 2016, session and round table proposals were submitted for selection to an International Scientific Committee, who selected 24 sessions and two round tables out of 90 high-level proposals. In September 2017, the chosen sessions and round tables solicited papers through a subsequent call and the selection of speakers was made by the chairs of each panel. As the call for papers produced almost four times as many abstracts as could be accepted, the programme committee decided to add two open sessions, with each chair putting forward two of the strongest proposals which the conference had perviously not been able to accommodate. As a result, the meeting in Tallinn includes 26 sessions with 121 papers and two round tables with 11 position papers.

In composing the final programme, the Scientific Committee organised the selected sessions into five parallel tracks that are loosely thematically related and run throughout all three days. 'Mediations' gathers together sessions observing the history of the sites of architectural knowledge production – such as architectural criticism, architectural magazines, and foundations supporting architectural research. It also addresses the status of colour, and the role of history as mediated in the architecture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

'Comparative Modernities' brings together sessions that address supra-national networks and institutions as channels for instigating the processes of global modernity: comprador networks in Asia in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, UN development programmes in non-Western countries in the mid-twentieth century, centrally administered design institutions in the Socialist block, and private developers in post-war Welfare states. Positioning this kind of analytical framework demands a rethink of architectural history's traditional categories and vocabulary. In a similar way 'Postmodernism' is

re-thought in one session in this track through juxtaposing Western-centric definitions of the term alongside examples of architectural practices within the Eastern block.

The track 'Peripheries' aims to rethink European architectural historiography, looks at the Tasman world, Europe's Islamic architecture and rural modernism. These sessions aim to demonstrate that 'periphery' is a relational rather than a strictly geographical term, which plays out in multifaceted relationships, in various locations. Examples range from mosques in West-European metropolitan cities, or modernism in rural farm settlements, to the paradoxical status of a country such as Greece – simultaneously praised as a cradle of European architecture yet considered 'peripheral' when viewed through the lens of Western modernism.

'Discovery and Persistence' looks at the early modern world: its residential systems, the *longue durée* of the baroque in Europe, representations of the Orient before the nineteenth century and the representation of architecture in erudite writing. It also highlights the rediscovery of Roman antiquity during the Renaissance, foregrounding the archival documentation of sixteenth-century archaeological work undertaken in Rome.

Finally, 'Body and Mind' brings together a diverse set of sessions, addressing, amongst numerous other issues, the fascination with the 'irrational' and surreal present in late modern and postmodern architecture, as well as mapping various structures which have historically operationalized the body. The latter category includes children's architecture designed to train future (ideological) subjects, the architecture of reform from the late nineteenth century, and the mid-twentieth-century architecture of creativity which gave rise to new kinds of work spaces and classrooms.

The proceedings also include papers and abstracts from two round tables and one Thematic Interest Group meeting. In 'Who (Still) Needs Eastern Europe' panelists debate about the recent transformations of the term 'Eastern Europe' in architectural studies, tracing how its earlier usage – in reference to the Habsburg empire and its aftermath – has been assimilated within the more recent history of the Communist block. The second roundtable, 'Beyond Instrumentality: Environmental Histories of Architecture', probes the methodological challenges faced by those attempting to approach architectural writing from an environmental perspective.

The meeting of the Latin American Interest Group, preceding the main programme of the conference, was titled Latin American Dialogues and includes papers dealing with encounters and cultural transfer between Latin America and Europe since the nineteenth century: the displacement of European architects to Latin America, transfers of architectural models through writing and images, historiographical constructions that interpret and adapt European narratives.

Taken together, the tracks, round tables and the interest group meeting aim to give an overview of the discussions, subjects of research and emerging tendencies in architectural history throughout Europe and beyond, *anno* 2018. Recognizing the contingency of this kind of overview, and the partiality of any attempt to represent the whole field of scholarship, we nevertheless believe in the role of the EAHN transnational meetings as a means of developing a new kind of platform that brings together authoritative scholarship as well as more polemical and overtly political accounts, providing space for asking uncomfortable questions, and raising problems that exceed the confines of national traditions.

I want to express the pleasure of our organising team in welcoming this year's conference participants to Tallinn, and hope that the research papers, position papers, polemics and conversations presented and conducted over the coming days will contribute to the future of architectural research, exploring and challenging the study of the built environment in all its forms.

Andres Kurg,  
Conference Chair

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# RETHINKING ARCHITECTURAL COLOUR

Session chairs:

**Conor Lucey**, University College Dublin  
**Lynda Mulvin**, University College Dublin

Just as early modern ornament and decoration has in recent years reclaimed its place in serious architectural discourse, confirmed by sessions and papers at recent meetings of the Society of Architectural Historians, the European Architectural History Network, and other forums and publications, so the status of colour remains to be fully addressed. Recent and ongoing research initiatives such as ‘Saturated Space’, run jointly by the Architectural Association and the Università Iuav di Venezia, signal a burgeoning interest in the decorative and ornamental properties of architectural colour; but the emphasis here has been squarely on contemporary practice. Other interdisciplinary projects, such as the ‘Progress in Colour Studies’ series of conferences and publications at the University of Glasgow, with its focus on linguistics, psychology and anthropology, have yet to attract histories of architecture, ornament and interior decoration to its otherwise broad roster of academic disciplines.

This session proposes to address the various roles and functions of colour in architectural design and decoration by widening the field of enquiry. As it stands, the established scholarship on architectural colour may be divided into two discrete Eurocentric strands, broadly characterized as ‘intellectual’ and ‘material’. While archaeological excavations during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries revolutionized the modern understanding of architectural colour in the classical world, so it initiated a complex and wide-

ranging theoretical literature from practitioners including Jacob Ignatz Hittendorff, Gottfried Semper, Bruno Taut and Le Corbusier. In more recent decades, research based on the empirical evidence from conservation and supplemented by archival sources, perhaps exemplified by the publications of Ian Bristow, has provided the basis for the material reconstructions of colour schemes long lost to the historical record.

Is the European conceptual tradition undermined by the increasingly scientific approach methods used in architectural conservation? Are there consonances between Western and non-Western approaches to colour? Tallinn is a particularly appropriate place to explore approaches to historic architectural colour, given its UNESCO heritage designation and the comprehensive 'Cultural Heritage and Conservation' programme offered by the Estonian Academy of Arts.

We invite papers that consider colour's intrinsic (ornamental) or extrinsic (decorative) relationship to form, that present new conservation-led research which challenges received orthodoxies about the role of colour in the articulation of exterior ornament or interior space, or that introduce theoretical approaches long overshadowed by the dominance of the Western European literature on architectural design.

## The Colourful Middle Ages?

Anneli Randla,  
Estonian Academy of Arts

### Abstract

Some recent findings of the decorative colour schemes employed in medieval churches in Estonia, studied by the Department of Conservation at the Estonian Academy of Arts, are discussed in this paper. The questions raised concern the function of medieval murals (as both extended architecture and meaningful symbols), the eventual whitewashing of the church interiors in the twentieth century, and the influence of these changes on the perception of ecclesiastical space.

The materials and techniques used for creating these decorative colour schemes are also discussed in their historical contexts. The forensic study of tool marks and paint layers, together with chemical pigment analysis have revealed important information, which compensates for the lack of substantive written evidence. In some rare instances, these material findings in fact complement the documentary evidence.

### Keywords

Colour in architecture, medieval murals, extended architecture, technical art history.

In this paper, I will present some recent findings regarding the decorative colour schemes employed in medieval churches in Estonia studied by the Department of Conservation at the Estonian Academy of Arts.<sup>1</sup> Over the last 14 years, the interiors of 14 medieval churches have been investigated. There is evidence of painted decoration on the exterior walls, but due to climatic conditions these murals have been very poorly preserved. Of the 14, only one church has a fragment of painted decoration on the former outer wall, which was turned into an interior wall after the addition of an extension to the original building.<sup>2</sup> The red and blue stylised palmetto frieze on the chancel wall of the Kaarma church dates from the thirteenth century and was painted in a fresco technique, but it is too small a fragment for further generalisations.

The interiors of the churches have provided more information on their earlier colour schemes. For instance, seven consecutive painted decorations were found in the Koeru church, which today looks quite plain. In this paper, only the earliest medieval layers are discussed. Before looking more closely at these murals, a short and somewhat simplified historical overview is necessary.

The earliest medieval churches in Estonia date from the thirteenth century, when this territory was incorporated into Christian Europe. Not all ecclesiastical buildings were made of stone at first and nearly all of them were extended, modified or redecorated during the later Middle Ages. The first major turn, which mainly influenced interior decoration and furnishings and to a lesser degree architecture, was the Reformation. In towns, the changes took place as early as in the 1520s and were in general more radical; in rural areas the process was much slower. No source indicates massive whitewashing of churches, but gradually the interiors were redecorated for ideological as well as aesthetic and practical reasons.<sup>3</sup>

Most churches got monochrome walls and vaults in the nineteenth century, a process which might have been influenced by pietist ideas. The eventual whitewashing occurred only in the twentieth century, especially after World War II. During the Soviet era there was a constant shortage of quality paint and all congregations could do, was to cover deteriorating interiors with layers of lime. At the same time, in professional conservation circles, the nineteenth-century decorations in medieval churches were often considered to have little or no value and a total whitewash was regarded as more 'authentic'.

Thus, the present situation, where church interiors are very plain, is a relatively late condition. However, this has made a strong impression on the general public and churchgoers alike. The perception that a proper ecclesiastical space should have white and therefore clean walls and ceilings is widespread. When earlier, more colourful decoration has been revealed, most congregations have been curious but not really willing to embrace this different visual character in their 'white' churches.<sup>4</sup>

The medieval murals can be divided into three slightly overlapping groups: (1) larger figurative compositions; (2) paintings of extended architecture; and (3) more moderate ornamental decorations. All of these discoveries have rendered the church interiors quite different from their present appearance.

The figurative compositions within the churches in Valjala, Muhu and Ridala depict biblical figures, saints and angels. The iconography is somewhat different in each case, but in general their message is quite clear. Technically, the Valjala mural of six apostles is the most interesting: although its present state of preservation is very poor, close study of the paint layer revealed that it was not executed only in red ochre, as was previously thought. The visible remains are only an extremely detailed and masterly rendered underdrawing for the painting. Chemical analysis of the minute fragments of the finishing paint layer revealed that expensive blue and bright red pigments had been used to model the robes of the apostles. The binder of the paint remained unclear; it was probably an organic one, much less stable than the lime used in most medieval murals in Estonia.<sup>5</sup> In spite of the current state of the Valjala mural, it is possible to imagine the colourfulness of the original interior of the church.

The paintings of extended architecture form the largest group of the recent finds. Here the term 'extended architecture' is used to mark all depictions imitating architectural features or surfaces in painting: from faux tracery windows and vault bosses to painted ashlar masonry. In the Koeru church two medieval colour schemes were discovered.<sup>6</sup> The first one covered the transversal arches and depicted alternating red and grey ashlar. The second layer of decoration was the most elaborate in the whole history of the church. The vaults had been (re-)plastered and the decoration had been painted directly on the still moist plaster in a fresco technique. The motifs had been drawn on the plaster using a sharp tool and compass, and in places stencils had been used for repetitive ornaments. The vaults, which have no ribs or key stones, got elaborate painted bosses, and 'ribs' had been drawn in red. On the transversal arches and their corbels, the earlier decoration had been repeated, although in a slightly different position. All of the corners of the interior had also been decorated with faux ashlar painted in red and grey, with white 'joints'. Another element of this colour scheme was an ornament surrounding the windows and consisting of stylised four-petal flowers or crosses in red and bordered with black lines. The same ornament but in reversed colours – black flowers and red lines – surrounded the triumphal arch. The first decorative paint layer can be dated to the late thirteenth century, when the church was first vaulted, and the second probably to the late medieval period, around 1500. In a church with only a few carved details, these murals added the necessary highlights and a hint of playfulness amidst the relatively sober architecture.

Ornamental decoration very similar to that in Koeru was discovered a few years later in Keila church.<sup>7</sup> Here a black frieze of stylised flowers or crosses bordered all windows and the chancel arch. Only black had been used, but the motif was identical, suggesting that even the same stencil could have been used in both churches. The Keila church is a rare instance where this decoration can be cautiously linked to a written source: the medieval account book of this church, the only surviving one of its kind from a medieval rural church in the territory of Estonia, mentions a certain painter, the master Mychel, who had been paid for his work in the church in 1499. Since no other painted decoration has been found in the church, this entry might indicate the artist and date of these simple ornaments.

By far the most elaborate murals were uncovered in Pöide church.<sup>8</sup> The church has had several different colour schemes over the centuries. The earliest one dates to the completion of the second construction phase of the building, the 'Gothic' church, from around the 1270s. Here, as in many cases elsewhere, the murals had been painted in a fresco technique on fresh plaster. Interestingly, in Pöide, real architectural features are combined with painted ones: for instance, real ribs alternate with painted ones on the chancel vault. The same holds true for the windows: there are tracery windows in the eastern and southern walls of the chancel, and the blind

northern wall had a huge painted rose window. Only small but legible parts of the composition were uncovered in 2012, but these were sufficient to reconstruct the dimensions, structure and technique of the painting, as well as to examine its state of preservation.

On closer inspection, the technical details of the execution of this image could be determined. A preparatory drawing had been made by using a compass, a ruler and a pointed instrument on the moist plaster, and this had been painted immediately. However, after painting only the upper parts, the whole composition had been shifted downwards by about 5 cm, re-drawn and re-painted before the plaster had completely dried. Some corrections were made later on the dry painting. The structure of the rose window was carefully composed. The rose, four metres in diameter, is divided into eight wedges. Each wedge is divided into two monk's head sectors, topped with quatrefoils. Between the lancets are roundels with pentafoils. The centre of the rose was less well preserved, and therefore its reconstruction is simplified. Considering the design of the rim, there could have been a more delicate solution. The window had been painted in various shades of red ochre, except for the spherical triangles, which were bluish or black. The red colour was most widely used in church murals, but here, at least in the outer rim, it might refer to brick. In any case, both the design and execution of this mural confirmed, that it had been made by an experienced professional.

Furthermore, three years later, another faux rose window was discovered. It is located on the northern wall of the eastern bay of the church's nave. Several lines, roundels and sextafoils, which resemble but are not identical to the ones in the chancel, were drawn on the same layer of plaster while the plaster was still moist. Although the plaster in this area has been very fragmentarily preserved, some traces of red colour can be detected. The meticulous geometry of the fragments makes the reconstruction of the full composition of this faux window possible. It consisted of a sextafoil surrounded by six further sextafoils of the same size and was encircled with a wide rim. Thus the design differed considerably from the one in the chancel. Was this a testing ground for the painted window in the chancel? Its different pattern and traces of red paint would contradict this assumption. If it was an independent composition, why would a church need two such images? The latest discovery in Pöide church came from the westernmost vault of the nave. Just a fragment of the vault plaster has survived. This central piece has a boss modelled of plaster and the vault groins are formed of thicker mortar. Red 'ribs' ending in *fleur-de-lis*-like spikes were painted along the groins onto fresh plaster. The most curious motif was revealed on the boss: a graffiti-like face of a young man whose identity remains unknown. In any case, the decoration of this vault is by a different and much less experienced hand than the rose windows.<sup>9</sup>

As none of the described murals has been uncovered entirely, nor have any of them been preserved extensively, it has been a challenge to

understand and visualise the historical colour schemes. Different imaging techniques have been tried for this purpose. The first, very simple digital reconstruction was made for Koeru in 2012.<sup>10</sup> More sophisticated ones on the murals in Pöide followed a few years later. At this stage these reconstructions are still too schematic, but at least give a better idea of the scale and extent of the decoration.<sup>11</sup> However, the most successful attempt at visualisation turned out to be the *in situ* projection of the faux rose window on the wall of Pöide church in 2016. If used moderately, this can be the best way to raise awareness among the general public of this important, but mostly lost aspect of medieval ecclesiastical architecture. Concurrently, 3D models of church interiors and furnishings have also been developed, and these have turned out to be very useful for further research.

In conclusion, the knowledge of the existence, extent, execution and possible meaning of medieval church murals in Estonia has advanced considerably in recent years. New imaging techniques have contributed to the wider and deeper interpretation of this information, as well as to making it more accessible to the general public.

The examples discussed in this paper illustrate that colour has played a much greater role in medieval church buildings than the present mostly white interiors would suggest. In addition to pictorial scenes with a clear religious message, more abstract colour schemes have made the architectural setting of the churches more elaborate. Colour has been used to underline existing architectural elements like transverse arches, triumphal arches or corners of the building, often adding ashlar or brick patterns to plastered surfaces. Such decorations have been very persistent, the patterns and colours have changed over time and the colour has disappeared as late as in the nineteenth or even twentieth century. Even more interesting are the cases, where fictive architecture is created with the means of painting. Well before the widespread *trompe l'oeil* technique, faux rose windows, painted ribs and key stones adorned medieval church interiors.

## Notes

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- 2 Villem Raam, 'Mõningaid uusi andmeid vanast dekoratiivsest seinamaalidest,' *Kunst* 1 (1966), 53–6.
- 3 See also Krista Kodres, 'Das "Geistliche Gebäud" der Kirche': The Lutheran Church in Early Modern Estonia as a Meeting Place of Theological, Social and Artistic Ideas,' in Andrew Spicer (ed.), *Lutheran Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012),

- 333–76; Krista Kodres, 'Translations: Conveying Reformation Ideas Through Architecture and Visual Media in the Eastern Baltic Region,' in Joachim Bahlcke, Beate Störtkuhl and Matthias Weber (eds.), *The Luther Effect in Eastern Europe: History – Culture – Memory* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017), 211–25.
- 4 Opinions expressed in discussions with the members of the congregations during research and conservation works.
- 5 Anneli Randla and Hilka Hiiop, 'Mõningaid uusi andmeid vanast dekoratiivsest seinamaalist,' *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi / Studies on Art and Architecture* 1–2 (2016), 135–83.
- 6 Anneli Randla, 'A Blossoming Heaven – Medieval Murals in the Koeru Parish Church,' *Estonian Art* 1–2 (2012), 36–8.
- 7 Anneli Randla, 'Keila kiriku maaling – kas esimene dateeritud ja atribueeritud keskaegne seinamaaling Eestis?' in Anneli Randla (ed.), *Järelevastamine. Kaur Altoale* (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2017), 263–72.
- 8 Anneli Randla, 'Rose Window: A Dream or Reality?' in Janne Harjula et al. (eds.), *Sacred Monuments and Practices in the Baltic Sea Region: New Visits to Old Churches* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 156–69.
- 9 Hilka Hiiop et al., 'Kes vaatab vastu Põide võlvilt?' in *Järelevastamine. Kaur Altoale*, 273–82.
- 10 See Randla, 'A Blossoming Heaven – Medieval Murals in the Koeru Parish Church.'
- 11 See Randla, 'Rose Window: A Dream or Reality?'

## Pioneer Polychromy: Geology, Industry and Aesthetics in Irish Victorian Architecture

Christine Casey,  
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### Abstract

This paper will consider the impetus to Thomas Deane and Benjamin Woodward's Museum Building at Trinity College in Dublin (1854–1857), a landmark in the employment of polished polychrome stone, and considered by John Ruskin as 'The first realization I had the joy to see of the principles, I had until then been endeavouring to teach'. This revolutionary building is not simply a precocious instance of Ruskinian influence but rather represents the convergence of burgeoning industrial and scientific forces together with a richly eclectic historicism.

Economic initiatives to exploit Ireland's rich deposits of polychrome stone, improvements in transport infrastructure, contemporary exhibitions of geological heritage, publications on architectural polychromy, together with a burgeoning poetics of marble architecture in Europe, created the seed-bed for Deane and Woodward's remarkable design. This paper will explore the pragmatic and formal contexts for the Museum Building's pioneering polychromy, and will consider its impact on Victorian architecture in Britain and Ireland.

## Ornament Without Ornamenting: Whiteness as the Default Materiality of Modernism

Susanne Bauer,  
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### Abstract

The terminology of the 'modern' is frequently attached to characteristics such as 'rational', 'utilitarian', 'functional', 'clean' or 'clear'. The colour white – incessantly and conveniently linked to all these characteristics – seems to be both the product and the expression of Modernism, and whiteness thus becomes its default materiality.

The argument about whiteness in architecture overlaps with the argument about ornament. One could argue that the prohibition of ornament would essentially mean the abolition of applied colour, that a modernist building should stand undressed in a mode of literal honesty. Ornamentation, like colour, should be swept away by a revolutionary inauguration of transparency. Paradoxically, the sign for this transparency was whiteness. The confusion upon which this narrative rests centres on the confusion about colour and ornament on the one side, and the colour white on the other.

Both colour and ornamentation are treated as ways of dressing a building. A coat of white paint, on the other hand, serves to avoid ornamentation. The modern use of whiteness is therefore not only a symbol of modernism but also a symbol of a non-existent object – of no dressing. Yet, according to Mark Wigley, the modern default materiality is just that, a way of dressing a building, and a white coat of paint is therefore a transparent mode of ornamentation. However, these logical contradictions represent no obstacle to the general sense that a white building is not only modern, but also corresponds to the overall demands of a modern architecture without ornamentation. The investigation into the default materiality of whiteness of modernism therefore serves as a tool into the overall analysis of the understandings of ornamentation.

## A New Chromatic Vision: The Early Impact of Colour Photography in Architecture

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### Abstract

On 28 April 1952, a crowded audience attended a lecture at the RIBA by the American architectural critic and photographer G.E. Kidder Smith, who surprised them with a superb selection of colour transparencies of Italian architecture. The *Architectural Review* editor J.M. Richards wrote afterwards: 'If only one had coloured photographs like Mr. Kidder Smith's readily available, and technical resources to reproduce them, architectural publications could be very much livelier and do a more worthwhile job in bringing architecture on the printed page than is possible at the moment.' This anecdote makes us rethink the role of colour photography in the representation of architecture, a subject that has remained under-investigated in architectural historiography.

Attempts to develop colour photography had been undertaken since the invention of the medium, but it was only with the introduction of the Kodachrome transparency film in 1935, followed by Kodacolor negative stock in 1942, that a major breakthrough was achieved. Although these processes later became mainstream in architectural photography, there has been no clear account of its origins in practice.

The aim of this paper is to explore the connection between the chromatic values of architectural design and its visual transmission in the early phase of modernism. Colour photography had an undeniable impact on architectural colour in practice: colour photographs in books and periodicals published between the 1940s and 1960s clearly influenced the use of colour in architectural design. Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye was almost exactly as monochrome as the many black and white photographs taken of it. This kind of imagery was spawning an architecture deficient in chromatic values. But some architects, such as Gio Ponti, Ettore Sottsass and Giorgio Casali, went beyond the established monochromatic representation of their buildings and in their pictures and articles for *Domus* magazine considered colour in a new way.

The factual representation of architectural colour had in fact long been desired by architects in professional practice. Many architects travelled with two cameras: one for shooting in black and white, and another to record coloured architectural surfaces and interiors. One of these was Bruno Morassutti, who spent a long period at Taliesin West looking deeply at Frank Lloyd Wright's colour schemes. Morassutti's visual legacy is only one of the many examples of colour photography informing an understanding of

architectural colour in its historical contexts. Konrad Gatz and Wilhelm O. Wallenfang's book *Color in Architecture: A Guide to Exterior Design* (1960), is a significant volume that makes the point of how colour photography interpreted and transmitted architectural colour. Translated into several languages, it has never been considered as a photo-book where the medium expressed the increasingly polychromatic nature of contemporary architecture.

This paper will contend that the visual representation of architecture in colour was more than an analytical tool: it had an important role in the historical development of our general knowledge and provided information on the character of modern architecture, helping to define a more rounded approach to architectural design.

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# MEDIATING ARCHITECTURE AND ITS AUDIENCES: THE ARCHITECTURAL CRITIC

Session chairs:

**Maristella Casciato**, Getty Research Institute

**Gary Fox**, University of California, Los Angeles

The session interrogates the emergence of architectural criticism as a key site for the production, circulation, and transformation of architectural ideas and practices in the twentieth century.

Responsible for bringing architecture into public discourse, architectural critics like Montgomery Schuyler, Lewis Mumford, Nikolaus Pevsner, John Summerson, Catherine Bauer, Jane Jacobs, Bruno Zevi, Ada-Louise Huxtable, and François Chaslin – to mention a few names of global significance – had transformative effects on the field. Each engaged in a remarkable diversity of professional activity including historical scholarship and preservation advocacy, becoming leaders in cultivating public opinion and in fostering a resemantization of the relationship between the built and the textual. In many ways their practices were divergent, yet together they articulate the often overlooked gaps between the built, the projective, and the public.

The investigation examines these transformative, yet little-studied figures, querying their historical role in the development of new audiences for architecture, their impact on the development of architectural journalism as a field distinct from the academy, and their influence on contemporaneous architectural practice.

The chairs encourage non-biographical and non-descriptive approaches to the topic, instead inviting scholars, architects, and critics to respond to historically specific questions such as:

1. How did the role of the architectural critic emerge, transform, and come to be highly specialized over the course of the twentieth century?
2. How has criticism adapted to its many media forms or engaged media systems beyond the textual?
3. What types of audiences does criticism engage or produce?
4. What historical relationships have criticism and journalism had with building practices and with scholarly production?
5. How does architectural journalism relate to political structures and institutions? What role has censorship played? How might we account for histories of repression of the architectural press?
6. How have the dictates of journalism run counter to those of criticism? Where has the friction between criticism as an ethic or as an aesthetic become apparent?
7. What becomes of the critic as the object of critique?
8. How has architectural criticism been treated historiographically, and what kinds of historiography might emerge from scholarly attention to architectural criticism?
9. What does it mean to make historical evidence of criticism?

## Critique vs Criticism: Giulio Carlo Argan and the Manifold Practices of Critica

Cesare Birignani,  
The City College of New York

### Abstract

Unlike English, Romance and Germanic languages do not distinguish between *critique* and *criticism*. In French, Italian, Spanish, German, Swedish, one and the same word (*critique, critica, Kritik, critiek*) is used to refer to two ostensibly distinct activities and to encompass a wide and somewhat unwieldy range of critical practices (commentary, analysis, evaluation, interpretation, judgment, etc.). This lexicological detail is not trivial. It might, in fact, reveal a fundamental feature of architectural writing as it was practiced in Europe and offer clues for the study of the emergence and transformation of the figure of the architectural critic. In this paper I propose to explore the dialectic of critique and criticism – and sketch the outlines of what we may call a study in historical semantics – by looking at modern Italy and, in particular, at the work of the art and architectural historian and critic Giulio Carlo Argan (1909-1992).

A prodigious, Promethean scholar, Argan was a key voice in architectural debates from the 1930s onward and contributed to major re-orientations of the discipline, for example (re)introducing architects to the paramount issue of typology or raising, in a seminal 1957 essay, the problem of the relation between architecture and ideology. Moreover, through his relentless activity as a publicist, Argan became one of Italy's most important public intellectuals, reaching new audiences outside the profession with newspaper columns, magazine articles, radio and TV programmes, and, significantly, an art history textbook that was used for decades in high-school curricula. Argan's long and preternaturally productive career – and his manifold practices of *critica* – offer an ideal ground to probe the vicissitudes of architectural criticism in the twentieth century and trace the history of the mediations between architecture and its audiences.

## Architects vs. the Public in Architectural Criticism: From the Press to Radio and Television

Jessica Kelly,  
University for the Creative Arts, Farnham

### Abstract

In 1972 the BBC broadcast a television programme called 'Life is Right, The Architect is Wrong'. The sentiment of the programme was evident from its title – it interrogated the work of architects in relation to the opinions and lived experiences of the public. This was one of the first times on British TV that architects, critics, and the general public appeared together on a panel to discuss architecture. Nearly forty years earlier, in 1935, *The Architectural Review* had published its first criticism column. Its purpose was 'not so much to elevate the understanding of the architect as to fan the ardor of the layman, who is to-day increasingly tempted to follow the current trends of architectural thought'. These two examples of architectural criticism's negotiation of the relationship between the expertise of architects and the opinions, knowledge, and experience of the public, are my starting point.

Between the AR's first criticism column and the BBC's 'Architect is Wrong' programme, architectural criticism shifted from seeking to consolidate the authority of architects by guiding and educating the audience, through attempts at compromise, balancing public opinion with architectural expertise. This shift from consolidation to compromise and critique was mirrored by architectural criticism's move into radio and TV. This paper will discuss the relationship between the changing media of architectural criticism and the changing attitude toward the public.

Looking at specific articles in the AR and BBC radio and TV broadcasts, this paper shows how the dynamic of expert versus public shaped the content, tone, and mode of address in architectural criticism. In turn, it will trace architectural criticism's role in the changing relationship between architecture, architects, and the public in Britain.

## Designs on TV: Aline Bernstein Saarinen and Public Reception of Architecture in the Postwar US

Emily Pugh,  
Getty Research Institute

### Abstract

My paper examines how architectural criticism on American television news and documentary programmes in the 1950s and 1960s played a key role in elevating the public's regard for architecture and design in these decades. In particular, I will analyze programming produced, written, and often featuring architecture critic and journalist Aline Bernstein Saarinen, whose reporting on design and the arts helped to move architecture to the center of national debates on culture and politics.

Saarinen worked as a critic and editor for print publications, including *Art News* and the *New York Times*, before beginning a career as TV journalist in 1962. Throughout the 1960s, she reported on architecture and arts for programmes such as NBC's *Sunday* and *Today*, as well as documentary specials like *Opening Night at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts* (1962). Using information culled from the programmes themselves as well as relevant archival materials, my paper will discuss how Saarinen's reporting echoed themes presented in other, similar programmes that aired around the same time, such as the 1958 episode of NBC's *Look Here* featuring Raymond Loewy or the 1961 episode of CBS's *Accent*, featuring Philip Johnson and Louis I. Kahn.

I will explore how the message conveyed by Saarinen and other architectural critics of this era informed, and was informed by, the evolution of television documentary as genre, which according to media historians was experiencing a golden age in the early 1960s. As I will argue, Saarinen's career demonstrates how architectural criticism and more precisely *journalism* on US TV news shaped public attitudes towards architecture and design in the postwar decades, establishing in the minds of Americans deep connections among building design, national prestige, economic affluence, and political supremacy.

## Data Dread and Architectural Criticism

Matthew Allen,  
Harvard University

### Abstract

I argue that an important aspect of modern architectural criticism is its fraught relationship with data. I focus on the case of John Summerson.

In a seminal 1957 paper, Summerson proposed that – in the words of Colin Rowe – ‘an allegedly neutral compilation of data’ is the ‘motivating force of modern architecture.’ Like other critics (e.g., Hitchcock’s 1947 ‘genius and bureaucracy’ and Colquhoun’s 1967 ‘typology and design method’) Summerson was attempting to adapt prewar thinking about modern architecture to the postwar situation. In 1960s Britain, the general infatuation with science and the spread of computational thinking mixed in architecture with a burgeoning bureaucratic terrain, from corporate practices to salaried government architects. In place of the relatively straightforward relationship between genius designers and iconic buildings, the postwar architecture critic grappled with new production methods, new building types, and increasing political complications. Of all the problems posed by the new bureaucratic mode, its relationship to data caused the most anxiety. In part through Summerson’s example, the contradiction involved in the very notion of criticizing data became a central tension of criticism. Historically, ‘data’ refers to ‘assumptions.’ Once data is criticized, it is no longer properly data. Taking this contradiction into account, a quasi-philosophical questioning of the place of data, determinism, and functionalism in architecture became a hallmark of postwar architectural criticism. Attempts to negotiate this central tension imparted the distinctly intellectual and internalist/disciplinary character that separates postwar criticism from adjacent modes of writing such as popular reviews of buildings and more philosophical theory. It also helped define a new audience distinct from the layperson and the architect-as-designer: the intelligent and creative worker in the bureaucracy of architecture. Criticism of the type Summerson wrote thus helped to define what it meant to be an architect in the last half-century.

## The ‘Critical’ in the Architectural Criticism of Kenneth Frampton

Mary McLeod,  
Columbia University

### Abstract

For nearly fifty years, British-American architect Kenneth Frampton has been one of the most important critics and historians of architecture, read by architects and students worldwide. He introduced the word ‘critical’ in English-language architectural criticism: first, in the title of his 1974 essay ‘Apropos Ulm: Curriculum and Critical Theory,’ and later, in his book *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (1980) and his highly influential essay ‘Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance’ (1983). His writings during this period were part of a larger shift that occurred in architecture criticism from the 1970s onward, one that sought to understand not just architecture’s formal properties but also its broader political, social, and cultural implications. Frampton sought to forge a link between architecture criticism and Marxist cultural theory, specifically the Frankfurt School. Here, he shows some affinities with his friend and colleague Alan Colquhoun. Together, they helped initiate what is sometimes called the theoretical turn in English-language architecture writing.

Frampton’s interest in a Marxist cultural criticism was especially indebted to Walter Benjamin and Herbert Marcuse (his copy of *Eros and Civilization* was, not coincidentally, a gift from Colquhoun), and two architects whom he encountered in the 1960s: Claude Schnaidt and Tomás Maldonado. Frampton, however, departing from these Marxist predecessors (as well as Manfredo Tafuri), and influenced by Dalibor Vesely, has attempted to combine his Marxist critique with a more phenomenological examination of architecture’s experiential qualities in an effort to counter – or at least to provide an alternative to – an overly commodified world.

After examining the evolution of Frampton’s theoretical perspective and some of the tensions in his critical stance, I conclude with a brief discussion of the impact his work has had on subsequent architectural criticism.

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# THE FOUNDATIONS OF ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH

Session chairs:

**Barbara Penner**, University College London

**Charles Rice**, University of Technology Sydney

In the last two decades, architectural historians have increasingly explored how a broad range of ‘actors’ produce buildings and cities and how architecture operates within a complex web of specific social and material relations. These studies have been important in terms of recognizing how governmental, regulatory and commercial contexts impact upon architectural and urban agendas and outcomes. Yet the formation of the very ground upon which architectural research has been constructed and the ways in which it is framed remains understudied. As Arindam Dutta reminds us in *A Second Modernism* (2013), knowledge paradigms are not essential or self-contained, but emerge from ‘a hybridized system involving the infrastructural or regional contexts in which they are set – the availability of funds, of people, epistemic currents, disciplinary audience, and so on.’

This session will aim to deepen understanding of architectural research by focusing on the role of its funding through foundations, think tanks, nongovernmental and governmental organizations. Indeed, in the postwar period, some of the most influential research in architecture and urbanism was funded by such bodies, from the Ford Foundation’s funding of Kevin Lynch’s and Marshall McLuhan’s research to the Rockefeller Foundation’s funding of Jane Jacobs’. Meanwhile, key networking opportunities were provided at the International Design Conference at Aspen (an offshoot of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH

think tank) and the Delos meetings. Architectural and urban issues have also been pursued through large government-funded research projects in other fields, including in defense, information technology, sustainability and climate science.

With some notable exceptions, however, few scholars have studied how funding organisations have influenced and shaped research in urban development, planning and housing policy or specific architectural projects. These organisations each have their own histories and agendas, which direct them to focus architectural research in certain ways, and which merit analysis in their own right. This session thus invites papers that will explore the funding of architectural research through specific case studies that illuminate these relationships. We would particularly welcome paper proposals which engage with the wider geopolitical context and the ideological agendas of funding.

## Research as Persuasion: Architectural Research in the Tennessee Valley Authority

Avigail Sachs,  
University of Tennessee

In 1933, the American federal government created the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and gave it responsibility for the entire Tennessee watershed. The Authority was specifically charged with building a series of dams, (to enhance navigation and produce low cost energy,) but also saw itself as an agent of modernization and reform in a 'depressed' region. To this end the TVA Board of Directors developed the notion of 'decentralized planning', a practice which would balance between the systematic federal approach and local interests and needs.

This overarching agenda was obvious in all of the TVA efforts, but especially in its deep investment in research. Spanning multiple disciplines and professions, this research was intended not only to produce new knowledge but also to demonstrate the power of science and planning to the residents of the Tennessee valley and to persuade them to support and contribute to the TVA goals. As such, it oscillated between basic investigation and practical application, and between general applicability and local specificity. TVA architects, especially those working in the Department of Regional Planning Studies, were an inherent part of this research program. Their work, which ranged from the study of 'electrified houses' to the development of regional libraries, was also informed by the need to balance the TVA's systematic and specific goals.

This fluid approach continues to shape architectural research today as it moves between 'basic' and 'applied'. An examination of the TVA effort, therefore, offers insight into the genealogy of architectural research and the importance of governmental organizations in shaping its fundamental attributes.

## Late Portuguese Colonialism in Africa: The Role of the Agência Geral do Ultramar

Ana Vaz Milheiro,  
University of Lisbon

### Abstract

After the Second World War, the Portuguese government felt pressured by international institutions to decolonize its territories in Africa and Asia. In resisting this pressure, the Estado Novo government activated the Overseas General Agency (Agência Geral do Ultramar) as an institution in the service of research and the financing of projects that would aid the colonial effort. The practices of urbanism and architecture were also considered areas of action of the Agency.

In the international realm, Portugal was isolated in its vindication of colonialism, a fact that required greater awareness and scientific knowledge about the decisions taken regarding the infrastructure of colonial territory. Technicians, architects and engineers had benefited from training abroad, in London (at the Architectural Association, among other institutions) or in Madrid (at the Technical University). These professionals were part of the staff of the Overseas Ministry, and were in the service of the Overseas Urbanization Office, a bureau created in 1944 to optimize the production of architectural and urban plans for the colonial territories. At the same time, the Agência Geral do Ultramar sponsored publications to disseminate knowledge acquired by architects through scientific and empirical means. Another fundamental aspect was research in topics such as medicine, climate, and agricultural and mineral resources. This research aided in decisions regarding the settlement of Europeans in Africa, as well as the organization of transportation networks, the design of settlements, and climatic solutions for buildings.

This paper aims to establish whether scientific knowledge was in fact generated via the infrastructure and programmes of the Agência Geral do Ultramar, or if the knowledge applied in colonization efforts was more empirical and therefore more random. The paper is also intended to illuminate the importance of the Agency as an active agent in colonization, and not merely an institution of propaganda.

## Ameliorating Research in Architecture: The Nuffield Trust and the Postwar Hospital

David Theodore,  
McGill University

### Abstract

This paper explores the influence of medicine on architectural research after the Second World War. As a case study, I look at the funding of research into hospital design by the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust. This charitable foundation was set up in 1939 by the industrialist Lord Nuffield, William Morris, founder of Morris Motors. The Trust supplemented the King Edward's Hospital Fund, which operated in London, by coordinating hospital activities in the provinces. In 1949 the Trust partnered with the University of Bristol to investigate the functions and design of hospitals, triggering one of the most influential architectural research programs in postwar Britain. I argue that the Trust's interest in the hospital as a building type initiated a new understanding of architectural research on the model of medical research, triangulating a profession, post-graduate university training, and private philanthropy.

I focus on the writings of Richard Llewelyn Davies (later Lord Llewelyn-Davies), the Director of the Trust's investigation into hospitals from 1949 – 1959. Llewelyn-Davies' contributions to research as Chair at the Bartlett School of Architecture (1960 – 1969) are well known. Scholars including Reyner Banham, Anthony Vidler, and Alise Uptis have explored how he pioneered the techno-scientific turn in architectural pedagogy. However, the structural change for the profession he envisioned and its basis in the Nuffield Trust model remains unexamined. His work went on to have a global influence through agencies such as the World Health Organization and his own design firm, Llewelyn-Weeks Davies, responsible for the first medical research hospital built for the National Health Service. Looking at this work as an extension of the history and agenda of the Nuffield Trust, I claim, allows us to move away from the 'internal' assessment of architectural research as a problem in pedagogy and re-centre it as a question of good governance.

## State-Funded Militant Infrastructure? CERFI's 'Équipements Collectif' in the Intellectual History of Architecture

Meredith TenHoor,  
Pratt Institute

### Abstract

'Militant' research that interrogates the operations of the modern state is not often state-funded; even less common is the conception of architecture as a militant practice. Yet these two conditions coincide in the case of the French research collective CERFI (Centre d'études, de recherches et de formations institutionnelles, or Center for Institutional Studies, Research and Training.) Starting in 1967, CERFI directed state funding toward research carried out by a group of 'social workers' from various fields including psychoanalysis, architecture, education and medicine. CERFI funded research, held conferences, organized social services in New Towns in France, and published a journal, *Recherches*, which served as a record and site of dialogue about and of institutional critique of a state they believed to be intent on accumulating power.

In this paper, I plan to examine the relationship between the research contracts CERFI obtained from the French Ministry of Equipment – which enabled members of the group to write proposals and carry out concrete actions in French New Towns – and the theories of architecture and infrastructure that members of CERFI collectively wrote. CERFI's theories are expansive: concerned with the relationship between architecture and infrastructure and the actions, power relations, and fields of desire worked through them, they are, in my view, a major contribution to the intellectual history of 20th century architecture.

Why did CERFI receive funding? How did CERFI become a funding institution of its own, and how did its operation as a collective and its distribution of research funds impact its theories of institutions? How can we think about the relationship between funding (which is often offered to make impactful social improvements, as it was in CERFI's case) and the project of theory-writing? I also hope to make some suggestions about how CERFI's work on the relationship between architecture, infrastructure and institutions might be relevant today, at a moment when infrastructure studies takes a more prominent role in the discipline of architecture.

## Workplace Politics: The Influence and Legacy of Public-Private Collaboration in DEGW's Office Research Building Information Technology (ORBIT) Study (1983)

Amy Thomas,  
TU Delft

### Abstract

The transformation of commercial architecture since WWII is a subject of growing interest among architectural historians. Scholars have explored the political-economic relationship between real estate cycles, finance capitalism, technology and the changing nature of corporate buildings. At the basis of these studies is an assumption that state-led processes of marketisation, deregulation and privatisation *indirectly* affected the changing style and structure of office buildings from the 1970s onwards. However, as yet the *direct* involvement of the state and real estate industry in the research and development of new commercial building types has been unexplored. This paper addresses this gap by considering the collaboration between the British state, industry specialists and the office planning firm DEGW in the production of the highly influential *Office Research Building Information Technology (ORBIT) Study*, published in 1983.

*ORBIT* was funded by the UK Department of Industry and the then state-owned British Telecom, alongside a consortium of industry specialists and real estate companies (including Greycoat Estates, Jones Lang Wootton and Steelcase), who were highly involved with the research and development of the project, including participation in monthly seminars. The study's explicit aim was to assess 'the impact of information technology upon office work and office workers'. Yet underpinning the project were wider concerns about the changing accommodation needs of businesses at a time when Britain's economy was being radically reconfigured by deregulation (enacted through co-sponsor, the Department of Industry).

Using the material from the recently-opened DEGW archive at the University of Reading, this paper will investigate the ways that the political-economic interests of the sponsors shaped *ORBIT* and its legacy. The paper aims to expose the institutional processes through which neoliberal policies directly influenced the direction of office design in Britain (and subsequently America), interrogating 'research' as a non-neutral mediator between ideology and built form.

# LAUNCHING THE ARCHITECTURAL MAGAZINE: THE FORMATION OF A GENRE

Session chair:

**Anne Hultzsch**, Oslo School for Architecture and Design /  
University College London

It has now been a few years since one of the UK's leading weekly architectural magazines, *Building Design*, ceased its print production and moved all its contents online. Yet, at the point of its potential disappearance, we know little about the beginnings of the printed architectural magazine. Surfacing as a genre during a widespread publishing frenzy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, nearly simultaneously in many countries, imitated and reinterpreted elsewhere later on, and re-launched as and when technological changes appeared, the architectural magazine is one of the most important material manifestations of architectural cultures besides the building itself. Its status as an often heavily illustrated serial with weekly, monthly, or quarterly publication, means it is placed as no other medium to capture the Zeitgeist of building and to map architecture's stakeholders, whether professional, institutional, scholarly, or lay.

While scholars have in the last few decades increasingly turned to investigate 1960s and 1970s architectural journalism, the nineteenth century has received surprisingly little attention. Aiming to close this gap, this session presents contributions that explore the genre of the architectural

magazine by examining its editorial formation across the long nineteenth century, including the first decades of the twentieth century. This moment of formation took place at different times in different places, and shifts in the genre led to the reformulation of its characteristics. It is these moments of defining what it meant to conceive, write, illustrate, edit, print, distribute, or read a magazine on architecture that this session targets.

Papers in this session explore themes around the producers, audiences, distribution, economics, technologies, appearance, or geographies (both micro and macro) of the architectural magazine. Meandering across Europe, speakers discuss the first magazines launched in Finland and Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century, as well as in Portugal around 1900. A non-western perspective is provided of the genre's development in China during its transition from the nineteenth-century imperial dynasty to the twentieth-century republic. The session ends with an outlook towards Italy and the genre-defining early years of *Casa Bella* and *Domus* against the background of the rise of fascism in Italy. Questions discussed include:

What constitutes architectural news, in text and image?

How did the architectural magazine differ from, or overlap with, other forms of serial publication, both special and general interest?

What role did debate and exchange play, and what was the ensuing relationship between professionals and the public, between professionals and critics, or between architecture and politics?

These and other issues will help to explore and define the crucial part that architecture, and its discourse, played in the public realm of the long nineteenth century.

## Printing a New Style: The First Swedish Architectural Magazine and the Creation of Modern Scandinavian Architecture in the 1850s

Anna Ripatti,  
University of Helsinki

### Abstract

This paper examines the first Swedish architectural magazine *The Journal for Practical Architecture and Mechanics*, etc. (in Swedish: *Tidskrift för praktisk byggnadskonst och mekanik m.m.*), founded in Stockholm by a small circle of progressive architects and civil engineers in 1850. Published monthly until 1853 and briefly in 1855, the *Tidskrift* was launched to form a virtual community for Nordic architects, engineers, industrialists, landowners, and artisans, and to spread knowledge of the latest developments in the arts and sciences. Based on a close reading of texts and images published in this short-lived magazine, as well as the correspondence of its editors, this paper explores the periodical's objectives. It argues that the *Tidskrift*, a showcase of the most fashionable Scandinavian architecture and technical innovations, as well as an important pan-Scandinavian forum for topical architectural discussions and criticism, had highly ambitious aesthetic, patriotic, and societal aims. Even if the magazine aimed to enhance freedom in arts, its contents reveal that it promoted a coherent aesthetic ideal.

My paper seeks to show that the magazine was used as a laboratory in creating a new Swedish or Nordic architectural style. The editors conceived this new style as a malleable archive of forms and practices, forged from elements stemming from diverse national and international sources. The paper concludes that the ultimate aim of the magazine was to market this new style to be used all over the western world through the transnationally distributed architectural press.

# 'An intimate cooperation of the intellectual forces of German technology'<sup>1</sup> – Professional Organisations and Their Journals in the German Countries

Christiane Weber  
Universität Innsbruck, Austria

## Abstract

During the long nineteenth century an independent technical education system was installed in the German-speaking countries, following the example of the French École Polytechnique. Technical development in the context of industrialisation caused therein an increasing specialisation of disciplines. Simultaneously the institutions became diversified in levels: technical schools developed into technical universities and schools of applied sciences for the building and construction industry were established.

In this context the foundation and development of professional organisations took place. In 1856 engineers founded the Verein Deutscher Ingenieure (VDI, Association of German Engineers) and the architects assembled the Architektenvereine (Associations of Architects). The Berliner Architektenverein, established in 1824, was the first of many of these associations incorporated during the nineteenth century in the cities of German-speaking countries. In Germany, the federalism and the political independence of the different *Länder* (states) was hindering the exchange of technical knowledge, which was easier to accomplish in centralised countries like France or Great Britain. Thus the professional associations established journals to promote the communication between the German-speaking technicians. One of the first publications was the *Notizblatt des Architekten-Vereins zu Berlin*, issued since 1833 two times a year, to inform the members and to exchange technical experiences. The journal, since 1851 edited periodically by the Berliner Architektenverein in cooperation with the Königlich-Technische Baudeputation (the Prussian state planning authorities) as *Zeitschrift für Bauwesen* addressed the academically educated civil servants. Soon specialised journals for the non-academic building and construction trade were established.

The paper analyses the different professional organisations and their specific professional journals before and after the foundation of the German Empire in 1871. Their specific topics and their means of knowledge transfer, with the aim to unite a politically separated technical audience, will be presented.

## Keywords

Professional organisations, German countries, Berlin, Strasbourg, nineteenth century.

## Industrial Promotion by Professional Associations

In the first half of the nineteenth century, federalism meant that the German states lagged significantly behind England, but also France. The lack of superior trade or industrial development additionally proved to be an obstacle – in contrast to those in centralised nation states. Each German state tried to improve its position in the competition, mainly through the establishment of polytechnic schools, which later became technical universities. After the French Revolutionary Wars, the new kingdoms, founded under Napoleon, such as Bavaria or Württemberg, faced the challenge of reorganising their political system. In doing so, the bourgeoisie assumed a new and important role. Their new political self-confidence manifested itself, among other things, in the establishment of bourgeois associations of different kinds.<sup>2</sup> With the aim of economic development, so-called professional associations were created almost simultaneously with the polytechnic schools. Referring to economic-technical goals, the Polytechnischer Verein 1815 in Bavaria was to be named first. The ambitious Prussia also built a modern administrative system referred to as Stein-Hardenberg's reforms. This development was decisively influenced by the jurist Christian Peter Wilhelm Beuth, who was 'among the closest circle of reformer around Hardenberg'.<sup>3</sup> Beuth, who was also enrolled during his studies at the Bauakademie, endeavored to 'adopt Prussia technologically and industrially to the leading developments in Great Britain'.<sup>4</sup> For this he relied on knowledge transfer by installing technical schools such as the later Gewerbeinstitut, organised trade exhibitions and reformed the patent system. In this context, an association was founded to promote economic-technical goals, the Verein zur Förderung des Gewerbefleißes in Preußen<sup>5</sup> in 1821. This association comprised a department for chemistry and physics, one for mathematics and mechanics, one for manufactories and commerce and a separate department for architecture and fine arts, which was directed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel.<sup>6</sup> Study trips were also part of the program of the Prussian industrial development: to be mentioned above all, Beuth's second trip to England in 1826, on which Schinkel accompanied him.<sup>7</sup> Beuth's business school was founded in the same year of 1821. Renamed Gewerbeinstitut, this school had as an explicit goal to prepare students for 'economic independence, and to replace the old state protectionism by training entrepreneurial qualities and so guarantee economic success'.<sup>8</sup> Berlin therefore had a further technical educational institution next to the Bauakademie, which educated civil engineers for civil service since 1799. In 1824, both schools were subordinated to Christian Peter Wilhelm Beuth.

**The Technical Professional Associations of Architects and Engineers**

The leading role of Prussia is shown by the fact that the first technical professional association was created in this German country. In 1824, Berlin architects founded the Berliner Architektenverein with the aim of ‘promoting the scientific education’ and ‘work together to further their profession’.<sup>9</sup> For the first time, only technical professionals came together in a regional association.<sup>10</sup> The club activities were aimed – similar to comparable organisations e.g. the Landwirtschaftlichen Verein<sup>11</sup> – especially at the exchange of technical expertise: to organise lectures, undertake field trips, set up their own library and discuss technical-scientific and architectural issues as well as members’ designs. The Berliner Architektenverein was in its form of scientific communication ‘prototypical’ for all further architectural and engineering associations, which subsequently emerged in numerous Prussian provinces and the other German-speaking countries.<sup>12</sup> The members of these associations were academically educated at a polytechnic school or the Berliner Bauakademie and civil servants. In the first half of the nineteenth century, their education included all ‘engineering sciences’, which at the time meant both civil and mechanical engineering. The civil servants were as ‘all-round’ engineers responsible for all technical facilities in the country such as land improvement, road construction, hydraulic engineering and the construction of industrial buildings including the driving of the machines. In the Berliner Architektenverein these ‘engineering sciences’ were present in the beginning, but under the influence of Schinkel the main focus was moved to architecture, especially to representative buildings for the state.<sup>13</sup>

This specialisation could have contributed to the fact that in 1856 graduates of the Berlin Gewerbeinstitut organised themselves founded the influential Verein Deutscher Ingenieure (VDI), which especially combined the mechanical and metallurgical engineers, but also the civil engineers. The aim of the VDI was the ‘profound cooperation of the intellectual strength of the German technology to join encouragement and further education in the interest of the entire industry of Germany’ (Figure 1).<sup>14</sup> Eight years after the failed revolution of 1848, this association can be interpreted as a step towards the unification of the German Reich on a scientific and technical level. Until 1910, 47 regional organisations were founded in all German countries, most of them in the centres of the industrialisation (Figure 2). After the foundation of the German Reich and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871, with a time delay a local branch was installed in Alsace-Lorraine in 1895.<sup>15</sup> In contrast to the Berliner Architektenverein, whose members were mostly academically educated, the VDI was open for non-engineers, which means technically trained technicians, who were employed in industry or trade. This member policy, which was in contrast to the architects’ associations less restrictive, ensured the VDI a high



FIGURE 1. Aims of the Verein Deutscher Ingenieure (VDI), published in the commemorative publication of 1910. Source: *Der Verein deutscher Ingenieure und seine Arbeiten* (Berlin: Otto Elsner, 1910), 1.

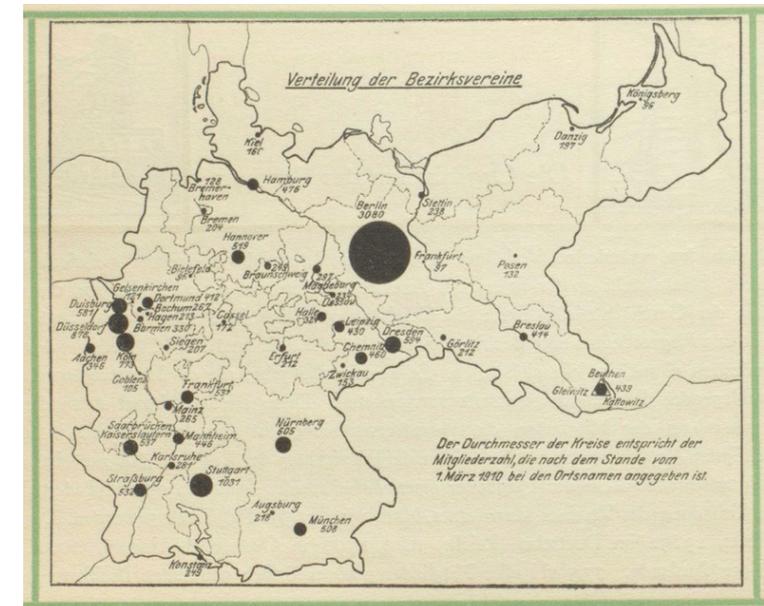


FIGURE 2. Local associations of VDI, published in the commemorative publication of 1910. Source: *Der Verein deutscher Ingenieure und seine Arbeiten* (Berlin: Otto Elsner, 1910), 4

attractiveness and a very high number of members.<sup>16</sup> So, shortly before the outbreak of World War I, the VDI had nearly 25,000 members. This first 50 years development falls into the age of high industrialisation. In contrast to the architect association, the VDI pursued professional politics from the beginning. One of the declared aims was the recognition of polytechnic schools as higher educational institutions, equal in status to the humanistic university.<sup>17</sup> In addition to professional politics, the district associations cultivated a lively scientific exchange: the commemorative publication of 1910 listed more than 300 meetings with 400 specialist lectures. Further visits to industrial plants took place and as did, of course, social gatherings.<sup>18</sup>

### The Magazines of the Technical Professional Associations

In research topics on the transfer of technical knowledge, journals as a medium for technical-scientific training are a very important source. Scientific communication was the declared aim of all these professional associations. In the federalist German countries a spiritual and economic centre – like Paris in France – was missing. Therefore the exchange of knowledge by technical journals had the highest priority. 14 out of 35 organisations founded until 1910 had one or more organs of publications.<sup>19</sup> One of the first journals of this kind was the *Notizblatt des Architekten-Vereins zu Berlin*, which was published twice a year since 1833. First edited in self-publishing, the periodical has been printed since 1837 by the publishing house Riegel in Potsdam and served to inform the members of the association. It reported about the association's affairs, about newly admitted members, lectures and acquisitions of the library. The addressees of this journal were academically educated civil engineers and architects.<sup>20</sup> Following the Berlin example, other architects' associations in the individual German-speaking countries also published their own journals during the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

The engineers in the VDI also had their own publication organ since 1857: *Zeitschrift des Vereines Deutscher Ingenieure*. This centrally published journal was used to inform the members in the different German countries. The editorial office was located in the VDI agency in Berlin. There was also a drawing studio, where the manuscript's enclosed drawings were engraved for printing. Until 1876, the journal appeared monthly. Club matters, meeting reports and patent applications were published separately on a weekly basis from 1877 to 1883. From 1884 both organs were then combined as one weekly periodical. The content covered topics from all areas of technology with a focus on mechanical engineering.<sup>22</sup> As in the magazines of the architect's associations, a magazine and book review had an important status. The review of numerous English and French books proved the international orientation and multilingualism of civil engineers working in the nineteenth century.

### The Merge of the Associations to Verband deutscher Architekten und Ingenieurvereine (Union of the German Architects and Engineers Association)

In creating the VDI, technicians – previously mechanical engineers – succeeded in creating a transnational association on the level of the later German Reich. But architects and engineering associations also counted on communication within Germany: since 1842, they met regularly every two years in the context of so-called 'Wanderversammlungen' (walking meetings) in different places.<sup>23</sup> The meetings were organised in different German countries by the particular associations. For the first time they met in Leipzig in 1842. In 1894 the meeting took place in the capital of the *Reichsland* Alsace-Lorraine in Strasbourg. On the occasion of these meetings, the host organised lectures and excursions on architecture and structural engineering in the host city. In addition, magnificent books dealing with construction history and civil engineering of the respective venue have been published in a very loose series since 1870. After the first volume on Karlsruhe, the Berlin<sup>24</sup> volume set the standard for later publications in 1877: to be mentioned, for example, the volume *Köln und seine Bauten*<sup>25</sup> (1888) or *Hamburg und seine Bauten*<sup>26</sup> (1890).

The national merger of the associations of the building industry succeeded after the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, when a united German Reich became political reality. Now, the various architectural associations, which were founded in the German countries throughout the nineteenth century, could gather in an umbrella organisation, the Verband deutscher Architekten- und Ingenieurvereine (VDAI), but without the VDI.<sup>27</sup> The dominant, academically orientated Berliner Architektenverein prevented the union with the VDI which had a large number of members, because it rejected its heterogeneous member structure, which was focused less on academic qualifications.<sup>28</sup> With the foundation of the umbrella organisation VDAI, the *Deutsche Bauzeitung*<sup>29</sup> became the organ of the new union. In 1901, the VDAI decided to found its own journal.<sup>30</sup> Until this point, the club announcements had been issued in two-year volumes with the title *Mitteilungen des Verbandes deutscher Architekten- und Ingenieurvereine*.<sup>31</sup> They contained protocols of meetings and published the lectures held in the assembly. Since 1912 the *Zeitschrift des VDAI* published new legislation and questions concerning the social status of the engineer's profession. Also discussed were architecture and civil engineering commented on by the most renowned representatives of their field, such as Reinhard Baumeister, Josef Durm or Josef Stübgen. From 1925, the association's organ became known as *Deutsches Bauwesen*.<sup>32</sup>

### An Example: The Publications of the Architects- and Engineers Association Strasbourg

For construction history research, the study of technical journals from the field of construction and building techniques is essential. Taking Strasbourg<sup>33</sup>

as an example – Alsatian city annexed by the German Reich after the Franco-Prussian War 1871 – one access to define knowledge transfer phenomena between Germany and France was the analysis of the professional organisations on site. This approach is particularly revealing because the associations, which were established under the German administration can be identified as bearers of technical knowledge of German-speaking provenance. Insofar, works such as the volume *Strassburg und seine Bauten*<sup>34</sup> which was published by the Architekten- und Ingenieurverein Straßburg on the occasion of the walking meeting of the Verband deutscher Architekten- und Ingenieurvereine in 1894 are highly informative sources revealing the state of the art in architecture and civil engineering. The publication shows a cross-section of Strassburg's construction industry in the first decades after the establishment of the *Reichsland*.<sup>35</sup>

The Architekten- und Ingenieurverein Straßburg also published periodicals. In 1878 – seven years after joining the German Reich – the first volume of the *Zeitschrift für Baukunde* was released, explicitly subtitled on the front page as *Organ der Architekten- und Ingenieur-Vereine von Bayern, Württemberg, Baden, Strassburg, Frankfurt a.M., Mittelrhein, Niederrhein-Westphalen und Oldenburg* (Figure 3).<sup>36</sup> The magazine was published in quarterly issues in Munich by the publishing house of Theodor Ackermann. Dr W. Wittmann 'Privatdocent an der K. Technischen Hochschule in München' (private lecturer at the K. Technical University in Munich) was named as editor. In addition to experts from Cologne, Oldenburg, Munich and Stuttgart, the editorial committee also included Reinhard Baumeister from the Technical University in Karlsruhe as a prominent member. As an Alsatian member, an 'Abtheilungs-Baumeister Caspar, Strassburg' is listed.<sup>37</sup> The magazine *Zeitschrift für Baukunde* was an attempt to oppose a southwest German emphasis to the Berlin-focused reporting of the *Deutsche Bauzeitung*. In the second volume from 1879, two works on Alsace-Lorraine were discussed in the book review: *Elsass-Lothringisches Baurecht* by Förtsch and Caspar,<sup>38</sup> and the *Protokolle über die Sitzungen der Commission zur Feststellung des Bebauungsplanes für die Stadt Strassburg*.<sup>39</sup> Overall, however, there are more reports on topics of civil engineering and less on architecture. Although, the first seven years contain the two mentioned reviews, but no essay on Strassburg and only a few contributions to Alsace, mostly on art history.<sup>40</sup> For the topic of building technology transfer, two reports by a building authority assessor Reverdy are interesting: on *Fluss- und Canalbauten in Frankreich*<sup>41</sup> and *Französische Brückenbauwesen*<sup>42</sup>. From 1885, the *Zeitschrift für Baukunde* merged into the *Wochenblatt für Baukunde*, which appeared weekly, from 1888 to 1890 as a special edition of the *Deutschen Bauzeitung*, into which it merged in 1891.

This magazine is relevant, because association matters of the Architekten- und Ingenieurverein Elsass-Lothringen were published, e.g. the winter reception 1886,<sup>43</sup> but also construction projects, which are



FIGURE 3. Architects- and Engineers Association Strassburg, *Zeitschrift für Baukunde*, front page of the second volume. Source: *Zeitschrift für Baukunde*, 1-4 (1879).

important for Strassburg, as well as staffing matters. The competitions for the Landesaussschußgebäude<sup>44</sup> or for the Kaiserpalast<sup>45</sup> (1890) were treated in several essays and the new construction of the church Jung St. Peter was reported on.<sup>46</sup> Repeatedly, the renovation of the Strassburg cathedral and the staffing of the cathedral master builder was an issue.<sup>47</sup> In terms of engineering reports, there is an essay on the port and on the regulation of the Upper Rhine.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout these magazines of the associations, reports on Alsatian's and especially on Strasbourg's construction activities are underrepresented in comparison to Stuttgart or Munich. This could be explained by the fact that the technical associations founded before the unification of the Reich – such as the VDI – were putting supra-regional issues in the foreground. The building industry in the new *Reichsland* Alsace-Lorraine only played a marginal role and was taken into consideration by magazines limited to southwestern Germany. The transfer of knowledge in the opposite direction, i.e. information about construction in the countries of the German Reich, was guaranteed by the publications of the professional organisations. Their members in Alsace received the associations' magazines regularly. The professional association's supra-regional structures furthered the mobility of the technical staff. The civil servants in architecture and engineering, which immigrated to Alsace-Lorraine from the Reich where highly mobile during the nineteenth century and were able to keep up to date with the latest technical and architectural developments at their various locations by the help of their associations and association magazines. During the nineteenth century, the technological advances also promoted the increasingly favorable production of printing works, which contained more and more pictures, which in turn made technical and aesthetic innovations available to a growing group of addressees. Insofar, one can call the journal industry in general and the publication activity of the technical professional associations in particular a medium for the transfer of technical knowledge.

Notes

- 1 This was the aim of VDI 'innige Zusammenwirken der geistigen Kräfte deutscher Technik zur gemeinsamen Anregung und Fortbildung im Interesse der gesamten Industrie Deutschlands': *Der Verein deutscher Ingenieure und seine Arbeiten. Herausgegeben aus Anlass der Weltausstellung in Brüssel 1910* (Berlin: Otto Elsner, 1910), 1.
- 2 Lars U. Scholl, 'Der Ingenieur in Ausbildung, Beruf und Gesellschaft 1856 bis 1881,' in Karl-Heinz Ludwig and Wolfgang König (eds.), *Technik, Ingenieure und Gesellschaft. Geschichte des Vereines Deutscher Ingenieure 1856–1981* (Düsseldorf: VDI-Verlag, 1981), 9.
- 3 Reinhard Strecke, 'Sammeln, ausstellen, patentieren. Zu den Anfängen Preußens als Industriestaat,' in Christine Brandt-Salloom and Reinhardt Strecke (eds.), *Klosterstrasse 36. Sammeln, ausstellen, patentieren. Zu den Anfängen Preußens als Industriestaat* (Berlin: Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2014), 12.
- 4 Strecke, 'Sammeln, ausstellen, patentieren,' 12.
- 5 Scholl, 'Der Ingenieur in Ausbildung, Beruf und Gesellschaft 1856 bis 1881,' 10.
- 6 Strecke, 'Sammeln, ausstellen, patentieren,' 13.
- 7 Strecke, 15–6; Nadine Rottau, 'Schinkel der Moderne – Gewerbeförderung und Design,' in Heinrich-Theodor Schulze Altcappenberg, Rolf H. Johansen and Christiane Lange (eds.), *Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Geschichte und Poesie* (München: Hirmer, 2012), 228.
- 8 Rottau, 'Schinkel der Moderne,' 227.
- 9 *Jahrbuch des Architektenvereins zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1911), 285; quote after: Eckhard Bolenz, *Vom Baubeamten zum freiberuflichen Architekten – Technische Berufe im Bauwesen (Preußen/ Deutschland, 1799–1931)* (Frankfurt:

- Peter Lang, 1991), 133.
- 10 Bolenz, 133.
- 11 Bolenz, 134.
- 12 Bolenz, 134. E.g. the Württembergische Verein für Baukunde in Stuttgart founded in 1842, the Sächsische Ingenieur- und Architektenverein in Dresden (1846), the Architekten- und Ingenieurverein im Königreich Hannover (1851), or the Bayrischer Architekten- und Ingenieurverein München (1867). See directory of Architekten und Ingenieurvereine and their periodical publications in: Rolf Fuhlrott, *Deutschsprachige Architektur-Zeitschriften. Entstehung und Entwicklung der Fachzeitschriften für Architektur in der Zeit von 1789–1918* (München: Verlag Dokumentation, 1975), 351–4.
- 13 Bolenz, *Vom Baubeamten zum freiberuflichen Architekten*, 134.
- 14 Scholl, 'Der Ingenieur in Ausbildung, Beruf und Gesellschaft 1856 bis 1881,' 15.
- 15 Christiane Weber and Peter Liptau, 'Zeugen des Aufschwunges. Elsässische Bauschaffende und die deutschen technischen Berufsvereine,' *METACULT* 4 (2015), 56. Foundation of local branch Strasbourg 1895, later renamed in Alsace-Lorraine, 1896 first list of number of members.
- 16 The member lists were published in the *Zeitschrift des Vereines deutscher Ingenieure*. The lists from 1890–1965 are sorted as individual books to regional associations. (KIT-Bibliothek: ZA 750).
- 17 Ludwig and König (eds.), *Technik, Ingenieure und Gesellschaft, Geschichte des Vereines Deutscher Ingenieure 1856–1981*. Including the articles: Lars U. Scholl, 'Der Ingenieur in Ausbildung, Beruf und Gesellschaft 1856 bis 1881'; Karl-Heinz Manegold, 'Der VDI in der Phase der Hochindustrialisierung 1880 bis 1900,' 133–66; Wolfgang König, 'Die Ingenieure und der VDI als Großverein in der wilhelminischen Gesellschaft 1900 bis 1918,' 235–88 and Christiane Weber, 'Werkstatt oder Laboratorium. Praktische Ingenieurausbildung im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert am Beispiel der Materialprüfungsanstalt Stuttgart.' Tobias Möllmer (ed.), *Stil und Charakter. Beiträge zur Architekturgeschichte und Denkmalpflege des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2015), 141–3.
- 18 *Der Verein deutscher Ingenieure und seine Arbeiten. Herausgegeben aus Anlass der Weltausstellung in Brüssel 1910*, 5.
- 19 See directory of architects and engineering associations and their periodical in: Fuhlrott, *Deutschsprachige Architektur-Zeitschriften*, 351–4. Only 8 out of 14 associations continued publishing activities until World War I. Bolenz, *Vom Baubeamten zum freiberuflichen Architekten*, 138.
- 20 Fuhlrott, *Deutschsprachige Architektur-Zeitschriften*, 43.
- 21 E. g. the Austrian engineers association: *Zeitschrift des Österreichischen Ingenieur-Vereins* since 1849. The association of the Kingdom of Hanover, independent until the annexation of Hanover by Prussia: *Notizblatt des Architekten- und Ingenieurvereins für das Königreich Hannover* since 1851, published together with the association of Saxonia since 1896. This confusing mass of publications is covered in the *Bibliographie zur Architektur im 19. Jahrhundert 1789–1918*, published in several volumes by Stephan Waetzoldt. The development project of the Berlin State Library was carried out by Verena Haas in the 1970s. Unfortunately, the *VDI-Zeitschrift* has not been included.
- 22 The contributions of the *Zeitschrift des Vereines Deutscher Ingenieure* are not included in Waetzoldt, the journal volumes are accessible via table of content volumes.
- 23 Weber and Liptau, 'Zeugen des Aufschwunges,' 54.
- 24 *Berlin und seine Bauten* (Berlin: Ernst und Korn, 1877). Thanks to Tobias Möllmer for this information.
- 25 *Köln und seine Bauten* (Köln, 1888).
- 26 *Hamburg und seine Bauten. Unter Berücksichtigung der Nachbarstädte Altona und Wandsbek* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1890).
- 27 Bolenz, *Vom Baubeamten zum freiberuflichen Architekten*, 140.
- 28 Bolenz, 141.
- 29 Since 1868 successor of the

- Wochenblatts des Architektenvereins zu Berlin.* Fuhlrott, *Deutschsprachige Architektur-Zeitschriften*, 81.
- 30 Fuhlrott, 82–3.
- 31 Fuhlrott, 116.
- 32 Fuhlrott, 116–7.
- 33 Cultural transfer between France and Germany in the city of Strasbourg was the research topic of the ANR-DFG financed project METACULT in the years 2013–6.
- 34 *Strassburg und seine Bauten* (Straßburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1894).
- 35 Weber and Liptau, 'Zeugen des Aufschwunges,' 54.
- 36 Starting from the third volume in 1880, the Architekten- und Ingenieurverein für Elsass-Lothringen is mentioned as co-editor instead of Strasbourg. *Zeitschrift für Baukunde* 1–4 (1880), front page.
- 37 *Zeitschrift für Baukunde* 1 (1878), front page.
- 38 [Reinhard?,] Baumeister, 'R. Förtsch, Kammerpräsident in Metz und M. Caspar, Abtheilungsbaumeister in Strassburg. Elsass-Lothringisches Baurecht, Strassburg, bei J. Astmann,' *Zeitschrift für Baukunde* 3 (1879), 530–1.
- 39 Seidel, 'Protokolle über die Sitzungen der Commission zur Feststellung des Bebauungsplanes für die Stadt Strassburg. 40. Strassburg, Druck v. Fischbach, 1879,' *Zeitschrift für Baukunde* 3 (1879), 527–9.
- 40 Braun G. (Regierungsbaumeister), 'Der Sechs-Eimer-Brunne zu Ober-Ehnheim im Elsass,' *Zeitschrift für Baukunde* 2 (1883), 61–4, figure sheet 6–8.
- 41 Reverdy (Bauamtsassessor), 'Fluss- und Canalbauten in Frankreich,' *Zeitschrift für Baukunde* 3 (1880), 425–36.
- 42 Reverdy (Bauamtsassessor), 'Das französische Brückenbauwesen,' *Zeitschrift für Baukunde* 3 (1880), 63–72.
- 43 Architekten- und Ingenieurverein zu Strassburg, 'Winterfest,' *Wochenblatt für Baukunde*, 5 March 1886, 102.
- 44 'Wettbewerbe zur Erlangung von Plänen für eine Landesauschussgebäude in Strassburg,' *Wochenblatt für Baukunde* 8 (1886), 212, 404; 'Preis Ausschreiben für Pläne zur Errichtung eines Landesauschussgebäudes in Strassburg i. Els.,' *Wochenblatt für*
- Baukunde*, 5 October (sic) 1886, 404.
- 45 'Der Kaiser-Palast zu Straßburg im Elsass. Architekt: Hermann Eggert,' *Wochenblatt für Baukunde*, 26 January 1889, 41–2; F., 'Der Kaiserpalast zu Straßburg im Elsass. Architekt: Hermann Eggert,' *Wochenblatt für Baukunde*, 22 March 1890, 141 (first part), 26 April 1890, 201 (second part).
- 46 F., 'Entwurf zu einem Neubau für die Kirche Jung St. Peter zu Straßburg i. E.,' *Wochenblatt für Baukunde*, 2 March 1889, 101–2.
- 47 'Die bevorstehende Neubesetzung der Stelle des Münster-Baumeisters in Straßburg,' *Wochenblatt für Baukunde*, 9 February 1889, 72; 'Die Neubesetzung der Stelle des Münster-Baumeisters von Straßburg,' *Wochenblatt für Baukunde*, 16 February 1889, 84; 'Wiederbesetzung der Stelle eines Dombaumeisters für Straßburg,' *Wochenblatt für Baukunde*, 8 March 1890, 124; F., 'Vom Münster zu Straßburg,' *Wochenblatt für Baukunde*, 30 March 1889, 150–2.
- 48 'Der Hafen in Straßburg i. Els.,' *Wochenblatt für Baukunde*, 8 November 1890, 547; 'Ueber die Möglichkeit einer Strombett-Regulirung (sic) des Oberrheins für den Betrieb einer Großschiffahrt abwärts Straßburg,' *Wochenblatt für Baukunde* 63 (1890), 377–9.

## Architecture and Editorial Culture: The Role of the Architect and Criticism in the Formation of the Portuguese Architectural Magazines

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### Abstract

This paper examines the origin of editorial culture in the Portuguese architectural magazines at the onset of the twentieth century. It argues that architectural magazines and professional journals are 'sites' that help us to better understand the constellations of relationships between editors, critics, architects, and the public audience.

While the publication of the first architectural magazine, *A Construção Moderna*, in 1900 might be seen as the introduction of a new instrument of architectural mediation, it was also an instance of disciplinary self-understanding and a place of architectural knowledge construction. The publication of a second magazine in 1908, *Arquitetura Portuguesa*, would reinforce the status of the architect and the presence of architecture in society. Unlike *A Construção Moderna*, which focused on the professional elites, *Arquitetura Portuguesa* set up its editorial strategy on the presentation of architects and architecture for public opinion. Taken together, these publications were a key juncture that allowed the rise of a mutually dependent condition: the architect's new professional status in the public mind and the introduction of architectural criticism as an autonomous field.

Based on different approaches and their distinct audiences, these magazines played a fundamental role in the formation of an architectural editorial culture. They were the common ground beyond the contingencies of constructive practice, enabling the rise of new orders of thought on the practice and representation of architecture.

## The Emergence of the Professional Architectural Magazine in China

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### Abstract

By world standards, architectural magazines developed relatively late in China's history. Special interest magazines aimed at a particular public audience only began to appear in imperial China around the middle of the nineteenth century and were mostly produced by foreign missionaries resident in the country. Professional magazines in the modern sense only appeared after the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911. The first engineering magazines appeared a few years later, and the first art magazines (which included features on architecture) in the 1920s. Serious architectural publications only emerged in the 1930s, when the first generation of modern Chinese architects returned to China after studying abroad. Latecomers though they were, these Chinese architectural magazines provide an interesting example of the emergence of professional publications in the non-western world.

Although China has a long tradition of building design and craftsmanship, the western discipline of architecture and its concomitant, the architectural magazine, were introduced into China at the beginning of the twentieth century, during a period of profound upheaval which culminated in the collapse of the last imperial dynasty and its replacement by a republic. The changes that accompanied the 1911 Revolution, including a reorganization of China's social hierarchy and a drive for modernization, provided the essential conditions in which professional magazines could flourish.

In this paper, the authors discuss the rise of the professional architectural magazine in China, from its humble beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century to its emergence as a fully-fledged publication during the 1930s. While stressing the crucial importance of modernization as an enabling factor, they also give due weight to other developments, and show how the professional architectural magazine owed its rise to a combination of circumstances.

## A Tale of Two Journals: The Early Years of *La Casa bella* and *Domus*

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### Abstract

January 1928 was a crucial month for all Italian architects, when they could suddenly find two architectural magazines among the newspapers: the new *Domus*, founded by architect Gio Ponti and Barnabite father Giovanni Semeria, and the relaunched *La Casa bella*, first published in Turin five years earlier. Both magazines were edited in Milan, the indisputable capital of culture in Italy at that time.

While *La Casa bella* initially had a conservative attitude and changed its focus to modernity only around 1930, *Domus* intended to renew art and architecture from the beginning. Both editors, Guido Marangoni and Gio Ponti, outlined their magazines' goals in their editorials, insisting upon the importance of aesthetics and style in the field of industrial production. Topics that were portrayed as women's interests, such as the art of homemaking, gardening and cooking were touched upon as well. Within the following years, almost all important Italian architects participated in both magazines as authors, critics and editors, developing a modern Italian architectural culture against the background of Fascism.

### Keywords

Architectural magazine, twentieth century, Italy, Fascism, *Domus*, *Casabella*.

### Introduction

In the beginning of the twentieth century, Italy was a backward country. Industry and infrastructure were lacking, and agriculture was still dominant in nearly all of its regions. In art and architecture Italy had also merely adopted foreign concepts – not by chance Filippo Tommaso Marinetti published his aggressive and patriotic 'Manifesto del Futurismo' 1908 in Paris and not in Italy.<sup>1</sup>

Only after World War I did modernisation seem to have a chance. Futurism developed into an explicit artistic-political movement close to Fascism, which rose to power in 1922 and immediately began a radical transformation and modernisation of the country. During this period the Novecento Italiano, motivated by the post-World War I *ritorno all'ordine*, was founded in Milan. It was promoted by Margherita Sarfatti, an art critic who worked at the newspaper of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, *Il Popolo*

*d'Italia*. The Novecento rejected avant-garde art positions like futurism and took its inspiration from traditional Italian art instead, asking for ethical terms like order, clarity and modesty. The movement was reflected by the magazine *Valori plastici*, published in Italian and French by Mario Broglio from 1918 to 1922. A similar movement existed in Rome, the Scuola Romana with its central figure Marcello Piacentini. It developed a monumental neoclassicism based on a simplified reception of Roman antique architecture. The Gruppo 7, founded in Milan in 1926, also made demands regarding the architectural heritage. Between December 1926 and May 1927 it issued four articles to declare its architectural concept.<sup>2</sup> The new, Fascist architecture should be developed by abstraction and reduction to only a few buildings types, as seen in antiquity. The spirit of antiquity should be renewed, not its shape.

In this climate of emerging Fascism and conflicting art movements, both magazines *La Casa bella* and *Domus* were born. *La Casa bella* first came out on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1928, followed by *Domus* on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January. Both served as vehicles for two opposing, but not mutually exclusive attitudes within Italian architecture: the artful, international attitude of *Domus* and the polemical, self-reflective stance of *La Casa bella*. Within the following years, almost all important Italian architects participated in both magazines as editors, authors, and critics.

### A Very Brief History of Italian Art and Architectural Magazines

A characteristic of Italian art and architectural magazines is their comprehensive claim, covering not only art and architecture, but design, literature, and general cultural aspects as well.<sup>3</sup> One of the first was *Cosmorama Pittorico*, published in Milan from 1835 to 1848 and again from 1855 to 1910. Furthermore, the *Nuova Antologia, rivista di scienze, lettere ed arti* must be mentioned. Founded in 1866 in Florence, it's still among the most respected cultural magazines today.<sup>4</sup> Also celebrated was *Emporium*, published from 1895 to 1964 by the Istituto italiano di arti grafiche in Bergamo. *Emporium* was inspired by British *The Studio* (1893–1964), the Berlin *Pan* (1895–1900) and the Munich *Jugend* (1896–1940). One of the regional but influential magazines was the carefully edited and richly illustrated *Vita d'Arte*, published in Siena from 1908 to 1919.<sup>5</sup> Of particular interest are the three magazines edited by Ugo Ojetti, a most influential art critic during the *ventennio*. In 1920, he was named director of the new *Dedalo*, in 1929 he founded *Pegaso*, and in 1933 *Pan*. Both the latter rendered homage to Fascism willingly. *Dedalo* and *Pegaso* were discontinued in 1933, *Pan* in 1935.

A more specialised magazine was *Il Politecnico. Repertorio mensile di studj applicati alla prosperità e coltura sociale*, published in Milan by Carlo Cattaneo from 1839 to 1869.<sup>6</sup> It offered a technical and a literary part and had close relations to *Risorgimento* ideals. In 1844 it was banned

by Habsburg censorship and refounded only after 1859, when Lombardy separated from Austria. In 1869 its technical part was merged with the *Giornale dell'Ingegnere Architetto ed Agronomo*<sup>7</sup> to *Il Politecnico. Giornale dell'Architetto Civile ed Industriale*. The former *Giornale*, founded in 1853, was inspired by the technophilic French *Les Annales des Ponts et Chaussées* and British *The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*. Acclaimed was also the large-sized *Ricordi d'architettura*, published in Florence from 1878 to 1900. Among the magazines dedicated to architectural practice and construction was the richly illustrated *L'Edilizia Moderna*, born in Milan in 1892 and modernised in 1929, and *Architettura italiana*, published in Turin from 1905 to 1943.

In January 1921 Gustavo Giovannoni founded *Architettura e arti decorative* with Marcello Piacentini, which was published under the auspices of the Associazione artistica fra i Cultori di Architettura.<sup>8</sup> The magazine always held conservative positions and soon developed into a mouthpiece for Fascist architecture. In January 1927 it became the official organ of the Sindacato nazionale architetti under the directorship of Alberto Calza Bini. In 1932 it shortened its name to *Architettura*; in 1944 it was suspended.

An important magazine was *1927. Problemi d'arte attuale*, then renamed *1928, 1929* and finally, from November 1929, *Poligono*. Its founder Raffaello Giolli<sup>9</sup> already wrote laudatory articles on Novecento architects Giovanni Muzio and Giuseppe de Finetti for *Emporium*. He was the first who considered the Gruppo 7 in 1928. From 1935 onwards his articles were published in *Domus*, as well as *Casabella*. Because of his critical position towards the Fascist regime, he was arrested several times and, finally, deported to Mauthausen concentration camp, where he died in Gusen II on either the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> of January 1945.

In 1929 *Rassegna di architettura* was published in Milan by Giovanni Rocco. In 1940 it was merged with *Architettura*. From 1933 to 1936 *Quadrante. Mensile di arte, lettere e vita* was published by Massimo Bontempelli and Pietro Maria Bardi. In 1932 the Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica founded its *Urbanistica*, contemporaneous to the French *Urbanisme*. *Urbanistica* is still published today.

### *La Casa bella*

*La Casa bella* was born in Turin around 1923.<sup>10</sup> From the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1928 onwards, it was published monthly in Milan by Studio Editoriale Milanese and edited by Guido Marangoni, an art critic, who was the director of the Biennale delle arti decorative in Monza in 1923, 1925 and 1927.<sup>11</sup> The magazine's title should be taken literally: *casa* means not only house, but apartment, home and household as well. So initially *La Casa bella* dealt mostly with interior design, and less with architecture. In his first editorial, Marangoni clearly named both goals of the new magazine: 'to rekindle in the masses the cults of art and of the house with the wish to make it more and



Figure 1. *La Casa bella* 1 (1928), 25

more beautiful and comfortable and to stimulate the producers of arts and crafts to support this new spirit of the age with all their drive and energy'.<sup>12</sup>

In the magazine, whose cover was designed by painter Bruno Santi, the reader found articles on Venetian apartments depicted in quattrocento paintings, on the simple beauty of rural houses, on fireplaces, on the aesthetics of a dining room, on embroideries, and, illustrated by numerous pictures, a home story on the house of the artist Umberto Bellotto in Venice, which represents the magazine's ideals of *bellezza*, *semplicità* and *armonia*. Various chapters on beautiful books, on exhibitions, and a final gloss with short notices completed the issue.

At that time, the magazine's format was 24 x 31,8 cm (DIN A4 21 x 29,7 cm). It had 50 pages including advertisement with a classic, but generous and airy layout based on two columns with justified text and illustrations mostly set within the columns or centred (Figure 1. *La Casa bella* 1 (1928),

25). The first issue cost eight lire, an annual subscription 80 lire. Eight lire was quite a lot, as an industrial worker had earnings of roughly 2,5 lire per hour.<sup>13</sup>

Within the following issues, *La Casa bella* continued with all facets of the beautiful home such as stained-glass windows, ceramics, tableware and cutlery, sculptures, and even plants. In his editorials Marangoni criticises modern mass furniture and standardised apartments, always emphasising, in those years of emerging Fascism, the *italianità* and the *risveglio del sentimento artistico*.

Modern architecture first played a role in May 1928, when Arturo Lancelotti certified the Gruppo 7 an *indiscutable ingegno*, although he criticised the pending tower restaurant by Mario Ridolfi shown in the *Mostra di architettura razionale* in Rome.<sup>14</sup> On the following pages, Alberto Marzocchi wrote a scathing review on the Hôtel Martel by Robert Mallet-Stevens in Auteil.<sup>15</sup> He described captivated, but with clear antipathy its pure geometric shape, 'perfect for a chronometric life', but missed any sensual aspect of atmosphere, beauty, and comfort.

In September 1928, after an amply illustrated article on Renaissance courtyards in Bologna, a modern villa was presented again.<sup>16</sup> The author lauded its rationalistic design as a mark of modernity, but criticised its closeness to foreign architecture – a typical sample for xenophobia in Italy in the late 1920s. The conservative attitude of *La Casa bella* close to Novecento and Scuola Romana shows most clearly in December 1928, when the Palazzo della Montecatini, a building seemingly from the late nineteenth century, was celebrated as 'wise balance between tradition and the inner longing for originality',<sup>17</sup> and in February 1929, when the Casa Madre dei Mutilati in Rome (1925–38, inauguration 1928) by Marcello Piacentini was praised for its *ritmo, semplicità e arditezza*.<sup>18</sup>

But things began to change. In May 1929 Enrico Paulucci reviewed modern houses in the rue Mallet Stevens in Paris, surprisingly positively after the scathing review of the previous year.<sup>19</sup> In his judgement, the quarter may have a cold and abstract aspect, but a closer look would reveal a fresh and modern lyricism. In August 1929 Alberto Sartoris wrote the first of an entire series of leaders,<sup>20</sup> in which he familiarised the readership with modern architecture, such as social housing in Frankfurt by Ernst May and in Sint-Agatha-Berchem near Brussels by Victor Bourgeois (1922–5), the Villa Michel in Versailles by André Lurçat (1925), the House La Roche-Jeanneret by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret (sic) (1923–5), the Colnaghi House in Basle by Paul Artaria and Hans Schmidt (1927), and the Rincón de Goya in Zaragoza by Fernando García Mercadal (1926–8).

The 'modern turn' of *La Casa bella* was also signified by a new cover, designed in 1930 by Giuseppe Pagano and Gino (Luigi) Levi-Montalcini. A certain G. P. (Gio Ponti?) lauds the Novocomum (Giuseppe Terragni, 1927–9) as la 'casa di domani',<sup>21</sup> and the new series 'dalla stampa di tutto il mondo'



Figure 2. La Casa bella 33 (1930), 79

gave an overview on modern architecture worldwide from some 50 foreign magazines (Figure 2. *La Casa bella* 33 (1930), 79).<sup>22</sup>

In January 1933 Giuseppe Pagano took over as editor, supported by Edoardo Persico in 1935-6, and changed the name to *Casabella*, then *Casabella Costruzioni* (1938) and *Costruzioni Casabella* (1940). In January 1941 Pagano received an official warning from Gherardo Casini, director of the press at the Ministero della Cultura Popolare for an editorial, in which he criticised the Scuola Romana (Figure 3. *Costruzioni Casabella* 157 (1941), 2).<sup>23</sup> The next month he continued his critics<sup>24</sup> – and Casini seized the issue and removed it from the market. During the time thereafter, Pagano was arrested several times and finally deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp, where he died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 1945. *Costruzioni Casabella* was suspended in December 1943, but reborn after World War II and as *Casabella*, which is published to this day.



Figure 3. Costruzioni Casabella 157 (1941), 2

**Domus**

The architectural and design magazine *Domus* was founded in 1928 by architect Gio Ponti and Barnabite father Giovanni Semeria. The first issue was published on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 1928. Since 1929 *Domus* has been published monthly in Milan by Editoriale Domus, founded the same year by Gianni Mazzocchi. The magazine's Latin title referred to topoi such as *italianità* and *romanità*, which were the new cultural and political reference points since 1922. The subtitle of *Domus*, 'Architettura e arredamento dell'abitazione moderna in città e in campagna' clearly indicated the magazine's closeness to modern architecture. Its mission was to renew architecture, interiors and Italian decorative arts. Women's interests – as they were perceived at that time – like the art of homemaking, gardening and cooking are touched on as well. Ponti outlined the magazine's goals in his editorials, insisting on the importance of aesthetics and style in

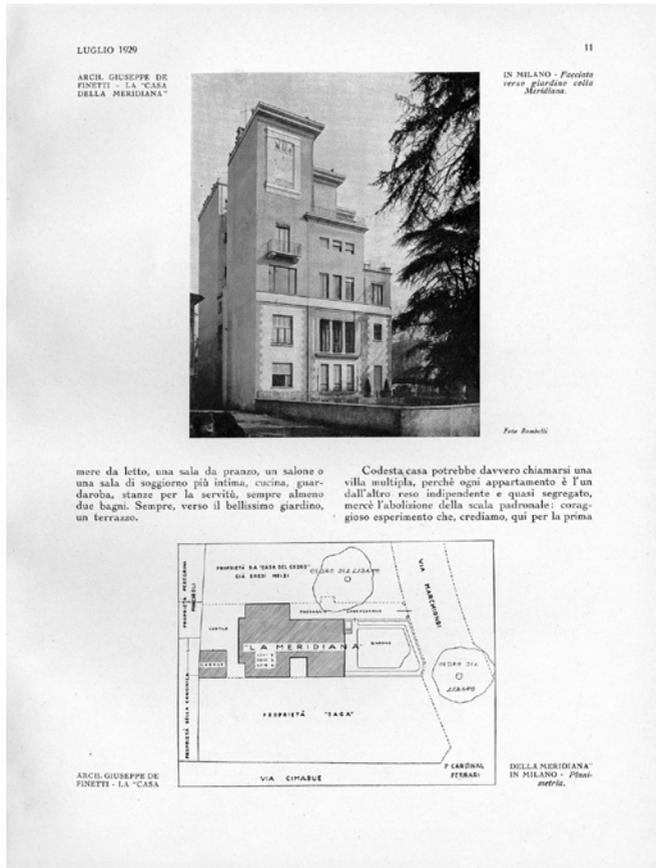


Figure 5. *Domus* 7 (1929), 11

the field of industrial production. In his first editorial Ponti evokes the ideal of *la casa all'italiana*, which should be developed from its traditional elements. The Italian house should be simple, comfortable and functional, but not a *machine à habiter* – which Ponti cited in French taking a dig at Le Corbusier.<sup>25</sup>

On the opposite page a sample illustrates Ponti's concept. The *patio* of (now demolished) Villa Rusconi by Marcello Piacentini (1914–7) was praised 'how traditional elements, reshaped by the spirit of a modern artist, are suitable to express a new architectural harmony.'<sup>26</sup> In the magazine, whose cover showed a vignette by Giulio Rosse, the reader found articles on modern *androni* and atria, on a Novecento villa in Padua and, with a fold-out map of the Vicenza region, on villas by Andrea Palladio, on dining rooms, selected art works, house plants, refrigerators – and also recipes for desserts with chestnuts. From the first issue on, *Domus* published not only photographs of its sample architectures but floor plans and sections as well.

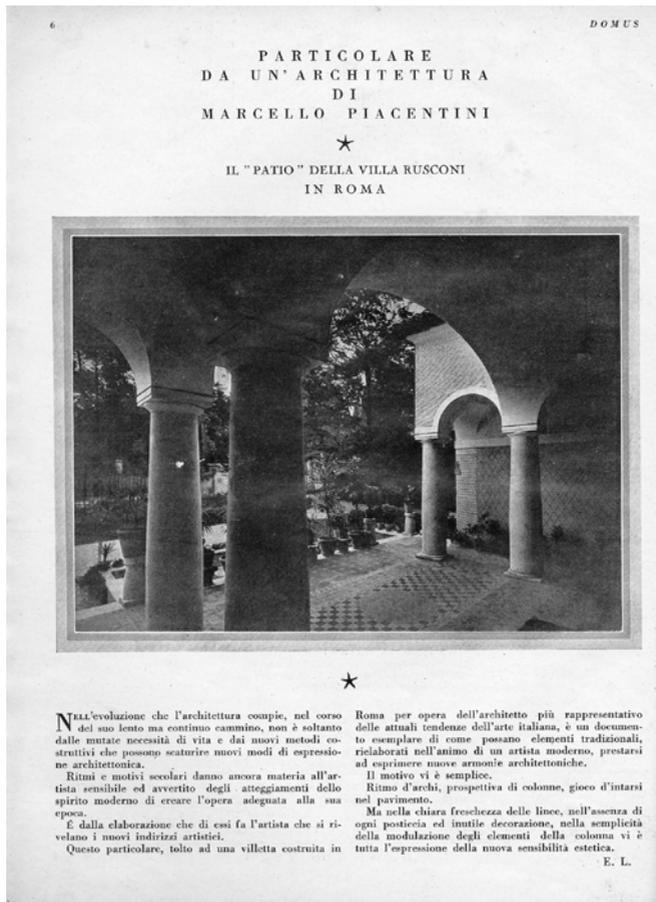
At that time, the magazine's format was 21,7 x 28,8 cm (DIN A4 21,0 x 29,7 cm). It had 44 pages, including a vast advertising section, with a classic, but generous and airy layout built of two columns with justified text and illustrations set within the columns or centred (Figure 4. *Domus* 1 (1928), 6). The first issue cost 10 lire, and annual subscription 80 lire. The first issue offers translations of the table of contents in French and English.

To underline the international attitude, the following issues offered abstracts in French, English, German, and Spanish – unfortunately, and without any explanation, they were discontinued by June 1928. The cover vignette changed with every issue. *Domus* continued to publish articles on interior design and on decoration, and on exemplary architecture, where it always offered photographs together with drawings. The samples were selected according to their ability to reshape traditional values in architecture such as simplicity, commodity and, mainly, *italianità*. In February 1928 the Casa Giobbe della Bitta near Rome again by Marcello Piacentini (1922–5) was lauded because 'it does not want to be more than a comfortable house'.<sup>27</sup> Piacentini's frequent appearance, which continued in the following issues, may surprise, but before his collusion with Fascism and his embrace of monumental classicism he was one of the innovators of Italian architecture.<sup>28</sup>

*Domus* was one of the first to print tutorials on design, for example in November 1928, when Elena Campi advised on planning bathrooms,<sup>29</sup> or December 1928, when Enrico Griffini discussed triangle houses.<sup>30</sup>

Modern architecture from foreign countries always played the central role in *Domus*. In March 1928 Griffini published an article on modern housing, mentioning the Werkbund exhibition *Die Wohnung* in Stuttgart (1927), villas by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret (with an error in the figures confusing the house House La Roche-Jeanneret), Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Villa Wolf in Guben (1926) and Rudolf Preiswerk's villa in Binningen near Basle (1927). Noteworthy is, that buildings of Robert Mallet-Stevens were first published only in details, showing staircases in photographs reminiscent of *Neue Sachlichkeit*.<sup>31</sup> However, in its first years *Domus* was more committed to Novecento architecture, as a strikingly long article on Giuseppe De Finetti's Casa della Meridiana in Milan (1924–5) revealed: ten pages, the longest article so far, richly illustrated, with floor plans, and an entire chorus of praise (Figure 5. *Domus* 7 (1929), 11).<sup>32</sup>

Gio Ponti left the magazine after twelve years. From July 1941 on, *Domus* was edited by Massimo Bontempelli, Giuseppe Pagano – who was the editor of *Casabella* as well – and Melchiorre Bega. In October 1942, Guglielmo Ulrich took over for the arrested Giuseppe Pagano. In October 1943 Melchiorre Bega became the only editor, in December 1944 the magazine was suspended due to the war. *Domus* was reborn in January 1946 under Ernesto Nathan Rogers. It had a new look, but conformed to a line of cultural continuity with Ponti's period as editor. In 1948, Ponti returned to *Domus* as editor.

Figure 5. *Domus* 7 (1929), 11

### Final Remarks

The founding of *La Casa bella* and *Domus* signals a new era in the history of modern Italian architecture. With both magazines, and many others such as *Cosmorama Pittorico*, *Il Politecnico*, *Rassegna di architettura*, *L'Edilizia Moderna* and *Poligono*, Milan was established as the main centre of both art and architectural movements and related publishing activities. *La Casa bella* and *Domus* maintained the highest standard as leading professional magazines and set the tone for the resulting debates among experts. Members of the first generation of architects such as Gio Ponti, Emilio Lancia, the BBPR Studio, Giuseppe Pagano and Edoardo Persico established themselves in both magazines as editors, authors, and critics. Certainly, whether actually convinced of Fascism or not, both *La Casa bella* and *Domus* argued close to Fascist propaganda and worked permanently on the

*risveglio del sentimento artistico*, always emphasising the *italianità* of the works shown. The fate of Giolli and Pagano marks the extreme end of this strong relation between architecture and politics.

### Notes

- I would like to thank the rectorate of the University of Innsbruck, whose generosity allowed the Institute of Theory and History of Architecture the acquisition of the complete volumes of *La Casa bella*, *Domus* and *Ottogono* in 2016, and Ann-Cathérine Pielehofer (Vienna) for proofreading and correcting the English text. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, 'Le Futurisme,' *Le Figaro*, 20 February 1909; Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Teoria e invenzione futurista* (Milan: Mondadori, 1983), 10–1. Futurism only produced short lived magazines such as the literary *Lacerba*, edited by Ardengo Soffici and Giovanni Papini and published in Florence from 1913 to 1915, *La Città futurista*, published in 1929 and suspended after two issues, and *La Città Nuova* between 1932 and 1934.
- Gruppo 7, 'Architettura e una nuova epoca arcaica. Quattro note,' *Rassegna italiana politica letteraria e artistica* 12 (1926): '1. Architettura'; 2 (1927): '2. Gli stranieri'; 3 (1927): '3. Impreparazione, incomprendimento, pregiudizi'; 5 (1927): '4. Una nuova epoca arcaica'; Enrico Mantero, *Giuseppe Terragni e la città del razionalismo italiano* (Bari: Dedalo, 1969), 57–87.
- Due to the limited length of this paper, within the following only the most significant magazines will be mentioned. For an overview on Italy cf. Rosanna Cioffi and Alessandro Rovetta (eds.), *Percorsi di critica. Un archivio per le riviste d'arte in Italia dell'Ottocento e del Novecento* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2007); Maria Luisa Neri, 'L'occhio dello straniero. L'architettura italiana dalle riviste del mondo, l'architettura del mondo dalle riviste italiane (1890–1940); in *L'altra modernità nella cultura architettonica del XX secolo. Dibattito internazionale e realtà locali* (Rome: Gangemi 2011), 11–56; for detailed studies on single magazines cf. Hélène Jannière, 'Images d'une ville moderne pour l'Italie fasciste. La photographie publiée, Quadrante 1933–1936' in Frédéric Pousin (ed.), *Figures de la ville et construction des savoirs. Architecture, urbanisme, géographie* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2005), 117–27; Michela Rosso, 'Il Selvaggio 1926–1942. Architectural Polemics and Invective Imagery,' *Architectural Histories* 1 (2016), 4, <http://doi.org/10.5334/ah.203>; for cross-border studies cf. Hélène Jannière, *Politiques éditoriales et architecture moderne. L'émergence de nouvelles revues en France et en Italie, 1923–1939* (Paris: Éditions Arguments, 2002); Hélène Jannière, 'Distilled Avant-Garde Echoes: Word and Image in Architectural Periodicals of the 1920s and 1930s,' *Architectural Histories* 1 (2016), 21, <http://doi.org/10.5334/ah.211>.
- Cf. Giovanni Spadolini, *Fra Viesseux e Ricassoli. Dalla vecchia alla 'Nuova Antologia'* (Florence: Edizioni della Cassa di Risparmio, 1982); Cosimo Ceccuti, *Antologia della 'Nuova Antologia' (1866–2000). Centotrentacinque anni di impegno culturale e civile* (Florence: La Loggia, 2000).
- Cf. Marta Batazzi, 'Vita d'Arte' (1908–1913), in Bernardina Sani (ed.), *Siena tra purismo e liberty* (Milan: Mondadori, 1988), 216–23.
- Cf. Serena Pesenti, 'Il Politecnico,' *Tema* 1 (1993), 68–70; 2 (1993), 67–8; 3 (1993), 69–71; 4 (1993), 54–6; 1 (1994), 65–7.
- Cf. Serena Pesenti, 'Giornale dell'Ingegnere, Architetto e Agronomo (Milano) 1853–1867,' *Tema* 3 (1994), 57–9; 4 (1994), 47–9; 1 (1995), 74–6; 1 (1996), 72–5; 2 (1996), 73–6; Ornella Selvafolta, 'Il 'Giornale dell'Ingegnere Architetto ed Agronomo' e la riflessione sull'architettura negli anni cinquanta,' in Roberto Cassanelli, Sergio Roba and Francesca Valli (eds.), *Milano pareva deserta ... 1848–1859. L'invenzione della Patria* (Milan: Comune di Milano, 1999),

- 91–112.
- 8 The Associazione, founded in 1890, has already published its distinguished *Annuario* since 1891; cf. *L'associazione artistica tra i cultori di architettura e Gustavo Giovannoni* (Rome: Casa dei Crescenzi, 1990).
- 9 Cf. Cesare De Seta, *Il destino dell'architettura. Persico, Giolli, Pagano* (Rome: Laterza, 1985), 101–55.
- 10 Beatrice Coda Negozio, Roberto Fraternali and Carlo Ostorero, *Alla scoperta della Torino Liberty. 10 passeggiate nei quartieri della città* (Turin: Edizioni del Capricorno, 2017), 31–2.
- 11 Cf. Mario Universo (ed.), *Casabella. Per l'evoluzione dell'architettura dall'arte alla scienza (1928–1943)* (Treviso: Canova, 1978); Chiara Baglione (ed.), *Casabella 1928–2008* (Milan: Electa, 2008); Rossano Astarita, *Casabella anni Trenta. Una cucina per il moderno* (Milan: Jaca Books, 2010).
- 12 Guido Marangoni, 'Verso la duplice meta,' *La Casa bella* 1 (1928), 10.
- 13 In today's Austria, where a minimum monthly wage of 1500 € must be paid, one issue of *La Casa bella* would cost about 30 €. However, the current price is 22,50 € per issue.
- 14 Arturo Lancelotti, 'La Mostra di architettura razionale,' *La Casa bella* 5 (1928), 31–4.
- 15 Alberto Marzocchi, 'Case dell'avvenire,' *La Casa bella* 5 (1928), 35–6.
- 16 Ugo Ortona, 'Una villa moderna,' *La Casa bella* 9 (1928), 18–20.
- 17 Ego Sum, 'Milano Nuova. Il Palazzo della Società 'Montecatini',' *La Casa bella* 12 (1928), 20–3; cf. (Ed.), 'L'arredamento del Palazzo della 'Montecatini' in Milano,' *La Casa bella* 1 (1929), 15–9.
- 18 O.[razia] Belsito-Prini, 'Armonie e dettagli della 'Casa Madre dei Mutilati',' *La Casa bella* 2 (1929), 10–3.
- 19 Enrico Paulucci, 'Parigi moderna. Rue Mallet Stevens,' *La Casa bella* 5 (1929), 29–32.
- 20 Alberto Sartoris, 'Gli elementi della nuova architettura,' *La Casa bella* 8 (1929), 9–13; cf. Alberto Sartoris, 'Architettura standard,' *La Casa bella* 11 (1929), 9–14; Alberto Sartoris, 'Tetti piani e giardini pensile,' *La Casa bella* 12 (1929), 10–5; Alberto Sartoris, 'Problemi delle città-giardino,' *La Casa bella* 25 (1930), 9–13; Alberto Sartoris, 'Sistema dell'urbanismo,' *La Casa bella* 28 (1930), 9–13.
- 21 G. P. [Gio Ponti?], 'I benefici dell'architettura moderna,' *La Casa bella* 27 (1930), 11–4.
- 22 Richard Rothschild, 'La Casa bella. Parte tecnica. Dalla stampa di tutto il mondo,' *La Casa bella* 33 (1930), 79–84.
- 23 Giuseppe Pagano, 'Potremo salvarci dalle false tradizioni e delle ossessioni monumentali?' *Costruzioni Casabella* 157 (1941), 2–7.
- 24 Giuseppe Pagano, 'Occasioni perdute,' *Costruzioni Casabella* 158 (1941), 7.
- 25 G.[io] P.[onti], 'La casa all'Italiana,' *Domus* 1 (1928), 7.
- 26 E. L. [Emilio Lancia?], 'Particolare da un'architettura di Marcello Piacentini,' *Domus* 1 (1928), 6.
- 27 Luigi Piccinato, 'Una casa in campagna,' *Domus* 2 (1928), 14.
- 28 Cf. Bruno Zevi, 'Marcello Piacentini: Mori nel 1925,' *L'architettura. Cronache e storia* 58 (1960), 220.
- 29 Elena Campi, 'Disposizioni razionali delle stanze da bagno,' *Domus* 11 (1928), 44–5.
- 30 E.[nrico] A.[gostino] Griffini, 'Case a pianta triangolare,' *Domus* 12 (1928), 31–3.
- 31 G.[io] P.[onti], 'Particolari d'architettura modernissima nelle costruzioni di Roberto Mallet-Stevens,' *Domus* 2 (1929), 38.
- 32 Ferdinando Reggiori, 'La 'Casa della Meridiana' a Milano,' *Domus* 7 (1929), 10–20.

# COMING BACK TO HAUNT YOU: THE HISTORY OF REJECTING HISTORY IN ARCHITECTURE

Session chair:

**Mari Hvattum**, Oslo School of Architecture and Design

At least since the mid-nineteenth century, architects and architectural theorists have routinely rejected history. From Heinrich Hübsch's insistence on a contemporary style to Le Corbusier's fantasies about the tabula rasa, the idea of architecture's absolute contemporaneity has long been something of a commonplace. And yet, history crops up in surprising ways in the midst of attempts to exorcise it. Alois Riegl, for one, while insisting that art and architecture belongs to its time, also conceded that no time could reach 'aesthetic fulfilment' by its own means alone. Riegl's argument is intriguing. The past, by virtue of its otherness, provides something that contemporary culture, with its seamless conformity to the *Zeitgeist*, is incapable of providing. The present, it seems, needs history to constitute itself qua contemporaneity.

The involuntary presence of history in nineteenth- and twentieth-century architecture is the topic of this session. Studying the history of history's rejection, we invite scholars to explore the multifarious ways the past comes back to haunt any attempt to reject it. The spectre takes many forms. Karl Bötticher, for instance, was one of the many nineteenth-century architects who insisted that architecture had to respond strictly to the conditions of the present. In

an interesting twist, however, Bötticher included the past – its beliefs, material culture, and accumulated experience – as a constituent factor of the contemporary era, thus smuggling history back into the equation. The insistence on contemporaneity, then, comes with its own particular historicity, like the way James Joyce made Leopold Bloom's day into a vehicle of history or T.S. Eliot insisted on tradition as the very precondition for the modernist break with the past.

## The Great Labyrinth: Schinkel's Struggles Against History

Emma Letizia Jones,  
ETH Zürich

### Abstract

Between the 1820s and early 1830s, the Prussian architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel made several attempts to produce a tectonic ideal born of an architecture without any 'style'. These attempts, according to Schinkel's own assessment, were all failures. Around 1835, he produced a piece of writing intended for publication in an architectural textbook for students, but which remained only in the pages of his notebook. This text contains one of the most candid confessions in architectural literature, for it not only highlights the deep insecurities of an architect assumed to be at the peak of his career, but also reveals his fraught relationship to the question of history. Schinkel's philosophical position laid out in the text leads him to seek new expressions of form that can reflect absolute, Idealist principles. But in conflating ideal architecture with its historical referents, Schinkel inadvertently traps himself in a double bind, in which history presents itself at every turn in the futile search for the new and the universal.

This paper investigates Schinkel's text as an expression of his imprisonment in the 'labyrinth' (as he called it) of style: his attempt, first, to escape it, and then – as he felt this was impossible – his resignation toward historicism in later projects, and his disowning of his own radical earlier work ('I fell into the error of pure radical abstraction'). It will also touch on the emancipation from historicism of Schinkel's own pupils, who were ironically liberated in their search for the 'new' by technological advancements beyond their control: a luxury never afforded to Schinkel himself.

The paper juxtaposes Schinkel's unpublished text with his built works and works on paper, as a means of exposing both the discrepancies between the architect's theory and his practice. These oppositions not only highlight Schinkel's unresolved confrontations with the labyrinth of style, but also serve to position the quest for the 'new' in architecture as a central concern of Schinkel and his Idealist contemporaries in early nineteenth century Berlin. Yet, as will be shown, the attempt to liberate form from its historically established incarnations remained for Schinkel beset by the intrusion of pre-established historical narratives; a feedback loop only to be repeated by the early twentieth century modernists in their own attempts at a similar kind of emancipation.

# The Modernity of Rejecting Modernity in Architecture

Richard Wittman,  
University of California at Santa Barbara

## Abstract

This paper presents an inverted example of the phenomenon described in the panel brief; one in which it was modernity that was rejected in favour of history, but in which the modern stubbornly returns as the foil that allows the historical to constitute itself as such. This example thereby illuminates the deeper phenomenon at work in the dynamic described in the brief, namely, the mutual reinforcement of past and present in the historicist perspective.

The example concerns the initiatives to highlight Rome's Christian material heritage launched by Pope Pius IX upon his return to the city following the suppression of the 1848–1849 Republican uprising. Aimed at reconfirming Rome's providential Christian status, this work involved several major church restorations, particularly targeting Paleochristian and medieval buildings, as well as the foundation of a Commission of Sacred Archaeology charged with excavating and publicizing Christian antiquities. Ostensibly rooted in the antipathy of the Catholic leadership towards the social, political, and philosophical developments of the previous half-century, this concerted emphasis on the Christian past presented itself as drawing a veil of oblivion over a modernity that it implicitly locates elsewhere. Yet as these various initiatives unfolded after 1850, the problem of how to handle the new elements associated with these works was consistently resolved in favour of a modern treatment. This was true for architectural elements and for the frescos that sometimes replaced unsalvageable old ones, as well as for the shelters built to protect newly excavated ancient Christian sites. This paper will argue that the evident modernity of these new elements was necessary to heighten the historical 'depth of field' in which the ancient features adjacent to them were seen, illuminating their present relevance with a clarity often lacking in the Romantic historicizing frames typically deployed in such situations in the 1820s or 1830s.

# Riegl's Untimely Walls

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Princeton University

## Abstract

Every time Alois Riegl's work is re-examined, his argument about the multiple temporalities of aesthetic modernity is illustrated with a new set of artefacts. Piranesi's etchings of overgrown Roman ruins dominated the pages of the English translation of his 'Modern Cult of Monuments' in 1982. More recent commentaries have featured fragments of ancient Greece, or the remnants of recent monument wars. Yet even as all the minor genres that Riegl studied have been unearthed – from Dutch group portraits to belt buckles, from baroque cupolas to Assyrian bas-reliefs – one kind of artefact in the Rieglian catalogue has remained stubbornly untimely: the wall. Painted and sculpted walls, and in particular late-medieval mural paintings and late-Roman basreliefs, were crucial support for Riegl's ideas. Yet they have fallen through the cracks between his two historiographic personas. In architecture Riegl is a prophet of monumental values, and of their spatialization in twentieth century architecture. In art history Riegl is a prophet of visibility whose analyses prefigured the cerebral, relational, structured, or patterned qualities of modern art.

In this paper I address Riegl's walls as hybrid and untimely media. I focus on the walls Riegl visited as an inspector for the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1897–1903. These walls are hard for us to appreciate today because – to speak Riegl's language – their 'distance from our taste' has remained so vast. Yet by encountering their shallow murality, and their shifting dimensions of illusionistic depth, we find Riegl's definition of aesthetic modernity: a condition where sensorial distance vis-a-vis an artefact is not only a perceptive factor in its formal appreciation, but a position from which the epistemology of multiple temporalities is made available.

## Collage/Camouflage: Mies's and Reich's Strategies to Engage the Past

Laura Martínez de Guereñu,  
IE School of Architecture and Design, Madrid-Segovia

### Abstract

When Mies selected the site for the German Pavilion at the International Exposition of Barcelona (September 1928), the eight Ionic columns framing it across the Plaza de Bellos Oficios were not yet there. They would not be placed there until December 1928, after Mies had already been working on the Pavilion project for three months. Mies responded to the enfilade of classical columns by incorporating them as architectural signs of the past and composing a collage with the Pavilion's modern architectural elements (free-standing metalwork screens, cruciform chrome plated columns, an empty display case). During its ephemeral existence of eight months (May 1929–January 1930), the Pavilion would be seen across the eight Ionic columns, completely transforming the boundaries between its interior and exterior. Mies and Reich designed another 16,000 square metres of exhibition spaces to accommodate the products of 350 German industries, inside the eight Noucentista Palaces that Spain had made available to Germany free of charge. In these interiors, which Mies knew well from his first visit to Barcelona in June 1928, Mies and Reich camouflaged the columns and entablatures of historical styles and transformed the Noucentista spaces into modern, unadorned, and consistent environments full of chromed display cases.

This paper will explore and compare the two different reactions that Mies and Reich had to the unexpected presence of history, both in the form of the eight Ionic columns framing the Pavilion site (collage) and the Noucentista spaces (camouflage). It will reveal what the narrow lens of tabula rasa modernism has impeded us from understanding: that Mies and Reich's free-plan layout and abstract architectural elements emerged in an engaged conversation with the past.

## Specters of Modernism

Mari Lending,  
Oslo School of Architecture and Design

### Abstract

Jacques Derrida's 1993 book on hauntology, *Specters of Marx*, was also an enlightenment-inspired political meditation on loss and mourning. This paper will revisit Derrida's theory on spectral moments with an eye to architectural historiography, taking as its point of departure a plaster cast drama that unfolded at Yale University in the mid-twentieth century.

'Too much history leaves little room for work', Josef Albers claimed in the essay 'Historisch oder Jetztig?' ('Historical or Contemporary?'), published in 1924 while he was still teaching in Weimar. Traditional art and architecture education was 'at least three hundred years behind the times', all about 'note-taking and copying', while the Bauhaus aimed at reintegrating art education and practical action 'into harmony with the actual demands of contemporary life'. This neat teleology Albers would rehearse and refine inexorably, yet his revulsion with 'retrospection' and 'backward-looking' reached its most dramatic expression when he, in 1950, in person, exorcised the biggest collection of plaster cast at any American university. A decade later, Paul Rudolph came across 200 casts that had survived Albers' iconoclasm, and mounted these exquisite nineteenth-century objects across his 1963 Art & Architecture Building at Yale University, creating an unforeseen constellation of cast concrete and plaster casts, and not least a striking chronotope and a ghostly polychronic spectacle.

Ghosts are characterized by being out of place, as well as by distorting conventional conceptions of time. Ghosts haunt, in a Derridean mannerism, by being a 'non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present', producing movements that rely on disjuncting, disjunction, and disproportion. Furtive and untimely, the apparition of the specter evokes discourses of violence, melancholy, and fantasies about the future that have also left their mark on the history of architectural modernism.

# COMPARATIVE MODERNITIES

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# COMPRADOR NETWORKS AND COMPARATIVE MODERNITIES

Session chair:

**Lawrence Chua**, Syracuse University /  
Albert-Ludwigs-Universität

The comprador classes of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were critical agents of global capitalism. As 'middle men' in the colonial enterprise, they enabled the development of imperial trade networks, negotiated the supply of labor that extracted profit from the local landscape, established new patterns of consumption and taste and facilitated cultural as well as economic exchanges that were critical to the growth of Asian cities. In diverse treaty ports and colonial entrepôts like Singapore, Batavia, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, compradors drew on a diverse vocabulary of intra- and trans-regional architectural forms, labor, materials, and construction techniques to build homes, offices, godowns, factories, and infrastructural networks that were legible to both European corporations and local populations. The diplomat and entrepreneur Cheong Fatt-tze, for example, deployed ironworks from the Scottish Macfarlanes factory as well as Teochew ceramic ornamentation from the southern China coast to articulate a mansion in British-colonial Penang that could be identified as the home of both a mandarin official and a modern capitalist. His neighbor, Khaw Sim Bee (Phraya Ratsadanupradit Mahitsaraphakdi to the Siamese crown), meanwhile, built nearby Asdang House in a neo-Palladian idiom that marked him as a member of a cosmopolitan class that circulated freely across national and imperial borders.

The travelling, sojourning perspective of the comprador allows historians to critically examine the fractured, multi-scaled geographies at play across global networks as well as what Raymond Williams has described as ‘the metropolitan interpretation of its own processes as universals.’

This panel examines the role of comprador patrons and architects as active participants in the production of the global modern built environment in the 19th and 20th centuries. The panel aims to create an understanding of treaty ports, colonial cities, and free trade zones not only as sites of local and foreign interactions but as incubators of new ideas about architecture and modernity in the global capitalist economy.

## Building Cosmopolitanism: Reconsidering the Comprador as Contractor in the Formation of Shanghai’s Lilong

Nora Boyd,  
Hunter College

### Abstract

Before the Bund and before Pudong, Shanghai was a city of undulating stone and tile *lilong*, a building type unique to the city and integral to its cosmopolitan and mercantile culture. While the type is often fit into narratives about the ‘semicolonial’ nature of the city, as invented and disseminated by English and American merchants, it was the comprador who built these complexes. Engaged to solve the problem of housing single men and then small families, entirely new social units in China, the compradors looked to regional forms and employed them to serve the mercantile project of rent collection. The resulting type, the *lilong*, became the hallmark of Shanghai’s built environment, housing three-quarters of the city by 1949, and shaped generations of migrants, sojourners, and opportunists into cosmopolitan Shanghainese.

While English and American merchants are named and quoted, reified into positions of importance in Shanghai’s history, compradors are discussed in generics. Cheng Jinxuan and Silas Aaron Hardoon, originally compradors who worked for Sassoon and Co., became extremely wealthy men. Though Hardoon would not traditionally be called a comprador, he arrived in Shanghai destitute and was, unlike other Baghdadi Jews, invested in Chinese language and culture. Using his knowledge and comfort with locals, he turned his lowly rent collecting into a booming real estate business. By foregrounding Cheng and Hardoon, we see the comprador as the translator both literally and culturally, an active agent in the creation of the city’s physical fabric, its spaces of interaction, and thereby its unique systems of life.

This study seeks to reorient the narrative of Shanghai’s *lilong* complexes, situating Shanghai as a place of generative translation and production rather than as a receiver of Western types, and establishing the compradors as both products and producers of modernity.

## The Twentieth Century Godowns Along the Singapore River

Yuk Hong Ian Tan,  
University of Hong Kong

### Abstract

The first Western agency house in Singapore was established in 1820, just a year after the founding of the British trading port. Others followed suit, facilitating the exchange of manufactured goods from Europe and raw materials from Asia. A significant contributor to the agencies' success came from their association with local compradors. They were influential business leaders in their ethnic communities who served as intermediaries between local businesses and agency houses. The relationship between comprador and managing agency was akin to mutual partnerships. During the twentieth century economic boom, the overlapping business domains of compradors and agencies built Singapore into a thriving entrepôt.

This relationship is expressed spatially at the Singapore River. There are three distinct urban patterns: Commercial Square (now Raffles Place) dominated primarily by Western companies and agency houses, shophouses at the mouth of the river occupied by Chinese traders and the godowns buildings upstream owned by both agency houses and compradors. While the neoclassical buildings in Raffles Place and the ubiquitous shophouse typology are well-studied, godowns have been woefully neglected. A lack of public interest has led to the demolition of godowns without much attention.

This paper aims to further an understanding of godowns vis-à-vis the ebb and flow of entrepôt trade. My study will focus on the godowns' technological advancement through the early adoption of modern structural materials such as iron, steel and concrete. It draws on a series of archival building plans submitted to the Municipal Council in the 1900s, supplemented with on-site survey, business records and archival materials.

## Sugar and the City: The Contribution of Three Chinese-Indonesian Compradors to Modern Architecture and Planning in the Dutch East Indies, 1900–1942

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### Abstract

To explore how compradors contributed to the development of architecture and town planning in the Dutch East Indies, this paper will examine the life and work of three key Chinese-Indonesian protagonists: Semarang's sugar king Oei Tiong Ham, Medan's leading businessman Tjong A Fie, and Chinese-Indonesian architect Liem Bwan Tjie.

Thanks to their wealth, predominantly acquired through trade, Oei and Tjong not only gained a civil status equal to Europeans, they also interacted and adopted a 'western' lifestyle in 'western' surroundings. To shape these surrounding, Oei and Tjong often sought the services of architects. Liem, who was raised in the colony and professionally trained in the Netherlands and China, seemed every affluent Chinese-Indonesian's favourite in the interbellum. His ability to blend modern formal European principles with Chinese philosophical ideals, gained him a substantial clientele.

To date, scholarly research addressing the role of Chinese-Indonesian compradors like Oei, Tjong, and Liem is insignificant when compared to the number of studies that focus on entrepreneurs and architects who originated from Europe. Although there are pragmatic reasons for this incongruity – linguistic barriers being one of them – the status, position, and influence of Chinese-Indonesian compradors in the Dutch East Indies does not account for it.

By exploring the ways that the private and professional lives of Oei Tiong Ham, Tjong A Fie, and Liem Bwan Tjie cut across western and Asian cultural barriers, this paper will take their lives and works *pars pro toto* to illustrate how Chinese-Indonesians were instrumental in not only introducing new idioms and approaches to architecture and town planning from Europe but also in changing the outlook of two important coastal cities in the Dutch East Indies.

# Modernising Macao, the Old-Fashioned Way: Macanese and Chinese Entrepreneurship in the Colonial City

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## Abstract

In 1877, Councilman Miguel Ayres da Silva and his Chinese partners were authorised by the governor to reclaim and urbanise a large portion of the city's riverfront. Coming from an old-established and well-respected family, Silva is one of the first in his generation of 'native-born Portuguese', as the aspiring aristocratic mixed-blood Macanese called themselves, to drift away from traditional employment in the administration or the military and make a name for himself as entrepreneur and landowner. His project, in line with the government-promoted harbour renovation, advanced the modern principles of development and sanitation, and adopted a regular pattern of well-aligned streets, blocks, and plots. This set the tone for a new age of centralised urban planning in Macao.

This would be the first urban extension plan to be carried out under the supervision of the newly-appointed Public Works Department, commissioned to bring order, regularity and elegance to the city. From 1870 on, the Public Works engineers sought to implement the Portuguese government's claim of full sovereignty over Macao, by managing the urban landscape to effectively end the ancient practice of 'divided sovereignty' between Portuguese and Chinese local authorities. This division, from the modern point of view, had resulted in a disorganised organic pattern and an insalubrious city.

However, Silva's blatant disregard for government regulations in the construction process, as well as the patch-up settlement reached after the work was completed, resonated profoundly with Macao's century-old tradition of autonomous space appropriation. Through the analysis of the project's plans, as well as related contemporary Public Works reports, this study demonstrates that the transition from bottom-up city building to the nineteenth century top-to-bottom model was indeed quite a contested process, reflecting both the ambitions and the contradictions of colonial Macao.

## Keywords

Colonial urban structure, Portuguese empire, Macao.

## Introduction

On July 7<sup>th</sup> 1877 the *Macao Government Bulletin* published a provincial ordinance granting the citizen Miguel Ayres da Silva a six-year concession contract, to reclaim and urbanise a large portion of the city's riverfront.<sup>1</sup> It justified the concession on the claims of it improving public prosperity by creating new ground on which to build commercial and industrial structures, as well as improving public health, by eliminating an insalubrious siltation point. In addition, by realigning the pier wall, the riverfront was given a much more regular profile.

Previously, the riverfront had been under constant restructuring for more than twenty years. This fact, however, can only be inferred from thinly veiled references in published discourses, or by looking at the evolution of the city plan, as no official records of permits or office regulations about it have subsided in the archival documentation. The July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1877 ordinance came precisely at a time when the Portuguese colonial government was attempting to create a validation circuit between Lisbon and the capitals of the overseas provinces for the regulation of private initiative intervention in the city. This accounts for the production of substantial archival documentation on Silva's project. Coincidentally, it is also the first time a Macanese (or 'native-born Portuguese') name is found heading such an endeavor. Previously, the capital and workforce on urban restructuring operations was mainly and, more often than not, solely directed by mainland (or 'foreign') Chinese.

This was clearly was a transitional period, for the administration and the entrepreneurs alike. The rules of city planning were changing from a more or less informal system, based on a sort of self-governance tradition, where projects were decided between the Chinese entrepreneurs and the governor, with no account for public opinion or need for validation by metropolitan financial and technical bodies, to a centralised system in which the empire was aspiring to modernise itself. The complexification of procedures brought about by this transition enabled the emergence, or the strengthening, of the middleman role between private Chinese capital and the Portuguese administration in the formalisation of urban projects. The emancipation of the former interpreter into a proper 'comprador' role fit right into the ambitions of the new generation of educated Macanese, of which Miguel Ayres da Silva and his reclamation project is a perfect example.

## Social Forces, Economic Prowess and Political Agenda

Miguel Ayres da Silva was a young man of 33, when the July 1877 ordinance was published. With his older brother, Pedro Nolasco da Silva, who was one of the most prominent intellectual personalities in the history of the territory, they were the fourth generation of their family to be born in Macao.<sup>2</sup> Both brothers were also City Council members, referred to in Macao as 'City Senators'. Miguel Ayres is less of a public figure than his brother,

partly because of his unusual choice of a career in real estate investment, but most probably because of his untimely death in 1886 at the age of 42, which can also account for the scarcity of archival sources detailing his life. Given his experience in urban planning, and undoubtedly due to his connections not only to the Portuguese colonial government but also to the Chinese entrepreneurial community, he is often referenced in collaborative missions with the government, as a member of the first Macao Sanitation Commission appointed in 1883, for example, or as representative of the Municipal Senate on the Advisory Technical Commission for Public Works.

Coming from the old-established and well-respected Silva family, Miguel Ayres is therefore one of the first in his generation of 'native-born Portuguese', as the aspiring aristocratic mixed-blood Macanese called themselves, to drift away from traditional employment in the administration or the military and make a name for himself as an entrepreneur and landowner. Probably highly educated, as his brother had been, at St Joseph Seminary, he would certainly have learnt to speak not only the Macanese patois, but also Portuguese, Mandarin and Cantonese. This was certainly not the standard education for the Macanese, which in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, were living through a sort of economic and moral decay linked to the prohibition of the coolie trade in 1874. This allowed, for a brief time, the resurgence of a number of these old-established families.<sup>3</sup>

Associated with *anciens régimes* that everywhere in the modern world were giving way to more liberal societies, the Macanese were often depicted by travelers, like the Austrian diplomat Joseph Alexander von Hübner, as 'half-blood Portuguese',<sup>4</sup> belonging to a bygone or even mythical time, when men came to Macao to make their fortunes.

"Nobody prospers here anymore, apart from coolie brokers or gambling house owners. The Chinese element is constantly gaining ground, which is only natural. The Chinese represent life, the Portuguese, sleep, or death. That's why we see the Chinese establish themselves in quite a few of the beautiful, old Portuguese houses. While the English and German residents depart because they are no longer able to do business, while the Portuguese element, through a series of multiplied infusions of Asian blood, taints and extinguishes itself, the Chinese, by means of their wonderful activity and sobriety, achieves what its government couldn't, by force nor by ruse: it comes, under the very shadow of the Portuguese flag, to retake possession of the territory formerly conquered by the Lusitanian heroes."<sup>5</sup>

Although this is certainly somewhat a caricaturised portrait, it nevertheless puts forth the main issue at stake in Macao since the First Opium War had led to the establishment of Western concessions in most of the South China

Sea ports, and mainly, of the British colony of Hong Kong: its territorial sovereignty and borders. From the 1840s on, through a series of radical reforms, central Portuguese authority was striving for a stronger grasp of colonial power over the city and its administration, so as to effectively end the ancient practice of 'divided sovereignty' between the Portuguese and Chinese local authorities, and their often conflicting separate customs and jurisdictions. Strongly attached to this old system were the Macanese families that had built their fortunes by negotiating, through their seats on the City Senate, the legitimacy of the Portuguese presence and privileges on a basis of proximity with the Guangzhou Qing imperial officials and their delegates who, up until this point, had wielded absolute power over the district's land and construction policies. The Qing officials' eviction and downgrading of the City Senate to mere municipal functions, decided by Governor Ferreira do Amaral in 1848, ultimately led to the development of a more liberal climate in the city, in which native Guangdong and Fujian entrepreneurs would soon thrive, under the shadow of the Portuguese imperial flag.

The reconstruction of the Bazaar, Macao's most prominent Chinese district, after a great fire almost completely destroyed it in 1856, provided the first opportunity for the intervention of the new centralised government in its planning and management. This was the beginning of the end for old Macao's Chinese and Christian cities living back-to-back. By the 1860s, what had started as a response to a crisis, had transformed into a full-fledged government plan to expand the Chinese Bazaar, by reclaiming more and more land on the silted riverfront. With the influx of refugee population from the Taiping rebellion and the onset of the Second Opium War, the pressure to expand was intense, which agreed with the political agenda of putting Macao back on the forefront of regional trade. Meanwhile, the gambling and commodity concessions, as well as the coolie trade, had helped develop local Chinese fortunes. Striving to break free from the Macanese elite's power and its attachment to the old system, Portuguese colonial ambitions found in these entrepreneurs an unlikely ally. Thus, under the banner of 'one benevolent government for all'<sup>6</sup>, they financed and provided the workforce for most of the renovation projects culminating in the 1872 inauguration of the New Bazaar area: an all new Chinese district, in a colonial Portuguese urban mold.

The focus on public works and urban renovation, as a means to influence and control Macao's social and political fabric, stemmed from the French theories on the 'political economy of material improvements'. Since the 1850s, these theories were all the rage in metropolitan political circles, leading to the establishment of the Ministry of Public Works in 1852, which sought to bring progress, liberty, and civilisation to the Portuguese society. Although formal legislation in this matter would not be published until January of 1870, with the establishment of the Public Works Department

of Macao, the 1867 commissioners' report for the 'organisation of a Public Works Special Body', clearly reflects this metropolitan philosophy in its political approach towards the problem of contested sovereignty:

“The idea of social transformation and improvement is being understood through the impulse and movement given to inanimate material. A scientific paradox, but still from which *civilization* has sprouted, as an acknowledged consequence of roads, railways, canals, public buildings and great cities. We will demonstrate this, not by appealing to the great nations of the world, but by borrowing on the history of our own small but beautiful and blossoming colony. We all know of the unflattering picture that Macao presented twenty years ago. Two districts, even as if two separate cities: the first, and most populated, the Bazaar, inhabited only by the Chinese, clinging to their prejudices and traditions, harassed by the rule of the Mandarins; an entanglement of narrow streets, filthy and unsanitary; and the second, the Christian city, with its old doors, like barriers to progress; both without police, completely separated, with unequal rights and no reciprocity of interests, small incomes, bounded, in moral languish, and apathetic. It was the honorable Governor Ferreira do Amaral, a true martyr to the progress and civilization of this land, who first understood how one could take advantage of public works to regenerate the colony.<sup>73</sup>”

However by the 1870s, the Chinese entrepreneurs' influence in Macao, which effectively had been the means by which the government had managed to launch this 'regeneration', were starting to be perceived as something of a menace to Portuguese rule. This prompted the government to put on a show of colonial power through the Public Works Department, or at least try so, by requiring all new projects to be submitted for its approval. As a result of this endeavor for transparency, Silva's reclamation would be the first of the inner harbour renovation projects to undergo government assessment and public scrutiny in its every step.

### Project and Controversy

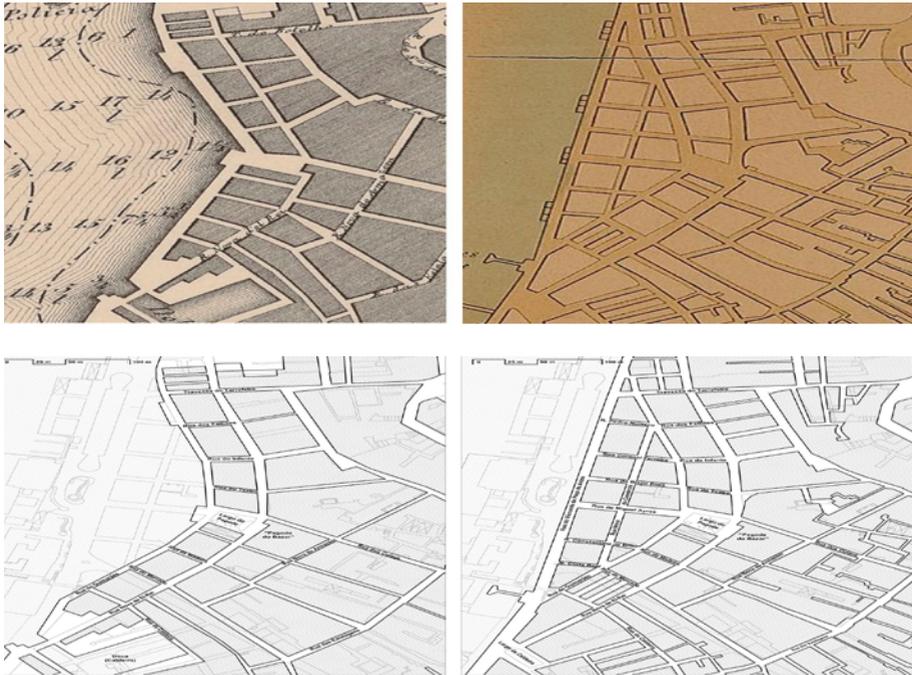
Figures 3 and 4 zoom-in on Silva's reclamation area. These are reinterpretations of the Macao historical maps of 1865–6 and 1889 (respectively Figures 1 and 2), superimposed on the city's 2015 cadastral map, so as to create a common morphological reference in order to enable a more accurate comparison between the 'before' and the 'after' stages.

The main idea in Silva's project is simply to close a curve in the Chinese Bazaar riverfront by drawing a straight line between its northern and southern points. As mentioned above, this project comes in the wake of



Figure 1. 'Macao com as Ilhas e Costas Adjacentes feita por Mr. W. A. Read, C. E. 1865–6'.

Figure 2. 'Planta da península de Macau na escala de 1 por 500. Macau, 15 de Março de 1889. Reduzida e desenhada por António Heitor, Condutor Civil, Obras Públicas de Macau'. Source: Archives of Macao, Macao SAR, PRC.



Figures 3 and 4. Reinterpretations of the 1865–6 and 1889 historical maps (respectively Figures 1 and 2), superimposed on Macao's 2015 cadastral map. Details featuring the 1877 Miguel Ayres da Silva reclamation area.

two previous reclamations schemes, carried out in the 1850s and 1860s, which had already expanded the old Bazaar's constructible land surface by approximately a third. This also established the principle of the waterfront main road topped by regular-shaped blocks.

Silva's proposition merely applies an orthogonal grid in this new 19,000 m<sup>2</sup> reclaimed surface, in which the waterfront line is the reference. There is a 10m wide main perpendicular street at the centre, connected to the Chinese Temple Square (Largo do Pagode) and aligned with the Bazaar Central Street (Rua dos Culaus), which Silva would later name after himself. The rest of the grid is composed of 6 m wide secondary streets, a longitudinal one named New Commerce Street (Rua Nova do Comércio), and five transversal ones, which would receive the names of the highest ranking colonial officers in charge at the time (allowing for a Pedro Nolasco Street, probably in honor of Silva's father), aligned as well as possible with the preexisting perpendicular streets.

By the end of summer 1877, construction was probably already under way, only to be halted by the administration one year later, on the grounds that Silva was breaching the concession contract. The complaint that led to this decision had been filed by the Public Works director right at the beginning of

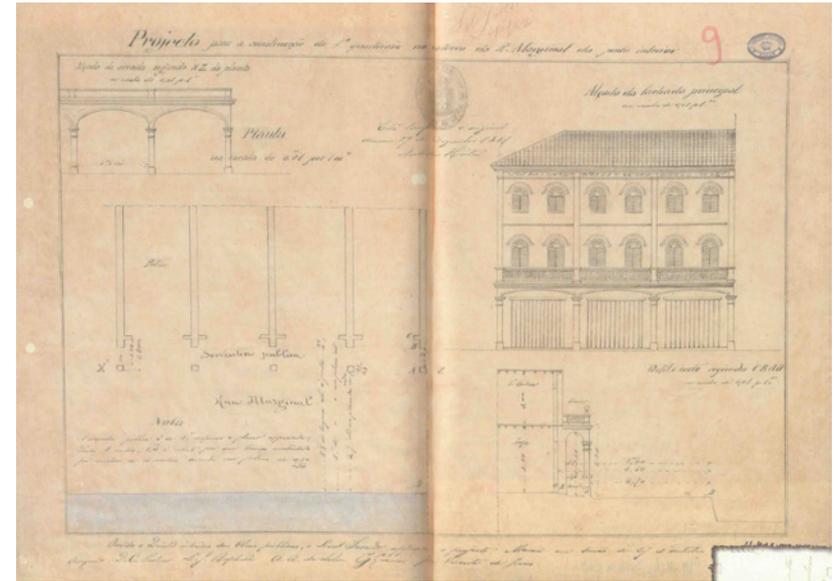


Figure 5. Plans, cross-sections and elevations for the projected commercial warehouses to be built in Silva's reclamation, submitted for approval by the Public Works Department on 29 December 1881. Source: Archives of Macao, Macao SAR, PRC.

the reclamation work, citing that Silva had deliberately started construction of the new river wall using a different technique than what had been established in the contract. Silva argued that he had only completed 10m of the wall in this manner, merely as an experiment. By the time the second Public Works complaint was finally taken into account by the administration and construction effectively halted, a 120m wall had already been erected. In other words, one third of the reclamation project was done.

The issue was not resolved until the summer 1879, when the governor published a new provincial ordinance establishing an amendment to the original contract. This effectively modified the construction system of the river wall to accommodate Silva's preference, with a 10-year deposit, meant to guarantee its safety and stability.<sup>8</sup> The governor later justified this action by arguing that it would be more costly to demolish and rebuild, with the technique favored by the Public Works Department, than to assign responsibility to the builder.<sup>9</sup> The ordinance also stated that no further alterations would be allowed.

After this, everything went smoothly, until the completion of the reclaimed area. The reception of the work and the order to continue with the urbanisation and building construction were again established by a provincial ordinance in March 1881<sup>10</sup>, after the approval of the plans for the projected commercial warehouses (Figure 5). In the first few months of 1882, however, a new controversy had arisen, prompting the governor to issue yet another

provincial ordinance, addressing the fact that Miguel Ayres da Silva had once again breached his contract.<sup>11</sup> The issue at stake this time was the clause stating that ‘all buildings overlooking the waterfront on the new reclamation site must be provided with regular arcades, following a uniform pattern.’

Indeed, the 1881 elevations show that Silva had at least considered putting up a narrow archway, supporting a small balcony on the first floor of his buildings (Figure 5). This design could be seen as a steel reinterpretation of the unified waterfront elevation the government had been trying to pursue since the 1870s, promoting the use of the public archway gallery. The fact is, that no archway was ever built. As had happened four years before, by the time the Public Works director filed its complaint, the streets and blocks had already been aligned, plots had been sold to Silva’s Chinese business partners, and construction was well under way. Again, the governor could only take note, and agree that the archways brought considerable nuisance to the waterfront road by limiting its width and demand some sort of reparation. Ever prepared, Silva had already put aside a convenient plot to build a much needed new police headquarters as compensation. Two years later, as councilman elect, he even managed to make a donation to City Senate of a brand new fish market appropriately situated on New Commerce Street.<sup>12</sup>

### Conclusion

“The spirit of our time is clearly one of replacing brute strength with intellectual strength; spear and sword fights with intellect conflicts; bayonets with debates. That is why we prefer negotiation instead of war; arguments instead of insults; our time’s way of thinking instead medieval time’s way of thinking. We understand the progress of civilization.<sup>13</sup>”

These words, spoken in 1840 by the great Portuguese politician and historian Alexandre Herculano, sum up the globalising mid-nineteenth-century philosophy. They exemplify the ideal that material and moral progress was being pursued in name of the betterment of mankind. At the scale of the empire, the same discourse brought a sense of auto-legitimacy to the colonial power, by appealing to the breaking down of barriers and the bringing together of communities through the development of communication routes and enabling it ‘to form a national space whose cohesion was guaranteed by the State’<sup>14</sup>, from the metropolis to the far-reaching overseas provinces.

In Macao, the ‘civilisational’ effort is mostly put into urban development as a means of establishing Portuguese hegemony over the territory. This effort, however, almost immediately has to measure up to the colonial government’s endemic lack of resources and consequently to its dependency

on local economic and social forces, and their inner dynamics. Thus, after enabling a first period of fairly autonomous city building by the Chinese entrepreneurs, the 1870s governments saw a new generation of Macanese, emancipated from the old ‘divided sovereignty’ system, and wanting to take their part as middlemen in the colonial effort.

In the end, the Public Works Department agents, despite their best efforts to enforce modernised and civilised city planning regulations, were reduced to mere observers of Silva’s controversies while they unfurled under the accommodating watch of imperial government, in a construction process that resonated profoundly with Macao’s century-old tradition of autonomous space appropriation. Notwithstanding, the result was indeed an all-new modern district, rationally designed and perfectly optimised, thus demonstrating that transition from bottom-up city building to the top-to-bottom model was quite a contested process, reflecting both the ambitions and the contradictions of colonial Macao.

### Notes

- 1 *Boletim da Província de Macau e Timor* 27 (7 July 1877), 109–10.
- 2 Jorge Pamplona Forjaz, *Famílias Macaenses* (Macao: Fundação Oriente, Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1996).
- 3 Francisco Vizeu Pinheiro, ‘Macao’s Coolie Trade: One City, Two Cultures, Three Communities. Social Harmony, Separate Development 35 (2010), 60–83.
- 4 Joseph Alexander von Hübner, *Promenade autour du monde* (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1871).
- 5 Hübner, *Promenade autour du monde*.
- 6 *Boletim da Província de Macau e Timor* 38 (23 September 1867), 224–6.
- 7 *Boletim da Província de Macau e Timor* 38 (23 September 1867), 224–6.
- 8 *Boletim da Província de Macau e Timor* 26 (28 June 1879), 138–9.
- 9 *Boletim da Província de Macau e Timor* 41 (11 October 1879), 251–2.
- 10 *Boletim da Província de Macau e Timor* 10 (5 March 1881), 61.
- 11 *Boletim da Província de Macau e Timor* 10 (11 March 1882), 78–9.
- 12 *Boletim da Província de Macau e Timor* 8 (23 February 1884), 82.
- 13 David Justino, *Fontismo: Liberalismo numa Sociedade Iliberal* (Lisboa: Publicações Dom Quixote, 2016).
- 14 Justino, *Fontismo*.

# THE POLITICAL AESTHETICS OF POSTMODERNISM: BETWEEN LATE SOCIALISM AND LATE CAPITALISM

Session chairs:

**Léa-Catherine Szacka**, University of Manchester

**Maroš Krivý**, Estonian Academy of Arts / Cambridge University

In 1983, Paolo Portoghesi, in *Postmodern, The Architecture of the Postindustrial Society*, connected the rise of postmodernism to the struggle of the Polish Solidarity (*Solidarność*) movement against bureaucracy and totalitarianism. He wrote: 'The architecture of our century opposes ideology to life, projects to reality.' While Portoghesi extracted architectural messages from a political field, authors in the East interpreted postmodern architecture in political terms. The aesthetic pluralism of Charles Jencks, whose *The Language of Postmodern Architecture* fascinated the circles of *samizdat* and *nomenklatura* alike, was a highly charged political notion for such diverse figures as Václav Havel, then a Czech dissident, or Alexander Ryabushin, then Secretary of the Union of Soviet Architects.

Prompting a particular bonding between design and ideology, the flourishing of postmodern aesthetics in the East and in the West was arguably connected to the shift from late socialism to late capitalism. Yet very few postmodern authors and architects would acknowledge their complicity with capitalist

expansion. Looking at examples of postmodern translations in both western and eastern countries in the 1980s and 1990s, this session will tackle the intricate relations between politics and aesthetics and the role these have played out in the development and global expansion of postmodernism in architecture. We are interested in the following questions:

What were the geopolitical dynamics of architectural postmodernism as its tenets were translated from socialist to capitalist contexts and back?

What was the political import of postmodernism's apparent return to life and reality? Was it an 'aesthetic instrument' of capitalism pure and simple, or was it a way of reinventing socialism?

How did such contrasting terms as totalitarianism and pluralism oscillate between political discourses and aesthetic domains?

How did late socialist architects understand, translate, and domesticate postmodernism, as the quintessential – to quote Jameson – 'cultural logic of late capitalism'?

How did the late socialist experience of eastern countries shape the work of postmodern architects and theorists in the West?

And finally, in what 'ghostly' forms (to refer to Reinhold Martin) has postmodernism endured since the apparent end of history in the 1990s?

## Provincializing Postmodernism: Appropriation and Transformation of Postmodern Tropes in Česká Lípa

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### Abstract

On 24 and 25 October 1980, an international jury led by Professor Herald Deilmann and including Kenneth Frampton, Richard Meier, and Rem Koolhaas, reviewed design proposals for a northwestern harbour district of Berlin, Tegel. The jury of the Tegel recreation centre competition – one of 21 competitions organized by the Internationale Bauausstellung-Berlin (International Building Exhibition), IBA'87 in the period between 1978–1987 – awarded the first place to Charles Moore, while a Czech team from Liberec (simply referred to as 'Stavoprojekt' in the exhibition catalogues) shared the second place with Ralph Erskine.

The Czechoslovak architects' participation in IBA was perhaps a token of plurality celebrated by the organizers, but both its inclusion in the IBA project and its architectural language open up a much larger question concerning the circulation of postmodern discourse and its constitutive entanglement with the Cold War. Relying on the IBA housing by architects involved in SIAL's Školka, as well as on their concurrent projects in Česká Lípa, this paper proposes that these architects produced their work in imaginary conversation with contemporary developments in the West. Even if one-sided and imaginary – in the sense that Benedict Anderson thought all communities were imagined – their conversation across geo-political contexts resulted in adaptations of various architectural 'sources' to Czechoslovak socialist reality.

While this paper is in many ways sympathetic to Fredric Jameson's formulation – in which postmodernism is a periodizing concept corresponding with a complex set of political, economic, and cultural circumstances – it precisely seeks to re-theorize the geopolitical premise at the base of his definition of postmodernism to include 'second world' production. If indeed imaginary conversations across 'the wall could be said to have been constitutive of late socialist architectural production, that would inevitably decentre (or provincialize, as Dipesh Chakrabarty might say) all definitions of postmodernism produced by late capitalism and its theorists.

## National in Form, Socialist in Content: Postmodern Architecture on the Soviet Periphery

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### Abstract

The final decades of the Soviet Union are widely referred to as 'The Era of Stagnation,' and yet this period also produced some of the most innovative Soviet architecture since the heady avant-garde days of the Revolution. Viktor Jorbenadze's 1985 Palace of Rituals in Tbilisi is an outstanding example of the genre: extravagant and otherworldly, it might appear as if from the pages of *Galaxy Science Fiction*. The Palace, however, embodies not only an aesthetic paradox, but also an ideological one: a cathedral in an atheist land, a lavish commission in a decade of economic torpor, and a dynamic integration of international influences by a supposedly insular regime. The Wedding Palace would appear to be the wrong building in the wrong place at the wrong time.

These seeming contradictions oblige us to rethink the Soviet experience and postmodernism as both a style and cultural condition. This paper argues that, in a dramatic departure from the modernist aesthetics of the 1960s, which had ignored local vernacular traditions, late Soviet architects like Jorbenadze explored designs 'national in form' (sensitive to local historic fabric) but also 'socialist in content' (reflective of Soviet values). With the communist future a thing of the past, Leonid Brezhnev's 'developed socialism' fostered and legitimized historicism in ways that redirected Soviet design culture, making engagement with the past (even national pasts) ideologically acceptable. The result was a dynamic, historically-inflected postmodern architecture that emerged from the cultural logic not of late capitalism but rather of late socialism – reviving and perhaps inverting the socialist realist artistic formula. A clearer understanding of postmodernism's provenance in the USSR complicates tidy narratives of the style as a global phenomenon.

## Contra the Late Socialist Vaudeville: Critiques of Postmodernism in East Germany

Torsten Lange,  
ETH Zurich

### Abstract

In the late 1970s, East German architects began to embrace postmodernism. Under the banners of experience, locality, and identity, they employed historical references and traditional urban typologies in their projects. Their aim was to counter environments that, for several years, had been criticized as monotonous, characterless, and disorienting. Despite sharing those concerns, architectural critics and theorists nonetheless remained rather cautious of the new, postmodern aesthetics. Among them was the philosopher Lothar Kühne (1931–1985). During the 1970s and 1980s, Kühne, who held a professorship at Humboldt University in East Berlin, became one of the most influential – if controversial – thinkers. He developed an aesthetic theory of architecture and design rooted in both Marxist ideology and poetics, which questioned ruling party doctrine and sought to salvage functionalism as legitimate principle for the communist future.

Focusing on Kühne's writings, this paper shows how the substitution of a working class utopian project with a real socialist present characterized by consumption and widespread cynicism formed the underlying object of his (and others') fierce critiques of postmodernism. Debates concerning the latter's validity within socialism played out against the backdrop of such prestigious urban design projects as the reconstruction of Friedrichstraße – the Neuer Friedrichstadtpalast (1984) as the project's centrepiece, in particular – whose superficial references to the mass culture and entertainment of the 1920s sought to appeal to popular taste.

Kühne's criticisms of postmodernism's 'meaningless shells', of trivialization and pleasure without memory, were framed – perhaps unsurprisingly – in historical terms of class struggle and the antagonism between the bourgeois capitalist and socialist systems. Yet, the paper asks to what extent those critiques, rather than merely being directed at the ideological opponent, have been aimed at what could be called, with reference to Fredric Jameson's critical analysis as well as Alexei Yurchak's anthropological studies of socialist everyday life, the culture of late socialism.

## Postmodernism and Neoliberalism in Santiago de Chile in the 1980s

Daniel Talesnik,  
TU München

### Abstract

This paper explores the ways in which architecture, particularly architecture influenced by postmodernism, became emblematic of the development of neoliberalism in Chile before and after the national economic crisis of 1982.

In the early 1970s, Chile had become an unlikely Cold War site, and with the help of the United States, the threat represented by the democratic election of Salvador Allende, a Marxist candidate, was violently suppressed in 1973. In the aftermath of the coup, one key aspect of American influence was the implementation of economic theories developed by a group of economists that came to be known as the 'Chicago Boys': Chilean students of Milton Friedman who became extremely influential in the reorganization of the country's economy during Pinochet's dictatorship.

Despite excellent scholarship on the economic side of the equation, Chilean architectural production during this period has yet to be adequately interpreted. If Chile was the first country to democratically elect a Marxist candidate, it later became the first testing ground for the completely opposite political and economic project of neoliberalism, allowing Friedman's acolytes to play Monopoly with the country through deregulation, privatization, cutting public expenditure for social services, etc. Inscribed in such logics were changes made to Santiago's planning legislations that favoured the development of a series of key high-rise buildings. Neoliberal agendas brought the corporate office tower to Latin America, which generated a lively discussion of stylistic issues, including the evaluation and promotion by some architects of postmodernist ideas.

By investigating the discursive tropes that influenced the design of a set of buildings in Santiago in this period and examining how architectural postmodernism as a movement and/or style filtered into Chilean architectural culture, this paper asks to what extent architectural postmodernism was an ideological correlative to neoliberalism in the context of post-1973 Chile.

## The Prince and The Pauper: The Politics of Stirling's Irony

Joseph Bedford,  
Virginia Tech

### Abstract

In a 1971 lecture at The Cooper Union, Peter Eisenman argued that James Stirling's Leicester Engineering Building was exemplary for its capacity to invert the expected meanings of materials common to the Modern Movement. More than a decade later, Leicester's 'double-coding' would lead one critic to proclaim the building's 'Postmodern Role.' It has since become commonplace to see Leicester as marking the end of Stirling's earnest faith in the Modern Movement as a project of social emancipation and to see the Harlequin-like Olivetti training school as marking the beginning of his role as postmodern ironist.

Stirling's ironic turn has often been attributed to either the mounting crisis of Modernism in the atmosphere of faltering economics and his mourning over the death of the welfare state, or to the architect's break-up with James Gowan and thus his liberation from Gowan's more functionalist pieties.

This paper, however, argues that Stirling's irony was a function of his biography and, in particular, his encounter with the problem of class mobility in the face of the rigid hierarchies of British social life. As such, Stirling's life and career was symbolic of a broader generational experience in Britain, in the later third of the twentieth century. The paper shows, in particular, that Stirling's irony was triggered by his marriage, in 1966, to Mary Shand, a member of the British aristocracy, and family relation of Camilla Shand, the future lover of Prince Charles. After 1966, Stirling was forever curious about his ascent from pauper to prince, and yet forever fatally excluded from becoming true aristocracy. Thus, it could be said that the double coding of his aesthetic language was a mediation of the double pull of high and low culture in the architect's own life, and in British society in general.

## CENTRALIZATIONS AND TERRITORIES IN THE ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTION OF THE SOCIALIST WORLD

Session chairs:

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In the twentieth century, the architectural production of most state-socialist countries underwent significant processes of centralization. These were manifest in many ways: through the reorganization of architectural labour into centralized systems of design institutes; through the integration of design organizations with the construction industry and other vertical institutional structures; through the reinforcement of the capital city as a model urban and architectural project; through the centralization of architectural theory and discourse with the regulation of architectural education and the establishment of unions, academies, and journals. These and other aspects of centralization were inextricably tied to a complementary trajectory of territorialisation at a vast scale. This tendency is visible, for example, in the ambition of centralized design institutes to deliver projects to distant territories; in the reproduction of central hierarchies at regional and local scales; through the production of norms with significance across climatic zones; among others.

On the other hand, there was a highly ambivalent insistence on integrating particular national or regional traits in an effort to articulate the universalist agenda of centrally administered socialist modernization. The application of diverse

architectural languages and local resonances was coupled with contested identity politics in states with a complex multicultural constitution. Over time, and by spreading over the national and transnational territories, centralized systems of architectural production and urbanism integrated and created ever more experts and institutions on the local level, sometimes generating centripetal tendencies in turn.

## The Unsettling Norms: Identity Politics in China's Search for Socialist Architecture with National Form

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### Abstract

This paper examines China's socialist architecture as a transnational undertaking that reflects the imperial dynamics of the socialist world and the complications in the transfer of international knowledge to national and regional contexts. It focuses on the 1950s, the period immediately after the Communist Party came to power, when 'socialist in content and national in form' was introduced as the official policy to direct art and architecture production in China. This official policy provoked debates among leading Chinese architects. They could neither reach a consensus about a definition of socialist architecture by applying ideological terms (such as form and content) and dialectical materialism to architectural criticism nor about national form that inevitably involved a reevaluation of traditional Chinese architecture, which was further complicated by regional differences.

This paper investigates such debates centered around socialist architecture with national form in China and their impact on the socialist construction projects during the 1950s. It addresses the issues of translatability of architectural languages, the contested identity politics in the shaping of new architectural norms, and the broader historical transition of modern Chinese architecture across the mid-twentieth century.

## Revisiting Socialist Baltic Regionalism: Between Local Myths and Critical Approaches

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### Abstract

In Soviet geographical and political contexts, the three Soviet Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) were presented as one entity – ‘the Baltics’ (or *Pribaltika*, as the region was known in Russian). The architecture of the Baltic region has been seen as exceptional within the Soviet Union, appropriating western cultural models much faster and with greater passion. It is commonly accepted that the Soviet occupation and forced introduction of Socialist Realism in the late 1940s and early 1950s drastically interrupted the development of the successful modernist schools of the Baltic States. However, it is evident that the Soviet doctrine of ‘socialist in content and national in form’ was rather well adapted in the 1950s in the Baltic republics, specifically in the creation (and continuation) of national Art Deco traditions. Even the revival of modernism in the early 1960s was closely connected to national narratives (in public art and interior decoration) and the search for a national expression of modernism (in the use of local materials and inspiration from Finnish regionalism). The 1970s saw a growing number of attempts to preserve regional identity in architecture based on the vernacular.

This paper revisits the nature of Soviet Baltic regionalism, questioning whether it was a rather common reaction to the monotony of standardized socialist ‘boxes’, a search for a (modern) national identity within the Soviet Union, a continuation of the search for national style that was started already in the pre-war National States, or a conflict within the modernist school leading to the formation of specific Soviet Baltic regionalism. The research is based on a historiographical review, material held by the Lithuanian National State Archives (LCVA), interviews with architects in Lithuania, and an overview of the contemporary Soviet press.

## Adapting Soviet Prefabricated Housing for the Regions

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### Abstract

The most evident and peculiar feature of the Soviet mass housing programme was its totality – its push to total equality and, in Mark B. Smith’s words, its ‘effect on everyone’s lives, not just the poorest’. In 1957, the main goal of the Soviet housing programme was to provide each family with an economical and comfortable apartment. Considering the vast geography of the country and the variety of the population, the families eligible to receive an apartment were diverse in their size, lifestyle, socio-economic, and ethnic origins. The architectural problem was to find adequate technical means to address this variety in the regions.

This paper discusses how this task was addressed within the housing construction sector by scrutinizing one of the most widespread Soviet mass-produced housing series: the typology I-464. Designed in 1958 according to universal normative documents (‘Construction rules and regulations’ or SNIps), it was replicated in various regions of the Soviet Union to accommodate thousands of families. Factories for the production of I-464 units were rapidly disseminated across the most distant regions of the USSR, where their production lines were adapted to make this typology fit with local building materials, climate, and seismic conditions.

This paper discusses two mechanisms of adaptation of this typology: (1) application of existing design in the process of ‘tying in’ (*pryvyzaka*) and (2) ‘experimental design’, which was a process of development of new building types for their further inclusion into the nomenclature of the typology. The experimental designs carried out by scientific institutes within the growing body of expertise addressed local demographic variables and the everyday life of future residents. Investigating this process reveals great architectural flexibility in this system of prefabrication and, subsequently, demonstrates how the corresponding norms were translated into new contexts, forming a basis for comfort in a minimal dwelling.

# Architects Displaced: Making Architecture at the Periphery in Communist Romania

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## Abstract

The centralisation of the architectural production in communist Romania served the purpose of equalising development across the national territory, given the considerable economic disparities and large cultural differences between the various historic regions. The paper addresses the centralised system of architectural production by looking at it from the margins and from below: focusing on peripheral design institutes and on architects.

During the first decade of the regime, almost all architects and all design institutes were based in the capital Bucharest. Decentralisation and regional differentiation became important issues after the late 1950s, when the system of architectural design expanded into the territory. A flow of 'human resource' was pumped through the system, from the centre to the periphery. Architects became the agents of a development that was intended to be both nationally systemised and locally specific. Originating from all over the country, they were trained in a single school in Bucharest, they were also partially trained in three regional schools during the 1970s, then redistributed across the territory. Some of them were actually displaced to marginal locations; others worked for distant places from central positions.

The paper focuses on the following issues: how did the territorial distribution of architects work and how did they perceive it? Were there any patterns in the architects' mobility across the country? What kind of projects were drawn up locally and what kind of design activities never left the centre? Have peripheral institutes and local schools of architecture been instrumental in producing a local specificity in architecture, or was it also rather centrally produced?

## Keywords

Centralisation, territory, architects, communism, Romania.

## Introduction: Centralisation as Concentration

The paper addresses the system of architectural design in communist Romania in its relation to the national territory. We look at this system from the margins and from below, focusing on peripheral design institutions (the regional and later county design institutes) and on architects (their formation, mobility inside the country and territorial reach of their practice).

Territorial diffusion is an important issue for understanding this system. It concerns not only the architectural projects built all over the country, but also the design institutes established deep into the national territory and the territorial spread of the architectural profession.

In most of the existing literature, historians focus mainly on the centre, as they strive to establish causality in the source of political decision. What happened in the margins of the system is considered to be the predictable effects of central decisions. However, looking closer at peripheral institutions might reveal a different picture, as architects at the bottom of the system are able to partially amend and escape the firmness of central control.

After the first decade of the communist regime, the system of architectural design in Romania was not only centralised, but actually concentrated in one single place: 26 design institutes of various profiles were based in the capital Bucharest, employing almost all the architects in the country. In 1957, only 4% of all construction designers (architects and engineers) in Romania were active outside the capital.<sup>1</sup>

There are two reasons for this extreme concentration. First, there were very few architects in Romania in the first place. In the mid-1930s, there were a little more than 500 members of the Architects' Body, 69% of which were located in Bucharest,<sup>2</sup> the only large city in the country. Second, the professional body was subjected to repression and cleansing, and thus radically remade by the new regime. In the first 15 years of the communist regime, a relatively large number of architects were jailed for political reasons.<sup>3</sup> In the only school of architecture in the country, candidates with 'unhealthy origins' were rejected at the admissions exam; after admission, students themselves assured control of the class, as 'commandos' of the Worker Youth Union (UTM – Uniunea Tineretului Muncitor) decided who of their colleagues should be expelled.<sup>4</sup>

In 1952, the liberal practice of architecture was prohibited and architects could only practice as state employees. The system of state design institutes was built from scratch and grew gradually. It started with the Project Institute for Constructions (IPC – Institutul de Proiectări în Construcții), which then divided in two: the Project-Bucharest Institute (IPB – Institutul Proiect-București) and the State Design Institute for Towns and Regions (ISPROR – Institutul de Stat pentru Proiectarea Orașelor și Regiunilor, later called Central Systematisation Institute for Towns and Regions, ICSOR – Institutul Central pentru Sistematizarea Orașelor și Regiunilor). The latter worked 'for the rest of the country';<sup>5</sup> the national territory – the 'province' – was just a hinterland to the capital.

During the 1950s, architects and engineers travelled from Bucharest 'to all corners of the country'. They could not design everything, only 60–70% of it; the rest of the necessary design work was covered by the technical services of local popular councils, mostly with 'underqualified' technicians.

This constant travel throughout the territory was by no means efficient, as architects made ‘inevitably superficial documentations’, ‘consuming precious time and requiring pretty important expenses’.<sup>6</sup> In the name of efficiency, an expansion of the system was projected onto the territory.

#### Decentralisation: Regional Institutes after 1957

‘The harmonious development of the regions’ and ‘a more rational distribution of the design forces throughout the territory of the country’<sup>7</sup> became important issues in the political discourse. In 1957, each of the 16 regions received a Regional Design Institute (IRP – Institut Regional de Proiectare) subordinated to the regional popular council. After 1960 they were renamed Directions of Systematisation, Architecture and Constructions Design (DSAPCs – Direcții de Sistematizare, Arhitectură și Proiectare în Construcții). The director of the DSAPC was at the same time, by law, the chief architect of the region. In their first years as IRPs, these institutes acted mostly as ‘transmission belts’ for centrally generated architecture and focused mainly on local housing projects. After 1960 they gradually took over more complex design tasks; nevertheless, the most important projects were still completed in Bucharest. Type designs, urban plans and representative architecture remained the prerogative of the centre. (Figure 1–2.)

The party disposed that architects and engineers should be transferred from the capital to these new regional institutes. However, their staff-establishment plans filled up very slowly; the worst staffed were the architecture studios. Architects had a weak position compared to engineers, whose profession was better represented in almost all institutes and especially in marginal locations. In the majority of regions, the director of the design institute was an engineer, because there was no architect with enough prestige to take the job; therefore, many regions had engineers acting as ‘chief architects’ (e.g. in the region Cluj). In many cities too, the chief architect position was occupied by an engineer (e.g. Cluj and Timișoara). Architects also had a notorious ‘low prestige’ and ‘had little to say’ in the advisory bodies of the regional popular councils.<sup>8</sup>

Architects’ reluctance to displacements in marginal places was quite strong. In spite of the perception of ‘an exodus’,<sup>9</sup> they were in fact barely enough in the regional institutes to keep them functioning at all. From the marginal regions, only complaints could be heard.<sup>10</sup> The institute in Iași (the regional capital of Moldova) for instance had 312 employees, of which 24 were architects (7,7%) in 1963.<sup>11</sup> The Architects’ Union (UA) was criticised that it did not do enough to persuade experienced architects to leave for the regions and take over executive positions there; some suggested that architects should be materially stimulated to move into the provinces.<sup>12</sup>

Eventually, the obvious conclusion was that, in order to fill the regional institutes, architects had to be produced rather than simply displaced, and the school of architecture start to produce about 200 graduates a year;



Figure 1. Employees of the DSAPC Cluj at a 1st of May demonstration in Cluj, early 1960s. Source: DSAPC Cluj Archive.



Figure 2. Exhibition of DSAPC Cluj’s recent achievements, 1962. Source: DSAPC Cluj Archive. Photo by N. Kulin.

it was mostly them who would be sent to the margins, by governmental assignment. ‘Professional youth’ characterised the regional institutes, as 80–90% of their architects were mostly young and inexperienced.<sup>13</sup>

Career opportunities, such as leading design positions and interesting projects, were many in these locations, and this became their main ‘carrot’ for attracting young graduates. One could become directly chief of project (like in Iași) or even chief architect of a city (like in Stalin-City [Brașov] or Suceava).<sup>14</sup> The ‘stick’ was for those who have fallen in political disgrace, who

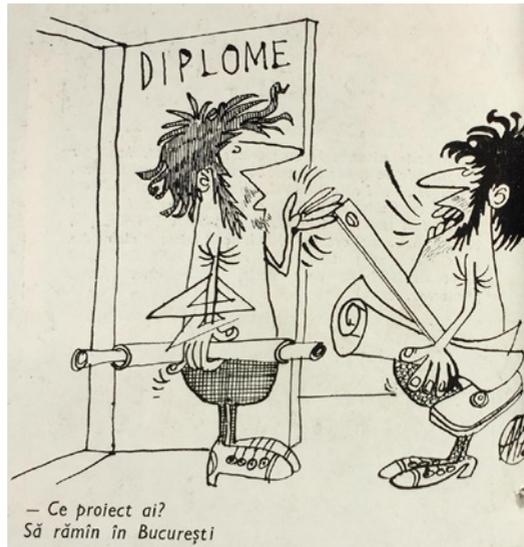


Figure 3. [Diploma project submission] 'What project do you have?' / 'To stay in Bucharest'.  
Source: *Arhitectura* 5 (1972), 48, drawing by Adrian Andronic.

had no other chance than to take the assignment to places like 'Moldova Bottom' ('Fundul Moldovei'); in the collective imaginary, as in reality, Moldova was the most underdeveloped region of the country. Only politically appropriate UTM members, regardless their academic performance, could take the most desired assignments at graduation, to IPB or ICSOR in Bucharest.<sup>15</sup>

Decentralisation was not only territorial, but also by specialty or area of expertise; each ministry developed its own design studio. The initial Institute for Industrial Projects (IPI – Institutul de Proiectări Industriale) multiplied on industrial branches into numerous specialised institutes. By 1967, almost 600 architects (of the about 2000 in total) worked in industrial design centres or institutes,<sup>16</sup> most of which were based in Bucharest and made projects for the entire country.

What is maybe unexpected in a regime at the peak of repression is the fact that many graduates did not comply to their assignment 'in the province'. An architect in Galați complained that people assigned there 'simply don't show up or they leave after one year'.<sup>17</sup> Many of the graduates managed in to find workplaces in Bucharest on their own, through relatives and connections. (Figure 3.)

One notable exception of an architect with some notoriety, who displaced himself voluntarily in to a marginal place, was Nicolae Porumbescu. 'An architect should be tied to the place where he builds, just like the agricultural specialist is tied to the land where he has to work,' he said. 'You go to Suceava?' – 'people ask you, like if you would go to some colony'. But

Suceava 'is not a colony, as it seems too often to ensue from this question. It is just one of the 16 regions of our faterland, where people work and built as well [as anywhere else]'. Porumbescu moved out of Bucharest precisely in order to escape marginalisation, reach important commissions and become visible on the national scene. In the town of Suceava, a young graduate may design a central square, while in Bucharest people have to fight for commissions and author titles, he claimed. Architects should rebel against the subordination they have to endure from too strict a hierarchy in a central institute, which 'undermines and flattens their possibilities of expression'.<sup>18</sup> Porumbescu's prestige and career would indeed soar precisely with his displacement in to the margins, as he would develop an original discourse based on local specificity in architecture.

### Diffusion: County Institutes after 1968

A new administrative reform in 1968 multiplied the 16 regions of the national territory to 39 counties. Each county capital established a design institute or design centre. County design 'institutes' (IPJ – Institut de Proiectare Județean) continued in principle the existing DSAPCs in the former regional capitals, while the county design 'centres' (CPJ – Centru de Proiectare Județean) were smaller and usually located in the newly created county capitals. The institute(s) 'for the rest of the country' in Bucharest continued to do the important projects for the less important places, sometimes in collaboration with the local institutes.

The diffusion of design capabilities into the territory was made in order to bring them closer to where investments were – especially housing investments, which were the most important task of local institutes from the very beginning. By 1970, 85% of all state housing in the country was built in the counties.<sup>19</sup> In 1971, the National Program of Systematisation was launched; the national territory became an explicit object of systemic design.<sup>20</sup> The well-structured diffusion of architects into the territory should have mirrored the systemic organisation of the localities network.

Architects were still too few, although their number was considerably higher than a decade before. In 1968, there were 2000 architects in Romania, to a population of 19 million; this was a small figure, if compared to Bulgaria for instance, with 7000 architects to a population of 8 million.<sup>21</sup> However, it was not only the overall number of architects, but especially their faulty distribution throughout the territory that was the problem. Although the percentage of architects outside the capital had increased from 20% to 33% in a decade,<sup>22</sup> their total absence in several county capitals stood out as a new setback. Counties in Moldova were especially in great need of architects.<sup>23</sup> At the western end of the country too, in Bihor County, there were only 13 architects for 615,000 inhabitants.<sup>24</sup>

In March 1970, Nicolae Ceaușescu himself gave indications concerning the dispersion of architects in the counties.<sup>25</sup> From 1971 on, all new graduates

would be sent into the counties, with very few exceptions. In order to distribute them to the smaller less attractive newer county capitals, not only Bucharest, but also the larger regional towns like Cluj or Timișoara became 'closed cities' for fresh graduates.

Once again, it was not only the displacement, but the production of new architects that was to assure a better diffusion of the profession into the territory. The decentralisation of architectural training became an issue. Even if the single architecture school in Romania, the Ion Mincu Architecture Institute in Bucharest (IAIM – Institutul de Arhitectură Ion Mincu București) recruited students from all over the country, the fact that they were all trained and lived for at least six years in Bucharest made them reluctant to leave after graduation.<sup>26</sup> The access of certain social categories to the architecture school was also limited; as Ascanio Damian (the rector of IAIM during the 1960s) remarked, there were only 12 sons of peasants among the 1300 students at IAIM; not only a better territorial recruitment, but also better 'social recruitment' was needed.<sup>27</sup> After Ceaușescu's indications in March 1970, concerning the decentralisation of architectural training, three new schools of architecture were opened in Cluj, Iași and Timișoara. The three 'provincial' schools functioned for about a decade (1970–82). Their creation was also the occasion for introducing the two levels education and the three-year trained architect ('conductor arhitect') – a kind of 'operational architect', needed in places of lesser importance, 'in countless agglomerations which do not aspire to recruiting an architect with superior training and whose absence they do not experience with acuity', in Damian's words.<sup>28</sup> Eventually, the decentralisation of architectural training did not challenge the superiority of the centre; it only provided an inferior kind of basic training in the margins, for the margins.

#### Centrally Defined Regional Specificity

Both moments of institutional decentralisation, in 1957 and 1968, were accompanied by a political and professional discourse on the need of regional and local specificity in architecture. It was however only at the UA plenary in February 1967 that the specificity discourse became mainstream, and clearly start defining the architectural expression. This discourse was a central product, as the theoretical debate around it was almost exclusively led among architects in central institutes.

Although Romania had regions with very different architectural traditions, and now even local architectural communities, the issue of regional specificity in architecture was defined in Bucharest for the rest of the national territory. In 1969, for instance, UA organised a competition for directive type projects for rural houses in three regional provinces, Oltenia, Transylvania and Bucovina; all prizes went to architects in Bucharest, none to a county institute in those regions.<sup>29</sup> The new political-administrative and cultural buildings in the fresh county capitals, which conspicuously



Figure 4. The National Theatre in Tg. Mureș. Architect Nicolae Săvescu, 1969–74. Photo by Dana Vais.

displayed the new 'specific' architectural language, were designed almost exclusively by architects in the capital. This explains very well why the notion of 'local' and 'regional' specificity rapidly became 'national specificity' in the architectural discourse of the early 1970s.

Constantin Săvescu, for instance, who worked for the Institute for Studies and Projects for Systematisation, Architecture and Typification in Bucharest (ISART – Institutul de Studii și Proiecte pentru Sistematie, Arhitectură și Tipizare) had never even visited Tg. Mureș before receiving the commission for the National Theatre there.<sup>30</sup> (Figure 4.) Cezar Lăzărescu, who designed the centre of Pitești with the State Institute for Constructions, Architecture and Systematisation in Bucharest (ISCAS – Institutul de Stat pentru Construcții, Arhitectură și Sistematie), was criticised for his total indifference for the local needs there.<sup>31</sup> Mircea Alifanti, professor at IAIM in Bucharest, designed the Political-Administrative Centre in Baia Mare truly inspired by the local architectural tradition, but still like a passing visitor from afar.<sup>32</sup> Nicolae Vlădescu, who worked for the Project Institute Carpați in Bucharest (the special design institute of the party) developed a series of culture houses for different corners of the country (Alexandria, Oradea, Tîrgoviște), all displaying versions of the 'specific' style.

Again, Nicolae Porumbescu with his important contribution to this notion might look like an exception, but he was not. Born, raised and trained in Bucharest, he displaced himself to Suceava and developed his discourse on specificity from there. But, he too defined it in generic national terms.<sup>33</sup> His architectural expression was indeed made for the historical region of Bucovina (to which Suceava belongs); but then he 'exported' it as such in Baia Mare and Satu Mare, which are in regions with different traditions (Maramureș and Sătmar); the subtler regional differences were lost even to him, who seemingly dwelt on them.

These kinds of horizontal transfers, from a regional or county centre into another, with different traditions, was indeed a familiar practice, albeit to a lesser extent: Porumbescu from the Faculty of Constructions in Iași designed the civic centre of Satu Mare, with the local design centre there; the Faculty of Constructions in Cluj designed a multi-use sports hall in the town of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej;<sup>34</sup> the design institutes of the counties Cluj and Mureș adapted large panel housing types from their 'colleagues in Bacău'<sup>35</sup> etc. After the first decentralisation in 1957, architects claimed they had been left behind 'the centralisation of the past';<sup>36</sup> in truth, after the second decentralisation (or rather territorial diffusion) of 1968, the centralisation of architectural design became only deeper and more effective in its integrating effects.

### Conclusion: Return to the Centre and Dissolution

The institutional system of architectural design reached its peak in the late 1970s. After 1977, the new centre of Bucharest would little by little absorb the resources of the national territory, which became one hinterland of the capital again. Resources were scarce, due to the rapid degradation of the economy. Architects were still too few; there were a little more than 4000 practicing architects in the country<sup>37</sup> and the (again) single school of architecture reduced the admission figure to 55–60 students per year in the early 1980s. The flow of architects was reversed; many would be displaced from the county institutes to projects in the capital, some even enrolled in the army, so that they could refuse the temporary transfer to Bucharest. Central control seemed to have reached a climax.

However, during the 1980s, in relation to the general scarcity of resources, the system of architectural production became more arbitrary, personalised and informal. Historian Alex Răuță showed how various civic centres in the country were achieved (or not) according to the local prime party secretaries personal capacities to obtain resources from the centre.<sup>38</sup> Personal relationships were decisive and subterfuges became the norm, with the complicity of architects and political responsables alike.

Institutes in the country reported falsified figures and distortions of reality. One illustrative example is how the building of the Cardiovascular Clinic in Cluj (today the Heart Institute) (Figure 5) was achieved in 1987–8.<sup>39</sup> Establishing a heart surgery clinic was the ambition of the Prime Secretary of the County Party Committee (who was also the president of the County Council). From the mid-1980s on, in order to save resources for the constructions sites in Bucharest, any building outside the capital – except housing – was put on halt; such a clinic would have required special permission from the top of the party leadership. Therefore, the clinic was submitted for approval as a project for 'housing young doctors'. The building received the exterior appearance of a block of flats, with loggias and domestic-like windows. The architects made two projects within the same



Figure 5. The Cardiovascular Clinic, Cluj. Architects Sorin Scripcariu and Gheorghe Vais, 1987–8. Photo by Dana Vais.

envelope: one of housing for the advisory body in Bucharest and one for the actual building on the construction site in Cluj.

Such absurd architectural deceptions had the twisted inner logic of a local escape from the oppressive central control of an authority in dissolution. So far, the evolution of the institutional system of architectural design in relation to the national territory – from literal centrality to decentralisation to diffusion – increased control over how architecture was produced. Even the notion of 'local specificity' was used to the effect of national integration in architecture. By growth and expansion, central authority was never challenged; if anything, decentralisation and diffusion increased the functional unity of the overall system. However, once resources were exhausted, dissolution followed. In the last decade of communist rule, this became most visible from the margins and from below, with architects (never entirely compliant) and peripheral institutions escaping control.

### Notes

- 1 'Pentru o mai bună repartizare a forțelor de proiectare,' *Arhitectura RPR* 2 (1957), 2.
- 2 'Tabloul Arhitecților Diplomați,' (November 1934), facsimiled in *Arhitectura* 3–4 (2016), 110–9.
- 3 Vlad Mitric-Ciupe, *Arhitecții români și detenția politică 1944–1964. Între destin concentraționar și vocație profesională* (București: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2013).
- 4 Mihai Enescu, 'Scurt jurnal de amintiri, în Uniunea Arhitecților din România,' in Viorica Iuga-Curea (ed.), *Arhitecți în timpul dictaturii. Amintiri* (București: Simetria, 2005), 96.
- 5 Paraschiva Iugu, 'O viață, o pasiune,' in Iuga-Curea (ed.), *Arhitecți în timpul dictaturii*, 156.
- 6 'Pentru o mai bună repartizare...,' 2.
- 7 'Să îmbunătățim munca arhitecților în toate regiunile țării,' *Arhitectura RPR*

- 8–9 (1958), 4–5; ‘Pentru o mai bună repartizare...,’ 2.
- 8 ‘Concluziile plenarei a V-a a UA din RPR,’ *Arhitectura RPR* 1 (1959), 14–5; Nicolae Litvin, ‘Fiecare oraș își are un profil specific,’ *Arhitectura* 1 (1966), 17.
- 9 Miruna Stroe, *Locuirea între proiect și decizie politică. România 1954–1965* (București: Simetria, 2015), 66.
- 10 Ion Miclescu, ‘Doi ani de activitate rodnică a institutelor regionale de proiectare,’ *Arhitectura RPR* 3 (1959), 2–3.
- 11 Nicolae Vericeanu and Ovidiu Alexievici, ‘Iași,’ *Arhitectura* 3 (1973), 27–8.
- 12 ‘Ședința plenară lărgită a comitetului de conducere al UA din RPR,’ *Arhitectura RPR* 1–2 (1958), 4.
- 13 Adrian Mahu, ‘Aspecte și tendințe actuale în activitatea de proiectare în județul Argeș,’ *Arhitectura* 2 (1973), 3; ‘Să îmbunătățim...,’ 4.
- 14 Miclescu, ‘Doi ani de activitate rodnică...,’ 3.
- 15 Eugenia Greceanu, ‘Uniunea Arhitecților din România,’ in Iuga-Curea (ed.), *Arhitecți în timpul dictaturii*, 123.
- 16 Ladislau Adler, ‘Consfătuirea consacrată activității de proiectare în domeniul construcțiilor,’ *Arhitectura* 1 (1967), 67.
- 17 ‘A doua conferință pe țară a Uniunii Arhitecților din RPR. Discuții,’ *Arhitectura* 3 (1965), 22–43.
- 18 Nicolae Porumbescu in ‘A doua conferință...,’ 36–7.
- 19 ‘Argeș, Mureș, Brașov, Prahova, Cluj, Ilfov,’ *Arhitectura* 2 (1973), 2.
- 20 Mircea Possa, ‘Dezvoltarea sistemelor de localități în România,’ *Arhitectura* 3 (1978), 13–4.
- 21 Nicolae Nedelescu, ‘Nu proiecte tip, ci doar proiecte directive,’ *Arhitectura* 3 (1968), 16–7.
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## Dialectics of Centrality in the Global Cold War

Łukasz Stanek,  
University of Manchester

### Abstract

In 1972, a representative of colonel Gaddafi confessed to the envoy of Nicolae Ceaușescu a preference for Romanian construction companies over Soviet ones, because of Libyan concerns about Soviet hegemony in the region. This statement pointed at a dynamic that defined much of the mobility of architecture from socialist countries during the Cold War, a dynamic which hardly reflected the received vision of the socialist world consisting of satellites revolving around the Soviet Union at its center. Rather, centrality in this world needs to be understood as dialectical: the capacity of the centre to concentrate, aggregate, attract, and integrate went hand in hand with its power to repel, disperse, fragment, and stir competition.

In this paper, I argue that export contracts from socialist countries offer a privileged vantage point for studying this dynamic. I will show that the Soviet Union was not always the most prominent actor among socialist countries in their work abroad. This argument will be made by looking at instances of collaboration and competition between architects, design institutes, and construction companies from socialist countries in four places during the global Cold War: Accra (Ghana) under Kwame Nkrumah (1957–1966), Lagos (Nigeria) under military governments (1969–1979), Baghdad (Iraq) from the coup of Qasim to the first Gulf war (1958–1990), and Abu Dhabi (UAE) during the last decade of the Cold War.

This overview will show that actors with little political leverage, fewer economic resources, modest technological offerings, and less cultural cachet were often preferred by local governments over those coming from the Soviet Union as the center of the socialist world. I will argue that the peripheral position of Bulgarian, Polish, and Romanian actors and its corollary, such as flexibility and adaptability, made these actors highly instrumental, and often favoured, within development roadmaps of local administrators, planners, and decision makers in West Africa and the Middle East.

# THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE NON-WESTERN WORLD: NORMS AND FORMS OF 'DEVELOPMENT' PROGRAMMES

Session chairs:

**Tom Avermaete**, Delft University of Technology

**Samia Henni**, Princeton University

Immediately after its establishment in October 1945, the United Nations (UN) founded the World Bank Group in order to invest in non-western countries, boost their economic growth, and channel their modernization projects. With the gradual collapse of European colonial empires – which stimulated the creation of the Non- Aligned Movement – new states joined the UN and large-scale 'development' programmes were launched. Under the header of technical 'assistance', 'cooperation', or 'aid', these programmes seem to have favoured western urban planning policies and politics. Yet, what exactly did these programmes consist of and how did they operate? To what extent did these 'development' programmes affect the politico-economic sovereignty of non-western countries? And how were western values mediated, but also challenged and remoulded by the so-called 'receivers' of 'development' in the non-western world?

This session aims to address these questions and to explore the relationship between the UN's financial investments, political significances, and planning measures in Africa, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia during the Cold War. The objective is to investigate the role of the UN's planning

and financial bodies in the making of western post-war international architectural and planning networks and organizations, on the one hand; and to scrutinize the roots of 'development' strategies and their impacts on the consolidation of newly independent states, on the other hand. Considering the 2016 decision of the World Bank to eliminate the term 'developing' from its official vocabulary, the session also intends to question the purpose of the UN taxonomies.

We seek papers that critically deconstruct the involvement of architects and planners in specific UN endeavours in non-western countries, including international seminars, conferences, competitions, housing policies, infrastructure designs, and rural and urban planning. Of special interest are papers that disclose how particular projects or built environments had obeyed or disobeyed to UN 'development' directives and expose the multifaceted impacts of such programmes at national, transnational and international levels. We welcome papers that demonstrate a method for analysing architecture and planning projects in historically, politically, economically, and geographically specific processes of UN 'development' programmes.

## ‘A World Picture’?: The UN’s Audio-Visual Apparatus for Mediating Habitat, 1976

Felicity D. Scott,  
Columbia University

### Abstract

Preparing for *Habitat: The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements*, Maurice Strong, Secretary General of the UN Environment Program (UNEP), proposed to his governing council that conventional conference reports and verbal presentations be supplemented by audio-visual techniques at the 1976 conference. If the initial idea was to produce a multi-media exhibition demonstrating ‘mutual aid’ strategies then in line with World Bank mandates that Habitat sought to promote, this initiative turned into a policy of inviting member states to prepare 26-minute films to be screened in Vancouver as part of their national participation. Films, Strong insisted, were better-able to communicate the ambitions of technology transfer and demonstration projects in the field of human settlements to the international audience gathered at the inter-governmental conference, also serving as tools of data collection. Hence Enrique Peñalosa, Habitat’s Secretary General, announced ‘1975 will most certainly become known as the year in which the world had its picture taken. For Habitat’s audio-visual program has caused cameras to focus all over the world on human settlement problems and their solutions.’

My paper will not focus on specific development or technical ‘assistance’ programs in non-Western contexts. Rather, picking up on the panel organizers’ question ‘how were Western values mediated’, it will investigate the UN’s attempted audio-visual mediation of World Bank’s economic and ideological agenda, their attempt to ‘use movies to move.’ To this end, with reference to specific films from non-Western countries, I will unpack the careful scripting of normative and distinctly Western narratives of ‘human settlements’ in these documentaries. In other words, I want to take seriously the degree to which time-based media were conceived as potential vehicles to ‘affect the politico-economic sovereignty of non-Western countries,’ even while this immense and expensive apparatus of film production and presentation touched down unevenly in different locations and with different outcomes.

## Open Door: UNBRO and the Spatial Planning of Cambodian-Thai Refugee Camps

Jennifer Ferng,  
University of Sydney

### Abstract

In the wake of Khmer Rouge genocide, the short-lived agency United Nations Border Relief Operation or UNBRO (1982–2001) was responsible for the maintenance and services of refugee camps positioned along the northern Cambodian-Thai border. Cambodia represented a fulcrum in southeast Asia during the Cold War, caught between the growing strength of Vietnam and the political backing provided by China. The Khmer Rouge, the Vietnamese army, and Thai officials each sought to wrestle control over specific locations along this region. The ‘open-door’ policy enacted by the Thai government allowed Cambodians to enter designated holding centers, even though Thailand was not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. While the accommodations and layout of these camps were funded by donations from Australia, Canada, France, Japan, and the United States, UN contractors had little input since many decisions were often ceded to Khmer civil administration. But this is not to say that architectural design was completely absent from the relief assistance offered by UNBRO. In fact, this paper argues that the concept of spatial planning throughout these camps was resurrected using UN logistics: the layout of food distribution and water rationing, the maintenance of a central border pharmacy, material support for adult and children’s education as well as internal security measures that protected each camp’s borders. Much of the planning and management of these camps were defined by the spatial configurations of humanitarian aid, and in turn, these practices helped to shape how Khao I Dang, Sa Kaeo, and S2 functioned as border regions that attempted to regulate the flows of refugees moving between Cambodia and Thailand. More importantly, today’s contemporary treatment of international asylum seekers and refugees by the Cambodian government and local NGOs has been conditioned by these historical movements of internally displaced persons and Vietnamese and Thai military personnel.

## Counter Currenting: The Production of Locality in the Case of the Training for Self Reliance Project (TSRP) – Lesotho, 1983–1987

Iain Low,  
University of Cape Town

### Abstract

The TSRP is a program developed between the Government of Lesotho and the World Bank (WB) - International Development Authority (IDA) to upgrade education throughout Lesotho. As a Least Developed Country (LDC), Lesotho qualifies for favorable loans negotiated with deferred repayment schedules. This enables Lesotho to benefit from aid whilst servicing loans in a sustainable and managed way.

The period under examination straddles the third and fourth phases of TSRP. By the fourth, the program was sufficiently established to contest norms generally associated with WB projects, particularly maximizing investment through efficient utilization of loans, as reflected in expeditious delivery of goods. Quantitative in its measure, the Bank has been less interested in the qualitative dimension of delivery, thereby promoting a techno-economic utilitarian development approach, and often marginalising local initiatives and ignoring human need.

The TSRP program requires a set of complex capital and operational investments. Buildings consumed the bulk of the loan, complemented by in-service training for unqualified teachers, the provision of text books, furniture and equipment, school feeding and sanitation – each contributing unique values.

Administration was by an autonomous Project Authority reporting to Parliament, yet governed by a Board comprising Ministries of Finance, Education, Planning and Public Works. Whilst intended on protecting the loan, a power ambiguity emerged, enabling space to experiment. Design agency was instrumental in this and recognized for its role in surfacing local qualitative inclusionary participation. TSRP has by now delivered schools for over twenty-five years.

This study will demonstrate the productive dimension of architectural design when participatory practice is deployed as a ‘decolonial’ strategy in relation to a set of inherited mechanisms defined by the economic utilitarianism associated with WB agreements.

## Tourism and Leisure Politics: The United Nations Development Agenda in Cyprus

Panayiota Pyla, University of Cyprus  
Dimitris Venizelos, University of Cyprus

### Abstract

The United Nations declared 2017 as the ‘Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development’, fifteen years after the ‘International Year of Ecotourism’ (2002) and fifty years after the celebration of 1967 as the ‘International Tourist Year’. Celebrated as ‘a Passport to Peace’ and a ‘Passport for Development’, tourism has fuelled UN development agendas in the developing world since the 1960s. Much like the themes of housing, environment, and peace, tourism has been at the root of decolonization, modernization, and development strategies. This paper will investigate the UN agendas on tourism by focusing on the Technical Assistance to Cyprus, which came out of colonial rule in 1960 and received massive foreign assistance for securing the young state’s economic growth and political stability.

The paper grounds this inquiry on a critical analysis of the 1961 report *Cyprus: Suggestions for a Development Programme*, authored by UN advisor Willard Thorp. Resonating with broader developmentalist strategies that projected non-western contexts onto a West-centred cartography, Thorp called for the industrialization of leisure in Cyprus, prescribing funding mechanisms, land uses, and hotel standards. Even as they catered to western socio-economic priorities, UN directives confronted a complex landscape of nation-building processes mediated by the state’s strong ties with the Non-Aligned Movement – a looming inter-communal conflict between the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities – and larger Middle East geopolitics. Casting the spotlight on the tourism-related policies and planning strategies of Cyprus, as well as on the rapid transformations of the coastal city of Famagusta, the paper analyses the complex intertwinement of Thorp’s interventions with divergent advice from other foreign development experts and local actors. This particular history of UN discourse on tourism can be most instructive in light of current advancements of tourism as a means for sustainable development and peace-building around the globe.

## Infrastructure of Pan-Africanism: The Trans-African Highway Network

Kenny Cupers,  
University of Basel

### Abstract

In the process of African decolonization during the 1960s, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) became a central institution for post-independence development programmes. One of the most ambitious of such programmes was the Trans-African Highway project.

Formally planned in the late 1960s and early 1970s, its goal was to establish an international network of highways that would connect the capitals of the newly independent African states. The project was led by Ghanaian economist and UNECA executive secretary Robert Gardiner, who was directly inspired by Kwame Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist development ideology. Both politicians radically reimagined the role of infrastructure: instead of being an instrument of colonial exploitation, infrastructure should be a vehicle of Pan-African freedom, unity, and development. Yet, as the promises of democracy and development turned sour over the following decades, only some of the planned new links were built.

This paper explores the geopolitics of infrastructural design in the Trans-African Highway project. First, it focuses on the relationship between Nkrumah, Gardiner, and Constantinos Doxiadis, whose 1961 Transport Plan for Africa foreshadowed UNECA's plans. Secondly, it examines the technical realization and materiality of the highway itself, focusing on the Nairobi-Mombasa corridor, improved under Jomo Kenyatta in the early 1970s and the only stretch currently still marked as the 'Trans-African Highway'. This single carriageway functions both as a long-distance transportation corridor and a giant linear marketplace linking city and countryside. It is less an artefact of western expertise than an interface between the apparatus of international development and the everyday experience of modernity.

## BUILDING FOR PROSPERITY: PRIVATE DEVELOPERS AND THE WESTERN- EUROPEAN WELFARE STATE

Session chairs:

**Tim Verlaan**, University of Amsterdam

**Alistair Kefford**, University of Leicester

The period from the 1950s to the 1980s was one of unprecedented urban expansion and renewal in Western Europe, conducted under the aegis of the new social democratic welfare state. Established urban centres were remodeled and redeveloped, while new, planned settlements took shape in satellite and New Towns, and in urban peripheries. The public planning and politics of this wave of post-war urban renewal has been relatively well-documented, but the involvement of private developers in building this 'brave new world' has hardly been addressed. Yet developers played crucial and instrumental roles in the design, financing, construction, and realization of urban renewal projects. In the process they developed lucrative new strategies of urban wealth-creation, produced dramatic new urban forms and structures, and left their own indelible mark upon post-war urbanism, politics and experience. Research into private enterprise in the field of architecture and urban planning has hitherto been left to a small number of real estate experts – whose focus is often restricted to legal contexts and business strategies – or to urban political geographers – whose work

tends to assume that private sector involvement in urban redevelopment is a product of post-1980s 'neoliberal' urbanism.

This session aims to embed private sector development and construction firmly within our wider narratives and understandings of post-war urban and architectural history, and does so for a number of reasons. The expertise and financial strength of private developers proved decisive for the execution of development schemes across numerous Western-European towns and cities. A substantial part of the modern built environment has been (co)produced by developers, and this demands more recognition within our treatments of post-war urbanism. Further, as many private developers operated globally, they undoubtedly played an important role in the dissemination of ideas on architecture, planning, and urban form, alongside those more widely-recognized channels of knowledge transfer such as international conferences and academic and professional journals. Finally, government bodies, independent architects and the private sector were heavily reliant on each other, forging powerful public-private partnerships to get building projects of the ground. Examining these hybrid governmental forms and practices allows us to develop more nuanced understandings of the nature and operation of post-war welfare states, and the ways in which they conceived of and provided for the social democratic citizen, while also shedding new light on recent phenomena of internationalization, outsourcing, and privatization of urban planning efforts.

## 'Uneasy Bedfellows' Conceiving Urban Megastructures: Breeding Consumer-Citizens in British New Towns

Janina Gosseye,  
University of Queensland

### Abstract

From its inception, the European welfare state was a contract between three partners: the state, civic society and the private sector. And yet, in most studies on the architecture and urbanism of the European welfare state, the role of the private sector is overlooked, as emphasis is commonly placed on governmental building initiatives and the effects that these had on post-war civic society. An excellent example is Andrew Saint's study of British post-war school building, which – Saint claims – was 'the fullest expression of the movement for a social architecture in Britain [that] ... found its outlet in the service of the post-war welfare state.' However, apart from the public sector, also the private sector played a key role in designing 'social architecture' that shaped post-war civic society.

New towns in particular were sites of experiment. Here, public-private-partnerships forged novel collective spaces, which were hybrid in character and which challenged and redefined precisely what constituted the civic realm. This paper will focus on one such novel type of collective space: the megastructural 'heart' of post-war British New Towns. Combining mass consumption with administrative and civic functions, thereby blending the concepts of 'shopping centre' and 'city centre', these structures perfectly embodied the welfare state's belief that capitalism could neither live with nor without the existence of a pervasive welfare system and vice versa. Individual consumers were seen as a force inimical to totalitarianism and the consumer-citizen, many believed, held the key to the formation of a new post-war society that was devoid of totalitarian overtones.

Through the analysis of three New Town megastructures – Cumbernauld Centre, Runcorn Centre and Irvine Centre – this paper will highlight the key role that the private sector played in the development of a novel civic realm, which sought to shape 'consumer-citizens' and (thus) a new post-war society.

## Welfare as Consumption: The Role of the Private Sector in the Development of Oslo Satellite Town Centres

Guttorm Ruud,  
Oslo School of Architecture and Design

### Abstract

In 1950, *Generalplanen for Oslo* (The Oslo Masterplan) established the planning framework for the future expansion of the city as a system of satellite towns containing housing areas and sub-centres. The architects in charge of the planning of the satellite towns were connected to the political power structure of the governing *Arbeiderpartiet* (the Labour Party). A production system of affordable housing for all was already in place, arranging land acquisition, technical infrastructure provision, rent regulations, standards, financing, distribution, and tenure. However, the construction of sub-centres was not secured through a system comparable to that of housing. *Generalplanen for Oslo* left much of the design, construction, and financing of these new urban community centres to market forces and private initiatives, such as the Swedish shopping centre company EPA which had a Scandinavian field of operation, providing affordable shopping in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway in the post-war period. Arguably, EPA can be construed as the mass consumption model for what Esping-Andersen categorized as the social-democratic welfare state.

In Norway, this Swedish company was one of the stakeholders at *Linderud*, Norway's first car-based shopping centre, and *Tveita*, Norway's first closed shopping centre. These centres are instances of the EPA model, but also outcomes from the interactions between private developers, entrepreneurs, market-minded architects, and the politically anchored planners of Norwegian welfare state production, each with different international influences and goals. The paper describes the diverging interests of the public, civic, and private sectors in the construction of Oslo sub-centres, and theorizes how the private sectors influenced the development of welfare as consumption.

## Negotiating the Post-War Italian City: Developers' Strategies, Models, and Visions for the Design of the Ordinary City

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Politecnico di Milano

### Abstract

The modernization of post-war Italy has mainly been observed through the lens of popular classes and public initiative. However, private developers were the main protagonists of the massive building expansion that altered the structure of Italian cities between the 1950s and 1970s. While the construction of Italian cities has been portrayed as the result of one unique project (the city plan), post-war urban development was the result of a fragmented growth and negotiation processes, in which private initiative and forms of public intervention continuously intersected. The 'ordinary' city, made of private buildings and private houses, was built through the stratification of processes, spatial forms, and actors whose relations have rarely been explored. Moreover, architectural historians carefully studied public housing programmes and residential solutions elaborated by a few outstanding architects, while the 'average' residential production has been considered as the product of a speculation culture, which preferred quantity to quality.

Comparing the strategies, structure, and operating methods of two major Italian developers (INA Assicurazioni and Società Generale Immobiliare), the paper investigates their post-war residential programmes as sites of experimentation, codification, and dissemination of planning and services policies, urban visions, housing codes, residential solutions, building techniques, lifestyles, and social models for the production and use of spaces. Using a number of case studies in Turin, Milan, and Rome, the paper will consider the mutual influence between architectural forms and the dynamics of the building sector in an important moment of its growth, linking the managerial, material, and financial aspects of residential property developments to its qualitative and symbolic aspects. It will contribute to a more nuanced narrative of the forms and phases of urban growth and a more structured view of the boom of Italy, challenging monographic and local historiography, as well as the dichotomy between public and private initiatives, which appear increasingly blurred.

## A Trojan Horse for Private Investment: The Manhattan Plan for Brussels, 1962–1967

Sven Sterken,  
KU Leuven

### Abstract

In the 1960s, Brussels became the capital of the European Community, host of NATO, and the seat of many international companies. By consequence, the city transformed very rapidly from a rather provincial town into a small metropolis. Due to its scale and suddenness, the impact of the corresponding building boom was dramatic and long-lasting. Up to the present day, scholars and writers invariably discuss the large-scale urban interventions of that time as failures and scars that need to be repaired. By contrast, this paper states that fifty years later, the time has come to reassess the planning culture of that period by looking into its original intentions rather than its (indeed often catastrophic) outcome.

As a case in point, we focus on the emblematic so-called ‘Manhattan Plan’ for the area around the North Station. The brainchild of a tripartite between a powerful local politician (Paul Vanden Boeynants), a ruthless developer (Charly De Pauw), and the then-largest architectural practice in the country (Groupe Structures), it aimed at realizing a state-of-the-art business district that would confirm Brussels in its international status. A genuine urban renewal operation initiated by the public authorities at the onset, the plan quickly became a Trojan horse for the private sector in its search for lucrative real estate opportunities.

This paper seeks to untangle this process of degradation of the Manhattan Plan by looking closely into the agendas of the three aforementioned parties and assessing how their (often conflicting) interests impacted the goals and intentions of the original project. In this manner, we will shed a clearer light on the role of private investment in such large-scale operations and nuance the current perception of the Manhattan Plan as a capitalist conspiracy at the expense of the area’s original inhabitants.

## Changing the Skyline: How a Network of Developers, Private Enterprises, and Housing Companies Contributed to the Realization of an Architect’s Vision of the City:

### The Case of Léon Stynen (1899–1990)

Bart Tritsmans, Flanders Architecture Institute  
Bruno Notteboom, KU Leuven

### Abstract

Léon Stynen was one of the most productive, versatile modernist architects in Belgium. After the Second World War, Stynen’s practice (together with his associate Paul De Meyer) developed into one of the most important players in the field. During his career of more than half a century, reaching from the 1920s to the 1970s, Stynen changed the Belgian urbanized landscape with hundreds of architectural designs for houses, shops, office buildings, cinemas, and cultural centres. However, Stynen’s vision of the city was more important than the separate buildings. He considered the city, in Geert Bekaert’s words, ‘as a beautiful image, a magnificent décor’. Stynen aspired to create skylines and to influence the landscape of the modern city. The case study of the city of Antwerp understands Stynen as a city architect *avant la lettre*, but more importantly, it shows the indispensability of a strong network of private companies, developers, and housing companies.

This paper investigates how the cooperation with a professional network of private developers, government bodies, and housing companies enabled Léon Stynen to influence the urban landscape beginning in his early career. This paper therefore will not only focus on the involvement of private real estate developers in the shaping of the (post-war) city, but also on commercial companies, such as clothing chain C&A, BNP Paribas bank, and British Petroleum, who had a strong presence in the city, often on key sites. It will investigate how Stynen’s predilection to create urban ensembles was reflected in his professional network, and to what extent his emphasis on rationality, rigorous proportions, and a bold choice of materials was influenced by the expertise and collaboration with the private sector.

# PERIPHERIES

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# EUROPEAN PERIPHERIES IN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

Session chairs:

**Petra Brouwer**, University of Amsterdam

**Kristina Jõekalda**, Estonian Academy of Arts

Informed by post-colonial theory and more recent attempts to write alternative histories, architectural historians have increasingly criticized the persistence of the architectural canon and its Eurocentric perspective, questioning its categories, narratives, and terminology.

Our session aims to critically analyse Eurocentrism from the hitherto neglected perspective of Europe's own 'margins'. We take as a starting point that Eurocentrism, as operationalized in the first architectural history surveys from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, comprises only a few countries: Germany, England, France, Italy, and classical Greece. With their exclusive focus on monuments, like Greek temples or French and German cathedrals, as exemplifying stylistic perfection, all other European architecture, be it from the Baltic countries, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, or Scandinavia, was deemed marginal. From the late nineteenth century onwards, many of these 'margins' produced their own historical accounts on national or regional architecture. Almost without exception, these accounts explicated their national and regional architecture as a derivation, relying heavily on the historiography at hand. The hypothesis we want to bring up for discussion is that by adopting the method and narrative of the general histories of architecture,

these national and regional architectural histories have perpetuated their position in the margins to this very day.

This session addresses the practice of architectural history writing in Europe's 'peripheral' countries and regions from the nineteenth century to the present that address the problematic relationship between the local, the national, and the general. We are not interested in local and national histories per se, but rather in the way they can be positioned within a wider geographical and disciplinary framework. The selected papers set out to explore cultural exchange and transfer (through influence, appropriation, inclusion, opposition, role models) and the local/indigenous (through geography, religion, race, building material, politics, history) in the widest sense. They reflect on the construction of Europe's centres and peripheries with questions such as: To what extent were the books on local and national architectural history aimed at 'filling the gaps' of general architectural history? What alternative approaches were developed? Should we interpret the adaptation of the Eurocentric perspective as a self-colonizing act and the alternatives as subversive, or are other readings possible? How far have historical realities further strengthened divisions between the East and West or the South and North of Europe?

## The Modern Margin at the Classical Centre: Critical Regionalism as Historiography

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University College London

### Abstract

This paper explores Eurocentrism within Europe through the semi-peripheral case of Greece. It argues that Greek architectural historiography echoes the double bind that conditions the relations of Europe with the modern Greek state since the nineteenth century. This double bind supports a dual self-image of Greece: (1) as the founding classical centre of modern Europe, and (2) as a peripheral site whose endeavours are legitimised by their adherence to modern European developments. For western observers, the classical Greece of the past thus overshadows the modern Greece of the present. Greek scholars have similarly adopted a dual vision of the architectural production of their country: (a) as legitimate regional adaptations of the European avant-garde movements, but also conversely (b) as their authentic or archetypal precedents, ranging from the 'modernist' cubic volumes of the Cycladic settlements to the 'postmodern' work of Dimitris Pikionis. This dual vision in turn enabled Greek practitioners to internalise modern European developments as inseparable parts of their own regional legacy. This is what historically led to the development of an architecture of critical regionalism in Greece.

Critical regionalism has been criticised as a colonialist discourse that actively marginalises the regions it addresses. However, in the case of Greece, it restored the already marginalised modern architectural production of the country in the eyes of western observers. A close reading of Alexander Tzonis & Liane Lefaivre's first theorisation of critical regionalism also shows how a discourse that allegedly promoted the focused return to the region ignored local nuances to answer only to the western architectural concerns of the time. Hence, the paper concludes that critical regionalism remains an unfulfilled project. No longer viewed as a manifesto for the humanistic architecture of the future, it can now become a historiographical agenda for the European 'periphery'.

# Architect Migrants from the Former Soviet Republics to Western Europe: A Blind Spot of Eurocentric Historiography

Eva Radionova, Amsterdam University of the Arts

Yelizaveta Yanovich, World Bank Group / Independent researcher

## Abstract

This paper questions the representation of the interrelationship between ‘peripheral’ national and Western European traditions in architectural historiography. It does so by examining the impact of architects who migrated from countries of the former Soviet republics on the architectural practices of Western Europe in the twentieth century. In their respective countries of origin, these architectural migrants have retained their position in national architectural culture, while in the general accounts of Western European architectural history they form a part of their host countries’ history. In Western European historiography, their national and local architectural background is ignored.

One could state that there is a blind spot in European architectural historiography because the influence of migrant-architects has largely been misunderstood. This paper argues that this blind spot should be analysed in terms of cultural and post-colonial studies. Following Edward W. Said’s *Orientalism*, we suppose that the migrants’ culture should be described in Western European architectural history as that of the ‘other’. According to the concept of Alexander Etkind and Dirk Uffelman, the integration of architectural migrants in Western European historiography should be understood in terms of internal colonization.

To reveal the blind spot in architectural historiography, this paper analyses the reception as well as the biographies of three architectural migrants: Berthold Lubetkin (UK), originally from Ukraine; Nikolay Zagrekow (also Sagrekow, Germany) and Nikolaus Izselenov (France), both originally from Russia. Our research into the architects’ biographies in ‘peripheral’ national and Western European historiographies, aims to clarify the disjointed nature of the interpretations in the respective discourses.

This paper explores the cultural mechanisms of denial of ‘peripheral’ influences on the canonical architecture of Western Europe. It allows architectural historians to evaluate the potential of a new historiography of architectural migration.

# Peripheral and Central Stances in Portuguese Architecture Culture

Ricardo Costa Agarez  
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## Abstract

In his acceptance speech for the 2011 Pritzker Prize, architect Eduardo Souto de Moura explained how, when he began practicing after the 1974 revolution, the affordable housing shortage in Portugal demanded his (belated) modernist approach: To ‘build half-a-million homes with pediments and columns would be a waste of energies’; postmodernism, he added, made little sense where there had ‘barely been any Modern Movement at all’. A ‘clear, simple and pragmatic language’ was needed, and only ‘the forbidden Modern Movement could face the challenge’. Moura’s words perfectly encapsulate the country’s post-revolutionary architectural culture tropes, which dominated published discourse since: modernism, not postmodernism, deserved a place in 1980s Portugal *because it had been resisted by a conservative dictatorship*; this also explained why it was absent from international architecture surveys.

The exception were the works of two other Portuguese exponents, Fernando Távora and Álvaro Siza, co-opted by survey authors since the 1980s in their drive towards global comprehensiveness: Kenneth Frampton, William J. R. Curtis and most recently Jean-Louis Cohen all have celebrated these architects’ site-sensitive, vernacular-infused modernism, occasionally straight-jacketed into critical regionalism constructs. Such recognition was promptly embraced by contemporary Portuguese architects and critics, eager to see their culture associated with a ‘good brand’ of regionalism, resistant and profound; most felt it was the ‘bad’, retrograde regionalism of the 1940s that, manipulated by the regime, countered modernism. Thus a two-pronged ‘forbidden modern movement’ / ‘redeeming critical regionalism’ tale flourished in Portugal.

By borrowing the conventions and constructs of international historiography in a politically sensitive and conscience-searching moment of national life, contemporary Portuguese architectural culture effectively narrowed its own relevance to a handful of names and works, thus flattening the country’s diverse forms of modernism: from the tentative to the mature, local, cultural, technological and material specificities determined a richly textured production that requires scholarly re-examination.

## Keywords

Modern movement, critical regionalism, postmodernism, historiography, Nuno Portas, Bruno Zevi

**Neo-Modernism in Portugal (ca. 2011)**

Eduardo Souto de Moura, it could be said, is a rising star in the international architectural firmament, coming from a peripheral culture that only recently attained widespread recognition. It therefore seems natural that, in his 2011 Pritzker Architecture Prize acceptance speech, meant to be read in Washington before an international audience, the architect gave a sketchy, potted-history-sort-of' account of his background and circumstance. Yet for all their (intentional) lightness these words epitomise, in a nutshell, the narrative that Portuguese architects and architectural historians (most often, themselves architects) have been peddling, home and abroad, for the last four decades. Indeed, they offer the opportunity for an analysis not only of their mediate and immediate meaning, but also of the ways in which architectural cultures at large are determined, in the present, by acquired knowledge and preconceived ideas passed on over generations with their own, now obsolete outstanding issues.

At the occasion, this was the core of Souto de Moura's argument:

After the [1974] Revolution, once democracy was re-established, there was an opportunity to re-design a country that lacked schools, hospitals and other facilities, and most of all half-a-million homes. It would certainly not be the then-fashionable postmodernism to provide a solution. *To build half-a-million homes with pediments and columns would be a waste of energies, for the dictatorship had already tried to do so.*

Postmodernism arrived in Portugal [in the 1980s, yet we had] *barely had any modern movement at all.* That's the irony of our fate ... What we needed was a clear, simple and pragmatic language, to rebuild a country, a culture, and *none better than the forbidden modern movement* to face this challenge.<sup>1</sup>

The notion of a 'forbidden modern movement' in Portugal, as purported here, serves Souto de Moura's own personal agenda: it especially suits a need to justify the architect's own post-postmodernist (or neo-modernist) design stance. A proponent of minimalist architecture reinterpreting Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's pursuits in late-twentieth-century fashion,<sup>2</sup> he chose to pick up the modernist project where it had purportedly been cut short by a conservative dictatorship – the key point here being that modernism, not postmodernism, deserved a place in 1980s Portugal precisely *because it had been resisted, in the mid-century, by a conservative dictatorship.* To insist on the notion that modernism was crushed by dictatorship – 'forbidden' – becomes essential to argue for the need to go back to it and reinstate its formal tenets.

In effect, to say – and write – that there was no modern movement to speak of in Portugal is commonplace today among scholars, students and

practitioners of architecture in the country: general literature on the period<sup>3</sup> insists that when the movement was budding in other parts of Europe, Portugal lacked schools, media, dissemination and debate opportunities, and importantly, instances of architectural theory production. The established narrative maintains that the nationalistic, anti-collectivist political concerns of the Estado Novo regime,<sup>4</sup> which were especially ponderous between the late 1930s and late 1940s, efficiently resisted and repressed modern architecture. The dominant narrative also suggests that when its grip was finally released in the 1950s it was too late, the world having changed, modernism being subject to scrutiny and critique, no longer viable unless thoroughly reworked. The trauma of official repression is embedded in architectural culture in Portugal, and a chronicle of heroic 1950s modernism – the work of architects who managed to overcome official constraints and belatedly realised their modernist beliefs, against all odds – has been left largely unquestioned. Originally mediated by the designers themselves, in inflated manifestos depicting the need for a 'battle of modern architecture'<sup>5</sup> to be fought against conservative architecture, the 'battle' narrative has since been acritically appropriated by later-day scholars<sup>6</sup> and entered the national mainstream discourse, constituting a useful crutch for conversations on twentieth-century architecture, both at café tables and university lecture halls.

How did this notion of a 'forbidden modern movement' become so engrained in the Portuguese national architectural consciousness?

**Ephemeral Modernism (since 1978)**

In order to understand this, we need to look at the way architectural history was written in Portugal in the late 1970s, particularly at the role of architect and critic Nuno Portas (b. 1934) in the process. Portas was an important figure in Portuguese post-revolution architecture: among other reasons, for his initiative, in a brief tenure as secretary of state (1975), to create a public support mechanism for community-participated housing schemes, the now-celebrated SAAL program.<sup>7</sup> With close intellectual ties with the Italian scene, and a keen, self-professed interest in Italian post-war 'realism', in 1967 he initiated the Portuguese-language edition of Bruno Zevi's *Storia dell'architettura moderna*, writing the preface to volume one; in 1978, Portas wrote an additional chapter to volume two of Zevi's survey, devoted to Portuguese architecture, when this second volume was finally published.<sup>8</sup> Portas's own chapter, titled 'The Evolution of Modern Architecture in Portugal: An Interpretation', became one of the most influential texts in the country's architectural education and culture. To this day, this 40-year-old essay is recommended in reading lists for architecture-degree courses there.

It was also possibly the first-ever published 'interpretive' survey of modern architecture in Portugal,<sup>9</sup> with Portas taking pains to present his work as that not of an historian, but of an architectural critic – down to the word 'interpretation' in his title. He composed his chapter with telling

subtitles: ‘I. The Obscure Decades’ (mid-nineteenth century to mid-1920s); ‘II. The Ephemeral Modernism’ (the interwar period); ‘III. The Resistance’ (ca. 1943–61); and ‘IV. The Relative Openness / Release and Unavoidable Cleavages’ (from 1961 on). The narrative thread is as clear as the author’s consummate Marxist discourse on the power structure in Portugal and how this dictated the fortune of modern architecture. As many since then, Portas was concerned with trying to find the reasons for – indeed, to come to terms with – the failure of early modernists and the late 1930s nationalistic-conservative backlash. Reflecting on possible reasons for 1930s (‘ephemeral’) modernism’s weakness in Portugal, he found this was due to the lack of conviction as much as to poor training and the weight of established convention: ‘the first heroes of our story later confessed to having had too many misgivings on whether to choose modern or traditional’ architectural stances.<sup>10</sup> This was a key aspect to Portas’s interpretation of Portuguese modernism’s short life: it was crushed not only by a change of heart in the regime itself – which turned towards nationalist conservatism after having welcomed modern architecture in many early public works – but also by the volatility of its protagonists, who adhered, with self-serving promptness, to nationalist ideology in those unstable pre-war years.

Portas was a very history-prone critic. To a keen interest in Portugal’s ‘ephemeral’ early modernism, its ‘cultural roots’ and misfortunes,<sup>11</sup> Portas contrasted in the 1978 chapter his long-held critical stance on the ‘narrowly Franco-Germanic and Brazilian “functionalist” understanding’ of the modern movement in the post-war years, seen as an ‘explicit or implicitly etiolated route’ – and his preference for practices stemming from the Nordic countries, ‘polemical Italy’ and the seismic effect of Team X’s proposals on CIAM in the late 1950s.<sup>12</sup> He recalled how as an editorial board member of the journal *Arquitetura* (1957–71) he participated in a collective effort to maintain ‘reflection on history and criticism as forms of intervention in the course taken by architectural events – and other kinds of events.’<sup>13</sup> Through his work as an architecture critic, Portas claimed his own role as a resistant in the tough final decades of the dictatorship, as a (very *Zevian*) believer in the social remit of architecture and its history and culture.

Portas concluded the final, ‘relative openness’ section of his 1978 chapter with a clue to why the figure of Álvaro Siza (b. 1933) was already being appropriated by international architecture culture:

With his personal route, [Siza] is the first Portuguese auteur, in a few centuries, to [see his work echoing] beyond national borders out of his own merit, as international critics over recent years have recognised the singularity of solutions and design intelligence in his itinerary, which aim straight at the linguistic crisis of contemporary architecture, currently an orphan of its great masters.<sup>14</sup>

It is at this point that we can start to see the national and international narratives on Portuguese architecture converge. At around the same time as Zevi’s Portuguese-language edition was published, a new tag was about to gain currency in international scholarship that would fit particularly well with the direction Portas’s interpretation of the fortune of modernism in Portugal pointed to: enter critical regionalism, through which Portuguese architecture eventually let itself be narrowed into a section of the global canon.

### Critical Regionalism, Portugal’s Saving Grace

It has been repeatedly noted that critical regionalism should be positioned in its context – intellectual, historical and geographical – to be properly understood: a supranational construct, developed by a metropolitan scholar working in Anglo-Saxon academia and built upon examples from lesser-known contexts and works by hitherto little-known designers. In the context of the early 1980s its purpose, as Keith Eggner put it, was that of a double critique of both ‘the placeless homogeneity of much mainstream Modernism and the superficial historicism of so much postmodern work’.<sup>15</sup> In other words: critical regionalism was as much a retrospective account of by-then 30-year-old critical stances – of post-war architects reacting against the widespread hegemony of mature international style formulas while seeking to maintain and extend the validity of modern architecture – as it was a reaction to its own time, signalling a widely-felt need for an alternative to postmodernism; an alternative that showed that the modern movement was not buried under its own orthodoxy, it had found ways to persist in locally-sensible practices, in the past, and could continue doing so.

As long as modernism still had ways of developing, there was no need for postmodernism – which is why it became so important for Souto de Moura and other neo-modernists to claim that modernism was an open route, not a dead end. To stress the pertinence of such a route, it was equally important to insist on the narrative of Portuguese modern architecture as a flawed, interrupted process, requiring a continuation. Critical regionalism proposed a synthesis of extended modernism and local awareness, the possibility of reconciling the global and the local in sophisticated ways that eschewed those more literal replications of regional building features that post-war modernists derided – it was this ‘reworked modernism’, now codified and brought into the international arena, that fitted well with the narrative of the ‘forbidden modern movement’ in Portugal.

If ‘true’ modernism had been an impossible project in the 1920s–30s (for all the reasons above), then its ‘critical regionalist’ second life in the post-war decades had been the saving grace of Portuguese architecture. Souto de Moura positions himself in this lineage; in 1978, Portas – and most authors since – trace the same lineage back to the works of Fernando Távora (1923–2005) and Siza.

In his seminal ‘interpretive’ survey, Portas described Távora as

the first in his generation to try to theorise ... and exemplarily practice a critique of the superficial translation of [the CIAM] models, while investigating new ways of expressing – *not mimicking* – traditional materials, references to the site and other veins of the ‘modern tradition’ ... I.e. trying the route that pioneers of the previous generation, 15 years earlier, had not known how to explore – starting therefore, without fear or prejudice, by studying the context and the Portuguese architectures.<sup>16</sup>

This is a very similar line of reasoning to the one employed by Kenneth Frampton in his construct; in 1978, I suggest, Portas presented Távora as a ‘critical regionalist’ *avant la lettre*.

‘Critical’ was the key qualifier in a category built on binary oppositions: between a ‘critically resistant architecture’ and ‘free-standing aesthetic objects’;<sup>17</sup> between literal and non-literal (or de-familiarised) interpretations of regional traditional features;<sup>18</sup> regionalism was good only if resistant (critical), yet reproachable if simply replicating features identified with local tradition – and even dangerous as an instrument of nationalism.<sup>19</sup> This moralistic stance of critical regionalism was vital both in Portas’s (untagged) characterisation of Távora’s work and in that of international survey authors who began including Távora’s and Siza’s architectures in their texts, in analogous terms.

Siza’s early work was associated with critical regionalism already in the second edition (1985) of Frampton’s *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*: the Portuguese architect ‘grounded his buildings in the configuration of a specific topography and in the fine-grained texture of the local fabric’ but – and importantly for the morals underpinning Frampton’s concept – his ‘deference towards local material, craft work, and the subtleties of local light ... is sustained *without falling into the sentimentality* of excluding rational form and modern technique.’<sup>20</sup>

William J. R. Curtis, in turn, introduced Távora’s and Siza’s works in the third edition (1996) of his influential *Modern Architecture Since 1900* – in a newly added Chapter 26, ‘Disjunctions and Continuities in the Europe of the 1950s’. These works would have configured an attempt ‘to cut through the prevailing eclecticism and provincialism of Portuguese architecture, and to return to local roots ... [Távora] sought an architecture that was modern but sensitive to a unique cultural landscape, and one of the keys for him was the Portuguese vernacular which he interpreted for its general principles and types’. Curtis adds that Siza, sensitive to the ‘lineaments of topography and to the spatial transition between buildings ... had *no intention of mimicking peasant architecture*, but did wish to draw on its social pattern

and sensitivity to both landscape and light.’<sup>21</sup> While passing the same moral judgment that permeates almost all scholarly views on regionalist architecture, in that ‘the best of these buildings seemed able to draw upon indigenous wisdom, but without simply imitating vernacular forms: to *penetrate beyond the obvious features of regional style to some deeper mythical structures* rooted in past adjustments to landscape and climate’ – Curtis did question the generalising inclusions that weakened the ‘critical regionalism’ construct as it recurred to ‘a selection of creditable modern architects whose work embodied a vital synthesis of the local and the general – figures like ... Siza or Ando in the then recent world of architecture. Theoretical post- (and pre-) rationalisations are one thing; works giving shape to ideas, insights, and intuitions, another.’<sup>22</sup>

Such weaknesses were no deterrent to the mutual appropriation process that this paper tried to describe: the appropriation of Távora’s and Siza’s work by critical regionalism – a conduit for such works to enter the international canon; and the appropriation of this new category by Portuguese architectural culture, whose purpose of celebrating the lineage of at least one (small, specific) part of the country’s output in the twentieth century, critical regionalism served well.

Yet, by presenting this as a revisionist, critical, resistant sequel to an unachieved, flawed modern movement in Portugal – by projecting critical regionalism’s generalising tenets onto the specific lines of Portuguese post-war cultural and social history – global and national historiography threw a shadow, heavy and hard to dispel, on what was produced before, alongside and after these sophisticated, attention-grabbing works.

My own work on the negotiations between modernism and regionalism in peripheral contexts in Portugal has been driven by a need to, as Sir John Summerson put it, ‘look over the shoulders and under the feet of the conventionally accepted heroes and try to see what went on around them and on what they stood; and ... whether that hinterland may not contain some very adequate heroes of its own’.<sup>23</sup> In my study of peripheral Algarve, a much more nuanced, diverse picture of post-war design and building practices outside Lisbon and Porto has emerged, side-stepping the ‘critical’ narrative.<sup>24</sup> But the whitewashing, sterilising consequences of this reinstatement of modernism – in ‘critical regionalist’ garb – on Portuguese architectural culture are proving more difficult to redress when it comes to postmodernist practices there: in her recent obituary of architect Raúl Hestnes Ferreira (1931–2018), architectural historian Ana Vaz Milheiro has noted how, by daring to ‘open up a glimpse of postmodernity in an “entrenched” modernist culture’ in the mid-1960s, Hestnes came to pay a high price: ‘Highly valorised by late-twentieth-century historiography, post-war [critical regionalist] modernism eventually smothered everything else that came since, in an anathema that we now see being gradually lifted.’<sup>25</sup>

The proposition of a theory of critical regionalism in the context of the rise of postmodernism internationally coincided in Portugal, in the late 1970s, with the aftermath of the ‘Portuguese Spring’ revolution of 1974, which made urgent the repositioning of Portuguese architects and their (‘dangerous’, complex, messy) relationship with the deposed dictatorship; one effective way to do so was to hail the ‘critical’ potential of regionalist-sensible modernists – ‘critical’ both architecturally and politically.

It seems remarkable that critical regionalism as a global category, ploughs on years after the ‘menace’ that prompted it – postmodernism – waned. In Portugal, this longevity – in people’s minds even if not words – is explained by the popularity of figures like Souto de Moura: without necessarily mentioning critical regionalism, their discourse positions Távora’s and Siza’s role in a clearly-defined action/reaction plot: failed early modernism / conservative reaction forbidding modernism / belated, ‘doomed’ post-war modernism / redemptive critical regionalist (reworked) modernism. In this plot, such figures see themselves as the protagonists of the most recent episode: ‘useless’ postmodernism / purposeful, pertinent (post-post) modernism.

Liberated from these (understandable, if contextualised) constraints, the thinking and writing of twentieth-century architecture in Portugal may attempt to be more inclusive, catholic, knowledgeable, and profound than these exceedingly black-and-white abstract views allow for.

### Notes

- 1 Eduardo Souto de Moura, acceptance speech for the Pritzker Architecture Prize 2011, Washington D.C., 2 June 2011, <http://www.pritzkerprize.com/laureates/2011>. My transcript, translation and emphasis.
- 2 One of the earliest English-language monograph references for Souto de Moura’s 1990s work is Werner Blaser’s small bilingual book *Eduardo Souto de Moura: Stein, Element, Stone* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2003). Other references include Antonio Esposito and Giovanni Leoni’s three editions of *Eduardo Souto de Moura* (Milan: Electa, 2003, 2012; London: Phaidon, 2013) and André Tavares and Pedro Bandeira’s *Floating Images: Eduardo Souto de Moura’s Wall Atlas* (Baden: Lars Müller, 2012).
- 3 For one instance of this narrative stance, see Annette Becker, Ana Tostões and Wilfried Wang (eds.), *Arquitectura do Século XX: Portugal* (Munich: Prestel, Deutsches Architektur-Museum, Portugal-Frankfurt 97, C. C. Belém, [1998]).
- 4 The so-called Estado Novo (‘New State’) dictatorship regime governed Portugal between 1933 and 1974, largely under the leadership of António de Oliveira Salazar (until 1968). For English-language discussions of the social, political and cultural developments of the period, see Ellen W. Sapega’s *Consensus and Debate in Salazar’s Portugal: Visual and Literary Negotiations of the National Text, 1933–1948* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2008) and Filipe de Meneses’s *Salazar: A Political Biography* (New York: Enigma, 2010).
- 5 Such was the term used by Portuguese modernists in the 1950s to describe their fight against conservative stances in architecture.
- 6 I have discussed this process of appropriation in Ricardo Agarez, ‘Metropolitan Narratives on Peripheral

- Contexts: Buildings and Constructs in Algarve (South Portugal), c. 1950,’ in Ruth Morrow and Mohamed Gamal Abdelmonem (eds.), *Peripheries: Edge Conditions in Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 209–24.
- 7 SAAL is the acronym for Serviço de Apoio Ambulatório Local. Portas’s work as architect and critic was recently the subject of an exhibition and attendant (bilingual) monograph, *O Ser Urbano: Nos Caminhos de Nuno Portas* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 2012).
  - 8 Volume 1 of the Portuguese edition, based on Zevi’s fourth, 1961 edition, was published in 1970; volume 2 publication record is dated 1977, although Portas’s additional chapter on Portugal is dated 1978 in the text itself.
  - 9 Portas himself explained, in a coda added to his chapter, that the first-ever survey of Portuguese modern architecture was the one included in José-Augusto França’s *A Arte em Portugal no Século XX* [Art in Portugal in the twentieth century], first published in 1974 – that is, between the publication of the first (1970) and second (1977) volumes of the Portuguese edition of Zevi’s *Storia*.
  - 10 Bruno Zevi and Nuno Portas, *História da Arquitetura Moderna*. 2 vols. (Lisbon: Arcádia, 1970–7). Vol. 2 (1977), 723. My translation.
  - 11 For example: in a pioneering, 1961 article decrying the imminent destruction of a significant 1930s café in Lisbon, he wrote of the absence of studies on the period and its tragic consequences. Nuno Portas, ‘Antes Que, Mesmo o Pouco que Temos ...’ [Before we lose even what little we have], *Arquitetura* 70 (1961), 49. My translation.
  - 12 Zevi and Portas, *História da Arquitetura Moderna*, Vol. 2, 740–1. My translation.
  - 13 Zevi and Portas, 746. My translation.
  - 14 Zevi and Portas, 744. My translation.
  - 15 Keith L. Eggner, ‘Placing Resistance: A Critique of Critical Regionalism,’ *Journal of Architectural Education* 4 (2002), 228.
  - 16 Zevi and Portas, *História da Arquitetura Moderna*, Vol. 2, 732. My translation and italics.
  - 17 Kenneth Frampton, ‘Critical Regionalism Revisited,’ in Maiken Umbach and Bernd-Rüdiger Hüppauf (eds.), *Vernacular Modernism* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 194.
  - 18 Liane Lefavre, ‘A Forgotten Episode in the Suppression of Regionalism’ (invited talk in the symposium *Globalisation or Regionalism?* The Bartlett School of Architecture, London, 2012).
  - 19 Cf. Liane Lefavre and Alexander Tzonis, *Critical Regionalism* (Munich: Prestel, 2003).
  - 20 Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007 [1980]), 317. My italics.
  - 21 William J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (London: Phaidon, 1996 [1982]), 482–4. My italics.
  - 22 Curtis, 636–7. My italics.
  - 23 John Summerson, *The London Building World of the Eighteen-Sixties* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973), 24.
  - 24 See e.g. Ricardo Agarez, *Algarve Building: Modernism, Regionalism and Architecture in the South of Portugal, 1925–1965* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).
  - 25 Ana Vaz Milheiro, ‘Hestnes Ferreira, a Morte do Arquitecto ‘Americano’’ [Hestnes Ferreira: The demise of the ‘American’ architect], *Público*, 13 February 2018, 28–9.

## From Tendenza to Tendenzen: Rewriting Ticinese Architecture, 1975–1985

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### Abstract

‘Now it’s the Ticinese’s turn.’ Conceived as an intellectual sequel to Aldo Rossi’s ETH tenure, the exhibition *Tendenzen. Neuere Architektur im Tessin* of 1975 was more than a mere survey of the architecture produced in the marginal canton of Ticino in the 1960s and early 1970s. Rather, the curator Martin Steinmann construed from this built production a programmatic message that fed into current debates on disciplinary autonomy and Realism.

The label *Tendenzen*, while stating the pluralism of co-existing Ticinese positions, placed them in a subservient position to the Italian *Tendenza* and particularly the work of Rossi, to whom an emerging generation of Swiss architects were intellectually and formally beholden. By means of a theoretical framework only loosely connected to Ticinese architecture’s historical and cultural specificity, Steinmann assembled an emancipated text-based discourse with much wider applicability, subsequently circulated in numerous professional and academic publications such as *archithese*, *A+U*, and *L’architecture d’aujourd’hui*. This paradoxical emancipation of discourse from architectural production was highlighted by Kenneth Frampton’s subsequent interpretation of Ticinese architecture as a notional ‘Ticino school’ in the journal *Oppositions* (1978), later instrumentalized in his definition of critical regionalism as ‘an architecture of resistance’ (1983).

This paper examines the interconnected textual narratives woven by Steinmann and Frampton around 1970s Ticinese architecture and their contributions to two major theoretical currents of the 1980s: postmodernism and critical regionalism. This premise invites an examination of Ticino’s intriguing status as peripheral territory which, temporarily, became culturally more productive than the intellectual ‘centres’ towards which it gravitated. Shaped by prominent outsiders like Steinmann and Frampton, and detached from the actual conditions of production, the architectural historiography of Ticino architecture only consolidated its peripheral status in the longer term.

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE TASMAN WORLD, 1788–1850

Session chairs:

G. A. Bremner, University of Edinburgh  
Andrew Leach, University of Sydney

The nineteenth-century architectural history of what Philippa Mein Smith (among others) has called the ‘Tasman world’ has long been shaped by the nationalist historiographies of twentieth-century Australia and New Zealand. Developments in the region’s colonial architecture from the 1780s onwards have thus fed later narratives of national foundations. The call for this session invited scholars to work against the grain of that problematic nationalism by addressing the architecture and infrastructure of those colonial industries operating across the early colonies of New South Wales, Van Diemen’s Land and New Zealand, and connecting that ‘world’ to the economies of the British Empire, the ‘Anglosphere’, and architectural geographies defined by trade. These papers thus return to the colonial era of the South Pacific informed by the gains of post-colonial history, four-nations British historiography, studies of global colonial networks and systems, and an appreciation for ‘minor’ forms of historical evidence and architectural practice. Armed thus, the papers in this session consider the architecture of the Tasman world from the 1780s to the 1840s in its historical circumstances, exploring architecture across three different registers: intentioned works definitively cast as Architecture; the ‘grey’ architecture (after Bremner) of industries, transshipping and colonial infrastructure; and as an analogy for the relationships, systems and structures of the colonial project and its economic underpinnings. Papers move around and across the Tasman Sea.

Philippa Mein Smith begins the session by exploring how the concept of the Tasman World and trans-colonial historiography activates the industrial architecture of sealing. Stuart King then homes in on the timber industry of Van Diemen's Land and its import for a geography spanning from the Swan River Colony to California. Harriet Edquist considers the role of the Vandemonian Henty brothers in the settlement of Western Victoria, tempering a celebration of their pastoralism by recalling the displacements and disruptions wrought by their arrival. Bill Taylor attends to the informal 'industry' of pilfering and looks through the lens it offers on the Australian ports and their relationships with Britain. In the final paper, Robin Skinner pursues the matter of representation in his treatment of Burford's dioramas of the three colonial 'capitals' of this period. Together, the papers in this session contribute to a post-nationalist architectural history of the Tasman colonies that figures the place of this region in the nineteenth-century British world and beyond.

## Sealer Dealers and the Architecture of the Tasman World

Philippa Mein Smith,  
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### Abstract

This study rethinks the colonial buildings and architecture of the Tasman world through a case study of the sealing industry, where the 'Tasman world' is conceived of as a working region defined by traffic between Australia and New Zealand – traffic initiated by seal hunting. Through studies of such colonial industries, the aim is to research the ways in which architecture (business and domestic) and building can be understood as elements in a global and imperial assemblage of corporate and private profit, speculation, and investment in the South Pacific. The paper shows how sealing entrepreneurs – sealer dealers – shaped the colonial built environment in New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, and New Zealand, and in turn depended on the 'grey architecture' of maritime industries, such as wharf facilities and warehouses, for their success.

Through an adaptation of staple theory and trans-colonial as opposed to transnational perspectives, the paper situates early colonial sealing enterprises within the oceanic networks that connected the Antipodes to Britain and Asia, and criss-crossed an increasingly British world south of Asia by the nineteenth century. It traces trans-colonial links and relationships that literally built on the profits, and establishes new connections between the histories of colonial architecture and industries in the colonies around the Tasman Sea. One avenue developed concerns the accumulation of wealth and the cultivation of propriety through domestic architecture, built by trade throughout the British Empire and the 'Anglo world'. Another is to enlarge the theoretical framework by analysis of connections between the dynamics of settler capitalism and the colonial built environment, as well as eco-colonialism in the form of plundering indigenous animal species. The study relocates and recasts cultures of colonial architecture between land and sea, in Sydney Cove and beyond.

## The Architecture of Van Diemen's Land's Timber

Stuart King,  
University of Melbourne

### Abstract

Early interest in the timber of the Tasman world centred on supplies for ship building in the British navy, as well as colonial construction and trade, with the commodity rapidly translated into a significant industrial enterprise. In Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), colonised by the British in 1803, this enterprise generated an infrastructural architecture extending from remotely located huts, sawpits and sawmills, to shipyards, shipping routes and ports. Produced by private and government enterprise, the most complex sites included the industrialised penal stations at Macquarie Harbour (1822-1835) – dedicated to the harvest of the island's endemic Huon Pine and shipbuilding – and Port Arthur (1830-1871), while the more remote sites were concerned with private timber-getting, settlement and shipyards, such as Port Davey (c.1840s). These sites and structures were a kind of 'grey architecture' that, in turn, supported another mobile grey architecture of timber ships, building components and buildings that effected settlement and urban expansion regionally and globally. Vandemonian architects, builders, merchants and entrepreneurs supplied building timbers as well as speculative shipments of locally manufactured, prefabricated timber buildings to the free settlers of the new southern Australian colonies of Western Australia (1828), South Australia (1836) and Victoria (1837), and to global gold prospectors in California (1849), Victoria (1851) and, later, Otago (1861).

This paper approaches architectural history from the perspective of a staple resource. It investigates the architecture of Van Diemen's Land's early nineteenth-century timber-getting, production and trade as one of the infrastructural layers, or working connections, that may be understood to have constituted the Tasman world of the early nineteenth century. It aims to challenge the limits of Australia's early colonial architectural histories, largely inscribed by colonial (now state) boundaries, institutions and individuals, by re-framing Van Diemen's Land's building and architectural production within the historical circumstance of the Tasman world and its global connections.

## The Architecture of Pastoralism and the (De)industrialization of Port Phillip

Harriet Edquist,  
RMIT University

### Abstract

This paper is part of an ongoing investigation into the impact of pastoralism on the building of early colonial Port Phillip. As Pearson and Lennon noted in their study of Australian pastoralism 'droving routes to metropolitan sale yards, wool stores, abattoirs, wharf facilities, railways, roads, and river and ocean transport systems [...] were developed to link the pastoral interior with the urban and market infrastructure needed to distribute the pastoral product'.

The Henty brothers and other Vandemonians who first took up land in Western Victoria demonstrated the truth of this statement with great clarity. The Hentys spearheaded permanent settlement around Portland from 1834 and, after 1837, occupied the rich pastoral country on the Wannon River. Their first successful ventures were in the whaling industry, sea trade and agriculture, and they laid down the infrastructure (the 'grey architecture') of Portland from 1834. They chose to take the risk of occupying this southern outpost of Port Phillip illegally because they recognized its rich pastoral possibilities and the strategic importance of Portland in the trade networks of the Tasman world. They anticipated that, in the scheme of things, they would be granted tenure of the land they expropriated.

But in doing so the Hentys, and those who followed, dispossessed the Gundijimara people of western Victoria, forcing them into a condition of semi-nomadism. This paper will argue, following Sashi Tharoor's observations on the impact of British trade in India, that the success of European settlement and the pastoral industrialization of western Victoria was in fact contingent on the 'deindustrialisation' of the Gundijimara, whose expert land management and cultural modification of the lava flows had created settled habitation in village-like communities, abundant food resources, and a country that to Major Mitchell, entering from New South Wales in 1836, had looked like 'Eden'.

## Pilfering and the Tasman World: Commerce, Criminal Cultures and the ‘Securitisation’ of Space in Early Colonial Sydney and Hobart

William M Taylor,  
University of Western Australia

### Abstract

Exported from Great Britain across the Anglosphere and into the fledgling commercial centres of the Tasman world, larceny was as a way of life and not easily contained. Many of the transported convicts and emancipists in Sydney and Hobart found themselves in the antipodes because of their thievery. The deprivations of transportation and inadequate stores, shortages of skilled labour and monopoly-induced scarcity, and a country resistant to old-world agricultural and commercial practices, further encouraged crimes of property, raising parallel fears for the colonial economy. The porousness of Sydney’s urban landscapes in particular was additional provocation for the period’s criminal population to continue pilfering goods, to embezzle and abscond. At the same time, illicit incursions into the so-called ‘grey architecture’ of colonial docks, shipping facilities, and harbour-side industrial sites showed the deviants to be a heterogeneous mob. These pilferers comprised not so much a distinct ‘class’ or stratum of the colonial community as such, but were rather disgruntled seafarers ‘spiriting away’ their just measure of pay in stolen rum, starving settlers ‘pinching’ produce from government plots and orchards, worn-out labourers ‘trousering’ scraps of firewood from the lumberyard, or aboriginals simply ‘hunting and gathering’ as their people had done for millennia.

The paper takes its cue from language alerting us to the cultural aspects of pilfering and the different understandings of economy involved. It describes the spatial dimensions of pilfering’s threat to colonial power giving rise to stronger store-rooms on ships, higher walls around factories, and intensified surveillance nearly everywhere. It proposes that architecture was both a source of functional response to these deprivations (in higher walls, barred windows and the like) and an indicator and target of thievery, as signs of propriety signalling the profits of illicit trade or alerting housebreakers to goods worth stealing inside.

## The Earle Panoramas of the Tasman World

Robin Skinner,  
Victoria University of Wellington

### Abstract

In the late 1820s and 1830s London society had the opportunity to experience the Tasman world in the round through Mr Burford’s large panoramas of the harbour settlements of Sydney (1828-30) Hobart (1831), and the Bay of Islands, New Zealand (1838). These circular spectacles were based upon drawings of the travelling artist Augustus Earle who had visited these settlements in the 1820s and were each accompanied by published commentary with illustration. As well as indicating the sites’ natural resources and showing the signs of the colonial establishment and its infrastructure, the panoramas illustrated penal establishments, industries, docks, shipping, whalers, missionaries and indigenous people.

Superficially, these appear to be uncomplicated presentations. However, reception was mixed. Sydney’s advance – with grand buildings, agriculture, grazing, warehouses, roads, bridges, manufactories and building regulations – was praised, while the convicts of Hobart were foregrounded visually and in the English reviews. On the eve of its systematic colonisation, New Zealand was presented one-dimensionally as a land of rich resources, albeit with a benign and declining Maori population.

Shipping at anchor indicated the network of labour and industry around the Tasman, which in turn connected with the commerce of the northern hemisphere. This paper considers these shows and the responses that they drew in Britain to determine various understandings in the 1830s of these activities in the colonies and their impact and connection to the metropolitan world.

# EUROPE'S OWN ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE: HERITAGE, CONTESTATION, AND NECESSITY

Session chair:

**Mia Fuller**, University of California, Berkeley

In 2009, a majority of the Swiss electorate voted against the construction of minarets on Swiss mosques – implying an acceptance of new mosques and by extension, of Muslims; but denying the buildings (and by extension, their users) their most distinctive and most visible trait. Germany's right-wing Alternative for Germany party, meanwhile, has made it an on-going agenda to halt any new mosque construction altogether. In parts of Spain and Catalonia, despite high proportions of Muslim migrants and generally peaceable Christian-Muslim relations, conflicts over proposed mosques have erupted as well. At the same time, Palermo's Norman-Arab architecture is consistently preserved as a marker of Sicily's Muslim past; Córdoba's La Mezquita Mosque is part of a UNESCO World Heritage Historic Center site and as such, garners very high numbers of appreciative visitors; and Islamic architecture throughout the Balkans, extensive and varied as it is, remains beloved and in some cases, recently restored.

This panel poses the question of how to situate – architecturally speaking – Islam within Europe. Are mosques (the quintessential and most necessary Islamic structures) signs of danger, of possible radicalization within otherwise placid and over-

whelmingly Christian cityscapes? Are they indications of distant and long-ago settled conflicts, reassuringly settled in the course of the Crusades, their architectural traces neutralized into heritage or converted into sites of other worship?

We take as our premise that increasing numbers of mosques in Europe are inevitable, and that they present opportunities for meaningful design and simultaneous urban and social integration and differentiation. With that in mind, we are presenting papers addressing histories of European Islamic architecture, principally (although not exclusively) dating no farther back than the late nineteenth century and imperialism's return of 'the colonized' to 'the metropole', as well as prospects for developing and future Islamic architecture in Europe. How will such projects be negotiated, locally and nationally? What architectural forms will they adopt: variations on historic Moorish, Arab, or Ottoman models? Or the currently more common Saudi model, often financed by a Gulf State? Will local syncretisms play a design role? How will funding and oversight shape individual projects? Our ultimate goal is to initiate an overdue, overarching discussion of the place of Islam in the built environment of Europe today and in the future.

## Recovering the Great Mosque of Cordoba: The History of an Idea

Michele Lamprakos,  
University of Maryland – College Park

### Abstract

After the expulsion of Jews (1492) and the forced conversion and expulsion of Muslims and their descendants (sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries), Catholicism was strictly enforced on the Iberian peninsula. In the nineteenth century, a national narrative emerged which depicted the 'Moors' as invaders who had left little imprint on Spanish society and culture. Liberals crafted a counternarrative, idealizing the Islamic past as an era when the country was free of Church dominance. This debate played out in archeology and restoration at the country's great Islamic monumental sites: the Alhambra, Madinat al-Zahra, and the Great Mosque of Cordoba.

The Great Mosque had been the city's cathedral for over six centuries, and thus was the most highly charged of the sites – with a massive *crucero* (choir and presbytery) protruding through the roof. Liberal restoration architects sought to recover the Islamic fabric, a process that shaped the building we see today. This paper will focus on the most radical of these efforts: the proposed removal (*traslado*) of the *crucero* which, in some iterations, would have also opened the building to Muslim worship. This idea – proposed at various moments during the twentieth century, under governments of both left and right – has been virtually erased from the historical record and popular memory. *Traslado* of the *crucero* was influenced by trends in restoration – in particular, the fashion of removing cathedral choirs – and also by regional identity politics and Spain's shifting interests in the Arab world.

This paper traces the idea of *traslado* to the early 1970's – when preparations were being made to nominate the building to the new World Heritage list – drawing on a newly revealed private archive. Despite gaps in the historical record, we can piece together the remarkable history of this idea, and how it almost became a reality.

## Mountainous Mosques: Examining Georgia's Tradition of Wooden Islamic Architecture

Suzanne Harris-Brandts, MIT  
Angela Wheeler, Harvard University

### Abstract

The Republic of Georgia's mountainous western region of Adjara features a wide range of over fifty uniquely decorated and hand constructed small wooden mosques that date back to the turn of the twentieth century. The harsh mountainous climate of the Lesser Caucasus provides opportunities for rendering in wood and paint what architects in other climates would produce in stone and tile. The region thus developed a local vocabulary of mosque design that underscores the diversity of the Muslim experience worldwide. These mosques represent a regional Islamic architectural legacy that flourished along the borders of present-day Georgia and Turkey during the Ottoman era – one that managed to survive Soviet prohibitions on religion, including the mass Soviet removal of minarets.

Today, their architecture is again being threatened, albeit from two new fronts. Lack of Georgian state funding and preservation threatens their physical longevity, while Turkish-supported upgrading campaigns have led to either dramatic building renovations or complete mosque replacement. While new mosque construction in urban areas of Georgia has raised concern and even hostility towards local Muslims, the vast presence of these historic mountainous mosques is surprisingly unknown. As such, Adjara's mosques currently sit outside contemporary Georgian identity narratives that anchor the country to Orthodox Christianity. While Georgia is a predominantly Orthodox nation, the particular local practice of Islam – and its vernacular architectural manifestations – are decidedly also Georgian. These remote structures are architectural testaments to multi-confessionalism in the Caucasus and should be seen as Georgian mosques built under Ottoman influence, rather than Ottoman mosques imposed upon Georgian territory.

This paper discusses the historic legacy of Georgia's wooden mosques, describing the uniqueness of their designs in relation to Georgia's history, while further addressing issues tied to the contemporary threats facing these buildings.

## Mosques, Minarets, and Changing Urban Identities in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Emily G. Makaš,  
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

### Abstract

Throughout the Ottoman Empire, Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Royal and Federal Yugoslavia, and independence, mosques have been integral to the visual representation and urban identities of the major cities of Bosnia-Herzegovina, especially Sarajevo and Mostar. In the past century and a half, these mosques and minarets have become a source of both contestation and celebration.

Since the nineteenth century, travelers from Central and Western Europe have described Bosnia as a picturesque and accessible 'Orient,' describing Bosnian cities in terms of their concentration of mosques and minarets. In the late Yugoslav period as today, this image is still used to attract attention to Bosnia's unique tourist value of rich Islamic architecture in the heart of Europe.

Contestations over Bosnian mosques began in the Austro-Hungarian era with the rise of monumental buildings for Christian and Jewish populations. Skyline competition continues today with bell towers and minarets vying for dominance through height and numbers. During the 1990s war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, mosques such as the Ferhadija in Banja Luka and the Aladza in Foca, were targeted in campaigns against signs of past Islamic empires and present Muslim neighbors. Since the war, resilience has been demonstrated through the restoration of damaged historic mosques such as the sixteenth-century Koski Mehmed Pasha Mosque in Mostar. The continuing presence of Muslims has also been emphasized through newly-built mosques. Due to their foreign support and architecture, some of these, such as Sarajevo's Saudi-funded King Fahd and Indonesian-funded Istiqlal Mosques, have been interpreted as threats of the Islamification of Bosnian cityscapes and populations.

Thus Bosnian mosques and minarets have been signs of an accessible Orient, as potential threats, as signs of radicalization, and as neutralized heritage. Drawing on examples from throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina this paper will explore the multiple meanings of mosques and minarets to both outsiders and various local communities.

## Vulnerable Borders Passing through the Mosque Complex: The Design and Construction of Central Mosque in Cologne

Ahmet Tozoğlu,  
Abullah Gul University

### Abstract

While its first stone was laid in 2006, the Central Mosque of Cologne was the premise of establishing new paths between Muslim and Christian societies in the city. Designed by German architect Paul Böhm and financed by DITIB, a branch of the Turkish government's religious affairs authority; it took more than ten years to complete the construction works. It was opened in 2017 and has become one of the remarkable examples of contemporary mosque design. The long construction period coincided with the rising popularity of neo-Nazi movements and disruptive debates on the place of foreigners in European identity during and after the influx of thousands of Syrian refugees to Europe. The mosque also became the target of anti-Muslim arguments during design and construction phases, and it was also criticized by the local Turkish-Muslim society due to its architectural form, choice of designer, and unpredictably high cost.

This paper sheds light on three topics about the presence of Muslim Europeans in the cityscape by elaborating the Central Mosque of Cologne as a case study. First, to understand the role of the mosque in the conceptualization of public space within Turkish-Muslim society. What did they expect from the central mosque complex and in what ways would the image of the Central Mosque meet their expectations. Second, to present the form of the mosque in Turkish-Muslim society and reveal the ideological bridges spanning to the Ottoman past and its historical image. The main frame of the research will be based upon the image of the Ottoman past as it relates to the identity of local, contemporary Turkish-Muslim society. Finally, to focus on the compelling and highly charged controversy between DITIB and the architectural firm about the image and symbolic value of mosque architecture.

## Religious Austerity: The Lutheran Limits on Mosque Architecture in Sweden

Jennifer Mack,  
KTH Royal Institute of Technology / Uppsala University

### Abstract

The results of a 2016 WIN/Gallup survey ranked Sweden as the second least religious country in world (after China), yet the many immigrants arriving there since the mid-twentieth century have modulated this. Even so, Muslim groups have typically been consigned, sometimes for decades, in ad hoc spaces known as 'cellar mosques' (*källarmoskéer*). Recently, new mosques have been constructed or planned in and around major Swedish cities like Stockholm and Gothenburg, yet the design visions of Muslim groups have frequently been challenged: as new centres of power in an increasingly diverse country, but also as assaults on taste.

In the twentieth century, the *folkhem* (people's home, or early welfare state) and *folkkyrka* (people's church, the Church of Sweden) linked Lutheranism and welfare state institutions. Unlike the lavish architecture associated with Catholicism in France and Italy, however, Swedish welfare-state Christianity promoted asceticism in church designs and frowned upon ostentation. The state streamlined these practices in late modernist town centers, where the simple churches were regarded as one space among many in an overall civic infrastructure. Contemporary architects draw on these traditions – explicitly or implicitly – in their work with Muslims, now among the major commissioners of new religious architecture in Sweden.

Focusing on current and future mosques on sites around Stockholm, I draw on archival and ethnographic research to argue that their architects' design tendencies – usually toward modernism – should be read not merely as stylistic preferences but extensions of a tradition of austerity in Swedish Lutheran architecture. For example, architects reduce exterior ornamentation on mosques, even after clients present elaborate designs and inspirations from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Kuwait, and beyond.

Is there a Lutheran underpinning to Swedish architects' allegedly secular, professional perspective even in the context of the construction of new buildings? How far does such a perspective affect these architects' work on mosques?

## MODERNITY AND RURALITY: MAPPING THE STATE OF RESEARCH

Session chairs:

Axel Fisher, Université libre de Bruxelles / TU Berlin  
Aleksa Korolija, Politecnico di Milano

Rurality appears as an emerging frame of reference in European discourses around the built environment, upsetting the longstanding lack of interest for rural areas of both the design disciplines and their histories. While some modernist architecture has sought, throughout its development, to find inspiration in vernacular and rural architecture (as a presumed source of authenticity and rationality), it was in the cities that this movement identified its preferred field of operations. Similarly, in the development of modernist urban planning and design, the importation of the countryside's environmental and social qualities to the urban sphere was meant to reform and cure the ill-perceived large industrial cities.

This session deals with an overlooked topic in architectural history – modernist design and planning in and for the countryside – addressing the relation between experiments in designing the physical environment and rurality at large. Examining the works of prominent or lesser-known modernist heroes, as much as those of obscure engineers active in the European periphery, it unveils unnoticed episodes in architectural history, spanning across key moments the modern era, disciplinary approaches, and scales. In doing so, this session offers an outline of different modernist attitudes towards rurality.

Among the transversal issues raised across the session, one finds:

alternately progressive and reactionary ontologies of the rural and nature: from more romantic, individualistic, and subjective attempts to reconcile humans and nature, to the invocation of the rural's alleged moralizing influence on individuals or collectivities;

from escapist to merely functional uses of the country-side;

uneven architectural boldness, oscillating between the imitation of the allegedly authentic vernacular, efforts to root emerging modernist styles in tradition, and the introduction of radically new architectural languages in the countryside, whether or not in connection with quests for national identity or even with totalitarian rhetorics;

an inclination towards the dissolution of architectural design in favour of growing concerns for village design, regional planning, landscape, and even social planning and engineering;

the autonomy or adherence of design stances to the underlying agrarian systems.

The extremely diversified range of the discussed case studies, while suggesting an expansion of architectural history's boundaries, sparks a potentially promising debate around the most appropriate conceptual frameworks and methodologies to approach the entanglements of modernism and rurality.

## To Subordinate, Unite, or Confront Architecture with Nature Knut Knutsen's Regionalist Strategies and Their Impact

Espen Johnsen,  
University of Oslo

### Abstract

This paper discusses architect Knut Knutsen's regionalist strategies around 1950, specifically regarding the relationship between architecture, the human factor, and nature, and how this was expressed in the modernization of the Norwegian countryside through his own projects and their impact on younger architects. In Norway, architects in the post-war years were not involved in the planning of villages or 'total' rural landscapes. However, they designed buildings for the welfare state in or near rural settlements, as well as single-family houses and cabins located in nature.

In the late 1930s, Knutsen turned towards an architecture adapted to the site, to nature, and to the use of natural materials. After years of intense work (1946–1951), including his project for the *District Council Houses* in Vågå (1947) and his own *Summer House* (1949), Knutsen published his radical views on architecture's ecological, social, cultural, historical, and artistic responsibility. He attacked the contemporary modernist practice (by Mies and his followers) of producing self-sufficient, visible architecture. According to Knutsen, modern architecture should be subordinate to nature and slip almost invisibly into the landscape.

Knutsen's architectural thinking falls into the transition to the 'Second Modernism' (as described by Pallasmaa) by being more oriented towards the situational, the unique, the historical, the inclusive, and the pragmatic. From the late 1950s onwards, he became more interested in creating a 'synthetic landscape', a dialogue between *ecocentrism* and *anthropocentrism*, that combined impulses from nature as well as from modern and anonymous architecture. Studies of nature should inspire formal variations, and the house could also create an enhanced expression of the landscape. His layout for the *Council Houses* in Askim (1958) and for a *Humanist City* (1967–1968) will be included in this discussion.

Finally, the paper will discuss Knutsen's impact and how Are Vesterlid and Sverre Fehn used different architectural strategies in their thoughtful dialogue with nature, either by means of subordination, unification, or subtle contrast.

## ‘Architecture, in the sense of pre-war times, is dying’: Ernst May’s Housing Schemes in Weimar’s Rural East

Sarah M. Schlachetzki,  
University of Bern

### Abstract

In the interwar period, Berlin-based Martin Wagner was elaborating the idea of his ‘city-countryside-city’. Socialist intellectuals such as Alexander Schwab aimed at a future balance between city and rurality by combining industrialism and re-agrarianization ‘in a new, higher form’. Creating settlements for the hinterlands always mirrored social policy, economics, and, for the case of Weimar’s East, plans for national consolidation. Only for the political left, however, architectural modernism was symbolic of a one-way street to a better future.

Throughout his career, architect Ernst May tackled the problem of modernism and the rural in more than one way. While his large-scale projects for the Soviet Union in the 1930s were mostly unrealized, and his Frankfurt period earned him the greatest international renown, it was his position in Silesia between 1919 and 1925 that had challenged the young architect and his team to develop immediate, cheap, yet sustainable housing schemes for Breslau’s countryside. It was also his achievement there (the creation of more than 3,000 dwellings) that won him his job in Frankfurt.

Given historiography’s focus on the metropolis, it does not come as a surprise that May’s Silesian work has either been ignored altogether or considered an ‘unmodern’ predecessor to the full-fledged modernism of his *Neues Frankfurt*. My paper will focus on May’s and his team’s Silesian housing schemes in the underdeveloped countryside, with respect to the colonization efforts vis-à-vis the border shifts of the time and with respect to the greater economic policies behind them, setting them in perspective with his later work, including his activity in East Africa. I argue that the formalist rifts between his work in Silesia, the USSR, Africa, and West Germany elucidate larger historiographic pitfalls in the conceptualization of ‘modernism’ and provide an apt example for a debate on the interconnection of architecture and the rustic.

## Agrarian Penal Colonies and the Project of Modern Rurality in Italy

Sabrina Puddu,  
University of Hertfordshire / Leeds Beckett University

### Abstract

Between the 1860s and 1930s, seven penal colonies were founded in the rural territory of Sardinia. Following the transition from Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia to the unified Kingdom of Italy, they were instrumental to the latter’s goals of enforcing penal reform, and modernising remote rural areas. Penal colonies were, in fact, planned to facilitate the birth and acceptance of a new, modern rural order imposed by the State. They impacted on the local farmers and shepherds’ secular habits, substituting the feudal *Dominium Divisum* and land use right of *Ademprivium* with an enforcement of absolute ownership that was codified by the institution of the *Cadaster*. Besides, they added another dimension to the European discourse on penal regimes that was then focused on the architectural model solution of the prison. In this respect, Robin Evans has shown how the establishment of a penal colony in Mettray in 1839, at the time when the prison was being perfected as a building type, evidenced uncertainty about the latter’s efficacy in reforming human behaviour, and asserted the need for new para-carceral institutions. Renouncing the strict confinement and central supervision of urban walled prisons, and promoted by social scientists, these institutions asserted the reformative power of a work routine on inmates, and argued for a rural context as the ideal setting for such purpose.

Established some twenty years after Mettray, the Sardinian colonies followed this same penal philosophy, although their spatial structure was not a linear descendent of the French precedent. In line with other examples – like Merksplas in Belgium – they expanded their reformative scope towards the domestication of large-scale territories. Their scope was also extended in time, planned as they were to develop over two stages: after the initial colonisation and land reclaim, civilians were meant to take over the colonies and their territory and turn them into modern agrarian settlements. The colonies of Castiadas and Cuguttu-Tramariglio are particularly explicative of this staged process. The first, built in 1875 on wetland affected by malaria, was implemented as a civilian settlement under Fascism and through the agrarian reforms of the post war democratic state. Cuguttu (1864) was followed by a more elaborate architectural project – the settlement of Porto Conte-Tramariglio (1938), an instance of Italian architectural rationalism of the 1930s – to kick-start the fascist agrarian ambitions of a territorial system of farms and urban settlements. My paper will provide an analysis of the two colonies framing them within similar experiences in Europe, and will elaborate on the role that large-scale spatial reasoning played at some crucial moments of political transition in Italy.

## ‘Only Human Tirelessness Built on Science can Conquer the Desert’: Planned Agricultural Communities in Early Nineteenth Century Hungary

Kristof Fatsar,  
Writtle University College

### Abstract

A dominant economical and political theme in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Hungary was the colonization of its southern and largely infertile regions. This was in large part due to the earlier Ottoman occupation of the central parts of the country, a historic circumstance which had still not been overcome by centrally organized systematic colonization, mostly by German-speaking settlers, as late as a hundred years later. Another factor in the slow development of the southern regions was the unfavourable soil conditions, namely the drifting sand. One of those who seriously thought about remedying this situation was the almost entirely forgotten Coblenz-born engineer and landscape designer, Rudolph Witsch. He had been experimenting with dune control in Hungary when creating a public park in the city of Pest in 1799, and was later employed by the military that governed the southern strip of the country after its reconquest. He wrote a treatise on the subject that was not only concerned about turning the region to profitable agriculture, but also proposing the layout of an ideal village as the core of the newly acquired agricultural lands. His proposal was not in the genre of Ledoux’s utopian industrial (at Chaux) or agricultural (at Mauperthuis) settlements of grandeur. Rather, it followed Rudolf Eickemeyer’s (1787) very utilitarian approach to planning villages.

His ideas to colonize the infertile southern ends of the country with land melioration methods and planned villages was eventually undertaken, although it is yet unclear whether his publications played a role in this process at all. This paper investigates the international context of Witsch’s theoretical work and reflects on the contemporary success of many Hungarian landowners to turn barren lands to fruitful agricultural estates around their country houses and naturalistic gardens, some of which were designed by Witsch himself.

## OPEN SESSION: SOCIALIST BLOCK

Session chair:

Mart Kalm, Estonian Academy of Arts

## National in Content, International in Form: Soviet Modernism and National Constructs in the Soviet Socialist Republics of Belarus and Lithuania

Oxana Gourinovitch,  
TU Berlin

### Abstract

The efforts to centralize the construction sector of the Soviet Union marked Soviet building policies from the very beginning. It was, though, not until the late 1950s that they brought accountable, holistic results. The reforms set off by Khrushchev succeeded in reorganizing the architectural institutions, scattered between multitudinous commissariats, soviets, and city councils, into a centralized system of design institutes. The reforms united planning and construction industries under the administration of one specific Ministry of Architecture and Construction, specified a general building code (SNiP), and extended and unified the architectural informational influx via a centrally controlled publishing system. Such centralizing measures made the large-scale industrialization and standardization feasible – ‘new advanced methods of construction and of production of building materials’ in specialized factories allowed the construction to ‘be increasingly transformed into the assembly of building components’, – which Khrushchev highlighted in a memorable speech in December 1956.

Within the same reformatory framework, though, a decree from 1954 granted unprecedented planning sovereignty to the national republics, delegating the planning decisions to local administrations. The first generation of national specialists, graduating from the newly opened local architectural departments of the national educational institutions, followed soon after. Already before 1960, many national republics saw the last non-locally designed buildings completed: the projects by architects from Moscow and Leningrad vanished from their capital cities as Socialist Realism did. Internationally-inclined Soviet modernism was to become far more accommodating for the national constructs than its ‘national in form’ predecessor.

The paper studies this ambiguous transition, focusing on the cases of two national republics representing the extremities of the multifarious Soviet spectrum: the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic with strong nationalist tendencies, articulated through all social strata, and the Belorussian SSR, distinguished by an eclipse of the nationalist sentiment.

## Invisible Theory of Praxis? Centralized Architectural Theory in the GDR

Kathrin Siebert,  
ETH Zürich

### Abstract

Between 1965 and 1967, on behalf of the German Academy of Architecture (Deutsche Bauakademie) of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), an authors’ group under the guidance of the Swiss architect Hans Schmidt (1893–1972) developed a comprehensive initial proposal for a marxist architectural theory. The 261 pages that made up the *Contributions to Architectural Theory Research (Beiträge zur architekturtheoretischen Forschung)* were completed in 1967. Within ten thematic essays, six architects developed fundamental and current questions of architectural theory, such as concept, subject, and method, the relationship between architecture and society, as well as principles and conditions for creativity. The basic principle was a concept of architecture that covered all different scales of space, from the single apartment to urban development. In their opinion, architectural theory research should be based on knowledge and methods of cultural theory, sociology, psychology, cybernetics, and semiotics. However, the compendium circulated only in an edition of 200 copies. In my contribution, I will examine the production of architectural theory under centralized conditions. I’d like to show that in the GDR, there was not only concentration on economy but also on architectural theory for a particular moment in time. What kind of circumstances made this happen? Who was involved in the process? And what about the results? What exactly was the critical potential of the mentioned text? Why was the publication of this fundamental research officially prohibited, although principles of architectural theory had been so urgently demanded? What were the factors that made it unacceptable?

## Travelling Influences from East to West and Back: The Case of Finland and Soviet Estonia

Laura Berger, Aalto University  
Sampo Ruoppila, University of Turku

### Abstract

Our paper focuses on the knowledge transfer between Finland and Soviet Estonia during the 1960s and 1970s. As populations, Finns and Estonians have long historical and cultural contacts, aided by the similarity of the languages. After the inward turning period during Stalin's rule, the Khrushchev thaw marks the re-establishment of contacts during the 1960s. The architectural historian Mart Kalm has argued that within the entire Eastern Bloc, the direct and significant Scandinavian influence on Estonia during the Soviet years was unique. In this context, it was most of all Finland where it came to be possible to travel and sustain contacts. Thus, we argue that the special relationship between Finland and Soviet Estonia offers a most intriguing point of contacts to explore in detail.

We identify three consequential modes of exchange, in each of which images play a seminal role: (1) travels including official excursions but often also accompanied or followed by exchange between private persons, (2) the spread of publications, and (3) exhibitions, where projects were displayed if not even canonized as known examples to the wider architectural community. Accordingly, the relevant materials come from travel accounts, epoch periodicals, and exhibition catalogues. The specific example is two Finnish housing estates which came to dominate the Estonian narrative: These are the first post-war, truly modernist residential areas of Tapiola (1954–late 1960s) and Pihlajamäki (1959–1965), which were the first Finnish examples where prefabricated elements were used to a large extent. Among masses of housing being constructed during these decades, it is images of Tapiola and Pihlajamäki which continued to be disseminated as the ideal examples long after their completion.

## Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennials as the Meeting Grounds of Late Socialist and Late Capitalist Postmodernisms

Ingrid Ruudi,  
Estonian Academy of Arts

### Abstract

What kind of a dialogue could take place between the ideals and ideologies of late socialist and late capitalist architects and theoreticians in the era of transition that shook Eastern Europe from the last years of the 1980s to the first years of the 1990s? What kinds of shifts of meanings and (mis)translations happened in communicating the beliefs and values of practitioners of the both sides? What were the political connotations of different architectures, and what was at stake for both sides in the attempt to establish an institutional platform for facilitating such a dialogue?

These issues are well illustrated by the case of the audacious undertaking of organizing the Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial (NBAT) in 1990 in Tallinn as a platform for high-level international cooperation and the exchange of ideas, decades before the biennial boom spread from the art world to architecture. The event featured representations of Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Icelandic, Faroese, Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian architecture. With a two-day conference, a major exhibition, and a student workshop, the event was a success featuring international stars like Aldo van Eyck, Peter Wilson, Sverre Fehn, Henning Larsen, Juhani Pallasmaa, and others, in addition to the most celebrated architects from the Baltics. The theme – *Metropolism and Provincialism* – was ambitiously global and in tune with postmodern regionalism yet not without a touch of self-irony and a critical stance. The equally representative follow-up in 1993, titled *Architecture and Individuality*, demonstrated more complicated communication issues, with Western European architects like Günther Behnisch, Willem Jan Neutelings, Snøhetta, and others discarding the formal issues of postmodernism as individualistic expression and Baltic architects somewhat losing their ground due to the harsh reality of the first years of cowboy capitalism. In addition to analysing the shifting focus between late/post/socialist and late capitalist contexts, it is possible to observe changes happening within those three years as well.

The paper is based on archival material, contemporary reviews in Estonian and international media, and interviews with the organizers and the participants from Nordic and Baltic countries.

# DISCOVERY AND PERSISTENCE

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# MEASURE EVERY WANDERING PLANET'S COURSE: RESIDENTIAL SYSTEMS IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE, 1450-1700

Session Chairs:

**Krista De Jonge**, KU Leuven

**Konrad Ottenheim**, Utrecht University

**Birgitte Bøggild Johannsen**, National Museum of Denmark

At the crossroads of architectural history, court studies, and urban studies, this session will address the interaction between the different residences of the early modern elite in Europe from the waning of the Middle Ages until the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, exploring them as parts of an integrated system or network on different geographic scales. The noble way of life was essentially nomadic, mirroring the constant migration of the reigning princely court in early modern Europe, dictated not only by political necessity (including especially war) but also by pleasure (e.g. war's mirror image, the hunt). Complex itineraries thus linked the often extremely scattered noble possessions with the centres of gravity of court life in a single 'planetary' system.

While the 'nomadic', and seasonal, character of the noble way of life has been generally recognized, there has been no attempt as yet to do the same for the elites at a lower level than that of the reigning prince, let alone for the urban patriciate and merchant class. The latter nevertheless also migrated between townhouse (with or without commercial infrastructure), suburban property, and rural domain, serving

as economic and socio-cultural investment (especially if tied to a noble title). Interaction between different social levels has not been looked at from a spatial perspective, leaving open pressing questions on the architectural plane.

The papers in this session explore particular conjunctions of residences beyond the classic opposition of town/country (to which in the early modern era is added the 'villa', suburban or pseudo-rural but not fortified and with urban formal characteristics), thus revisiting and revising standard typologies within a broader framework. Case studies address questions such as the interplay between the patron's itinerary and the development of particular residence types, explore architectural exchanges between particular patrons or social groups in this perspective, or review the whole spatial footprint of a patron in its entirety. They will pay particular attention to the role(s) each residence might fulfil within the strategy of self-representation of the patron in relation to his/her rank and position, and to the evolution of that role in response to changing aspirations.

## 'Going Back and Forth': Residential Systems in Renaissance Venice

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### Abstract

A Venetian commonplace asserted that 'to live outside Venice is not to be alive'. Yet Venetian patricians' spatial footprint had always expanded well beyond the lagoon. The history of Venice's landward turn, from maritime trade to investment in the *terraferma*, is well known. So too is its architectural dimension: Palladio's villas, especially those for Venetians such as the Badoer and Emo, are interpreted as paradigms of the Renaissance agricultural villa. Little attention, however, has been paid to the status of these villas in relation to the families' other residences and the mobile lifestyle required by owning multiple, geographically dispersed homes. In this regard, Palladio's Venetian patrons can illuminate the theme of early modern residential systems and their architectural strategies outside the courtly context.

This paper will focus on two families from the noble Pisani clan. Vettor Pisani and his brothers, patrons of Palladio's villa at Bagnolo, possessed or built several residences in Venice and on the *terraferma*. These houses served different members of the *fraterna* and various practical and representational functions. I have designated one type the 'stop-over villa', a smaller house intended for brief stays en route between houses. While enabling its noble owners to avoid the indignities of a public inn, it also facilitated transport of agricultural products. The subject of my second case study, Francesco Pisani, possessed just two houses: his Palladian villa at Montagnana and a stop-over villa in Monselice. He rented living quarters in Venice, and his country estate served as his principal residence.

Both case studies demonstrate the inadequacy of centre-periphery models to explain the complex residential configurations of sixteenth-century Venetians. The urban palace was not the sun around which a satellite villa orbited, rather each was a node in a constellation of dwellings bound by their owner's movement among them.

# The Materialisation of Power and Authority: The Architectural Commissions of Charles of Croÿ (1596–1612)

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## Abstract

While the monarchs in Spain turned to a more sedentary lifestyle in the second half of the sixteenth century, the noble way of life in the Spanish Low Countries remained essentially nomadic. This itinerant lifestyle originated from the feudal system, where the monarch granted possession of a certain territory to a nobleman, in exchange for military services or financial aid. Since the lord needed to be present to govern, the nomadic lifestyle became a method of political governance.

By the end of the sixteenth century however, the loans became hereditary and a select group of high nobleman held most of the fiefs within the Low Countries through inheritance and acquisition. Charles of Croÿ (1560–1612), the fourth duke of Aarschot, the first duke of Croÿ, the prince of Chimay, the count of Beaumont etc., was one of the highest-ranking noblemen in the Low Countries of that time. As these territories were too scattered and widespread to ensure an even, semi-continuous presence, the power and high status of the lord was not expressed by the actual attendance of the duke, but rather through the commissions built within a certain territory. The network thus becomes tangible, through the palaces and residences that – even unoccupied, had the duke remaining *in absentia* – and marked the territory and materialised the ducal presence. This paper offers an analysis of the residential network and architectural commissions of Charles of Croÿ, and shows how they contributed to the high status of the duke in his territories. As a corollary to his architectural strategy of representation, he established an extensive hierarchic structure of officers, who ruled the territories in his name, while he gradually turned to a more drawn-back life at his residence in Beaumont.

## Keywords

Noble residences, residential networks, Low Countries, Charles of Croÿ.

## Introduction

The Southern Low Countries had suffered greatly from the Iconoclastic Fury and the religious troubles of the second half of the sixteenth century, which had ravaged countryside and cities alike. By the end of the century, the time had come to deal with reconstruction, especially after the arrival

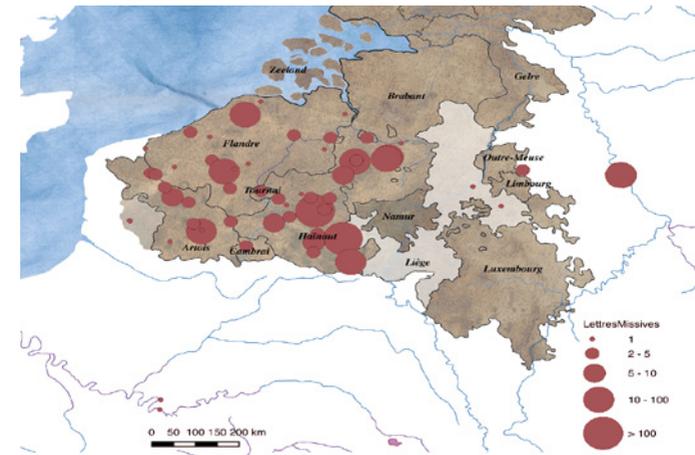


Figure 1. Map of the itinerary of Charles of Croÿ, based on the lettres missives. Compilation made by Sanne Maekelberg, based on a reconstruction of the provinces of the Low Countries around 1600. Source: Jongepier, I., GISTorical Antwerp – University of Antwerp / Hercules Foundation; and a map made for the archdukes in 1602. Source: City Archives, Furnes.

of the new governors, Archduke Albert of Austria and the Infanta Isabel of Spain, in 1598. The Twelve Years' Truce (1609–21), encouraged the nobility to undertake major construction projects to restore their damaged patrimony. The death of Philippe III of Croÿ, during his journey to Venice in 1595, turned his son Charles of Croÿ (1560–1612) into the head of the dynasty as the fourth duke of Aarschot. A large part of his legacy, amongst others, the territory of Aarschot and the urban palace in Brussels, had suffered from the Protestant invasions. As an active patron of the arts and architecture, Charles of Croÿ invested greatly in his architectural representation. The reconstruction of his itinerary, based on a collection of his letters in combination with his autobiography, gives an idea of his mobility.<sup>1</sup> In the resulting map (Figure 1), the size of the spheres corresponds with the number of letters sent from a certain location, thus indicating the relative 'importance' of the latter in the itinerary.<sup>2</sup> His favourite places of residence – the castles of Beaumont and Heverlee – can clearly be discerned, as well as the locations linked with his position as governor of different provinces: Flanders (Bruges), Hainaut (Mons) and Artois (Arras). The map confirms that the nomadic lifestyle of this high nobleman was determined by political circumstances – which also explains the importance of Brussels in the itinerary – and by social practices, in particular the hunt. In fact, both Beaumont and Heverlee were associated with a large, private hunting forest.

## Charles of Croÿ and His Court Organisation

Having led a very active political and military life until he became head of the family, Charles of Croÿ focused on his own patrimony from 1595 onwards.<sup>3</sup> The

following years he commissioned several large renovation projects. Moreover, he developed an administrative system, which allowed him to lead a more retiring life in his residence at Beaumont from 1605 on, especially after his second marriage to Dorothee of Croÿ in December of that year.<sup>4</sup> Like most princely estates, it featured a council and a *chambre des comptes*.<sup>5</sup> Each of the duke's territories was administered by a *lieutenant* and by *greffiers des fiefs*, who were responsible for the collection of taxes and the keeping of accounts. These were overseen by the *chambre des comptes* (chamber of accounts) established in Beaumont, which also had an important monitoring function (Table 1). The physical presence of the duke himself was thus no longer necessary. In Beaumont, Charles of Croÿ established an extensive household, almost proportional to the court of the archdukes (Table 2 and Table 3).<sup>6</sup> His domestic departments, including the organisation of his own personal quarters, counted 66 people as part of the court. The four stables of the Beaumont residence housed 41 horses: seven serving the *chambre des comptes*, eight for the domestic departments and 26 horses for the duke and his carriage.

### CHAMBRE DES COMPTES

#	Description
3	Le superintendant de tous nos affaires et président de nostre chambre du conseil et des comptes, avecq un clerq, un serviteur et deux chevaux
3	Le conseilier trésorier général et maîtres des comptes, aussy avecq un clerq, un serviteur et deux chevaux
2	Le maistre des comptes, avecq un serviteur et un cheval
2	L'auditeur, aussy avecq un serviteur en cheval
2	le greffier, controlleur et secrétaire, aussy avecq un serviteur et un cheval
1	l'hussier et messenger

Table 1. Structure of the *chambre des comptes* of Charles of Croÿ.

Source: Frédéric Auguste Ferdinand Thomas de Reiffenberg (ed.), *Une existence de grand seigneur au seizième siècle. Mémoires autographes de Duc Charles de Croy* (Bruxelles, Leipzig: C. Muquardt, 1845).

### CHEVAULX

#	Description
6	Six grands chevaux
4	Quatre double courtaux,
4	Quatre courtaux,
4	Quatre chevaux de cosche,
4	Quatre chevaux de chariot,
4	Quatre mullets

Table 2. Horses of the duke of Aarschot. Source: Frédéric Auguste Ferdinand Thomas de Reiffenberg (ed.), *Une existence de grand seigneur au seizième siècle. Mémoires autographes de Duc Charles de Croy* (Bruxelles, Leipzig: C. Muquardt, 1845).

### DOMESTIQUES

#	Description
2	Un maistre d'hostel, un serviteur et un cheval,
2	Un escuier, un serviteur et un cheval,
2	Un gentilhomme de la chambre servant aussy de couppier, un serviteur et un cheval,
4	Deux aultres gentilhommes servans, deux serviteurs et deux chevaux,
2	Un chapeleain et un serviteur, lequel servira aussy de prédicateur,
2	Un docteur en médecine et un serviteur, lequel pourra servir d'apoticquaire et distilleur
3	Un secrétaire et un serviteur servant de clerq, un aultre secrétaire,
6	Six paiges,
1	Un picqueur,
2	Deux varlets de chambre dont l'un servira de garderobe,
1	Un argentier,
1	Un dispencier,
1	Un crédencier,
1	Un boutellier,
1	Un boulenger,
1	Un brasseur,
1	Un maistre cuisinier,
1	Un maistre pastissier,
3	Un ayde de cuisine, un garçon ou laveplat,
1	Un valet de sale,
1	Un portier,
2	Deux lavendières,
1	Un jardinier,
6	Six laquais,
3	Deux trompettes, un garçon et deux chevaux
1	Un maistre pallefrenier servant de marischal,
4	Trois pallefreniers et un garçon,
4	Un coschier, un charton et deux garçons,
2	Deux mulletiers,
1	Un braconnier
1	Un tireur,
1	Un fauconier

Table 3. Members of the domestic department of the duke of Aarschot. Source: Frédéric Auguste Ferdinand Thomas de Reiffenberg (ed.), *Une existence de grand seigneur au seizième siècle. Mémoires autographes de Duc Charles de Croy* (Bruxelles, Leipzig: C. Muquardt, 1845).

### Building Strategy and Ducal Presence

The extensive archival sources, concerning the architectural endeavours of Charles of Croÿ, allow us to reconstruct his chief projects (Figure 2). The four baronies of the duchy of Aarschot were each equipped with a representative building, with the castle of Heverlee as the *magnum opus*. The urban palace in Brussels, as well as in Brabant, was completely refurbished and paired with a new garden pavilion in Sint-Joost-ten-Node, just outside the city boundaries. In Hainaut, work was done on the castles of Beaumont and Chimay, two major nodes in the Croÿ patrimony, together with lesser repairs and maintenance works on several castles in the same province. Also, the heritage of his mother, mainly the castle of Comines, was put back into shape. Strikingly, the residences where important construction works were carried out coincide with the focal points in the itinerary of Charles of Croÿ, with the castles of Heverlee and Beaumont as absolute highlights. The only exception is the city of Aarschot, foundation of the ducal title, visited only once by its overlord according to the records. The surviving plans, descriptions, accounts, and other documents still preserved in various archives, all carry the approval and signature of Charles of Croÿ, proving that he vetted every document, often on two separate occasions. These inscriptions testify to his need to control the commissions personally as part of his grand plan for the further development of the Croÿ heritage. While some architects and surveyors, such as the noted military draughtsman and engineer Pierre Lepoivre, seem to have worked on several sites, Charles of Croÿ remained the sole mastermind behind the whole programme.

Common ground can be found in the representative elements featured in all of the principal residences: a decorative programme with a genealogical theme, opulent gardens, and a conscious appeal to the past, expressed through a particular architectural typology.

### Origin and Descent – Genealogy as Ornament

Already in the sixteenth century, the Croÿ were aware of the importance of their pedigree and of the patrimony that was built by them through the centuries. Territory, titles, and genealogy were inextricably intertwined. Charles's great-uncle William of Croÿ (1458–1521), lord of Chièvres, was perhaps the first one to include an extensive genealogical programme into one of his built commissions. The 20 large, stained-glass windows of the gallery on the first floor of the castle of Heverlee depicted the Croÿ ancestors.<sup>7</sup> William and his wife Mary of Hamal were the last to be shown, suggesting that the concept of the series indeed dated back to their time, i.e. the first building phase.<sup>8</sup> Jean Scohier (ca. 1560 – ?), a chaplain and genealogist originating from Beaumont (Hainaut), made the first known written genealogy of the Croÿ, dedicated to Philippe III of Croÿ in 1589.<sup>9</sup> Scohier was the first to claim that the Croÿ descended from the kings of Hungary through the marriage of Catherine, heiress of Araines and Croÿ

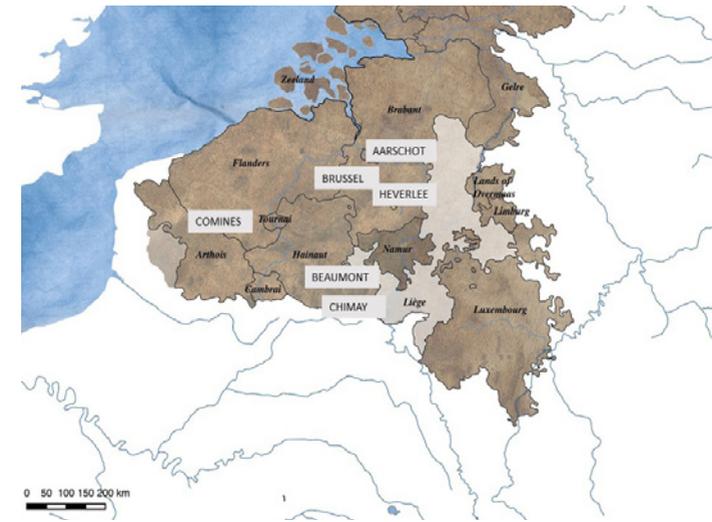


Figure 2. Location of the architectural commissions of Charles of Croÿ, duke of Aarschot.

to Marc, king of Hungary in the twelfth century. Their two sons Jean, lord of Araines and Guillaume, lord of Croÿ, became the founders of the Croÿ dynasty. Charles of Croÿ, son of Philippe III, continued the tradition. The first known genealogy commissioned by him dates from 1606; the beautifully illustrated volume also showcases individual portraits of the different members of the dynasty.<sup>10</sup> These are followed by images of the most important territories held by the duke, such as different views of the duchy of Aarschot and its constituent baronies (Heverlee, Bierbeek, ...), Château-Porcien and Montcornet.<sup>11</sup> For Aarschot, Heverlee, Château-Porcien, and Montcornet, the castles representing the ducal presence are even depicted separately. In 1612, Jacques de Bie published the Croÿ genealogy in print, thus sealing Charles of Croÿ's reputation as the family genealogist.<sup>12</sup> Elaborate pedigrees were also used as decoration in many of his built commissions. In his new *maison de plaisance* in Sint-Joost-ten-Node near Brussels, begun in 1597, one of the rooms in the tower displayed the Croÿ family tree in its windows.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the stained glass windows of the great hall on the first floor of the urban palace in Brussels were decorated with the descent of the fourth duke of Aarschot.<sup>14</sup>

### Showcasing Opulence:

#### Garden Design as Representation Strategy

The same sources describe the opulence of the gardens surrounding Heverlee castle, where parterres filled with the most exquisite flowers and herbs alternated with exotic trees and hedges (Figure 3).<sup>15</sup> The library of Charles of Croÿ demonstrated his fondness of horticulture, too, as it



Figure 3. The castle of Heverlee and the surrounding gardens.  
Source: University Archives KU Leuven, Arenberg collection, n° 2414, f. 3r.

contained over 60 works on agriculture, as well as books on the medicinal properties of plants and flowers. He even authored a book on agriculture: *Abrégé touchant l'agriculture, receuillé et mis en escrit par nous, Charles, syre et duc de Croÿ et d'Arschot, dédié à madame Dorothee, duchesse de Croy et d'Arschot, nostre femme, 1606*.<sup>16</sup> Charles seemed to have shared this passion with his father Philippe III of Croÿ. It was indeed Philippe, who had commissioned the extensive gardens of the residence at Chimay, which were later partly redesigned by Charles. Philippe III of Croÿ was also known to correspond with Charles de l'Ecluse, alias Carolus Clusius, the famous botanist. This interest seems to have passed from father to son, as it was Charles who finished the gardens surrounding the castles at Heverlee and Beaumont. The *menus plaisirs* of the duke mention several *ouvrages des jardins* in Beaumont and Charles of Croÿ even appointed his own gardener,



Figure 4. Reconstruction of the *maison de plaisance* of Charles of Croÿ in Sint-Joost-ten-Node (near Brussels). Source: Sanne Maekelberg, KU Leuven.

Guillaume Jouret, as part of the permanent staff there.<sup>17</sup> In 1604, Jacques Plateau was appointed to manage the care of the foreign plants and the cabinet of curiosities in Beaumont, the richness of which Charles of Croÿ emphasised in a letter to Carolus Clusius.<sup>18</sup> However, this famous botanist had a well-established relationship with Marie de Brimeu, the estranged wife of Charles of Croÿ and thus refused to work in his service.<sup>19</sup> As there was no room for elaborate gardens in Brussels, Charles of Croÿ built a *maison de plaisance* in Sint-Joost-ten-Node, just outside the city walls (Figure 4). This L-shaped pavilion looked out over an extraordinary garden, filled with rare plants and trees on one side and a large orchard on the other. These lush gardens expressed the wealth of the commissioner and could also be used for representative receptions and festivities.

#### The Glorious Burgundian Past

Charles turned the castle of Beaumont, one of the main residences of the Croÿ dynasty, into the administrative capital of his estates. The residence – said to be big enough to house three sovereign princes and their household – was situated on a plateau looking out over the entire area.<sup>20</sup> The territory of Beaumont had been donated to the Croÿ in 1453 by Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, in exchange for financial aid and military service.<sup>21</sup> At the time, Philip the Good had even undertaken major restoration works on the ducal residence in the city.<sup>22</sup> 150 years later, the palace still showed remarkable similarities to other Burgundian residences, such as the Palais Rihour at Lille, with its four-wing set-up with courtyard and protruding chapel complex. In

spite of the extensive restoration works<sup>23</sup> commissioned by Charles of Croÿ, the residence retained its fifteenth-century appearance.

A similar strategy was adopted in Sint-Joost-ten-Node, where Charles of Croÿ bought a second domain, just across from the leisure pavilion described above. This, a part of a vineyard formerly belonging to the dukes of Burgundy, is first mentioned in 1465; at the time, Philip the Good made several trips to his castle in 'Saint-Josse de Nouye', where he received and entertained guests, dined, and bathed.<sup>24</sup> In the first half of the sixteenth century, the property belonged to Engelbert II, Count of Nassau and his successors, hence its name of 'the old castle of Nassau', which persisted up to the beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup> Here too, little to no significant changes were made to the outer appearance of the residence, carefully preserving its 'Burgundian' look. The drawings of the domain, commissioned by Charles of Croÿ and probably executed by Jacques de Bersacques<sup>26</sup> show an L-shaped manor house on a moated site, accessible by a stone bridge with three arches followed by a wooden drawbridge, and flanked by two towers.<sup>27</sup> By the end of the sixteenth century this composition had lost all military meaning, but the symbolic power of these military elements testified to the owner's noble status.<sup>28</sup> In the duchy of Aarschot, two of the baronies received a tower construction as representative building, referring to medieval residential towers or fortified keeps (*donjons*).<sup>29</sup> These towers were considered the 'inner sanctum of the lordship', and thus had a symbolic meaning to the contemporary observer.<sup>30</sup>

### Innovative Design

While keeping residences in a fifteenth-century, 'Burgundian' state was obviously an established strategy, Charles of Croÿ also commissioned some quite innovative architecture. The leisure pavilion in Sint-Joost-ten-Node was a large L-shaped volume, spanning a water feature. After crossing the bridge visitors entered directly into the long gallery, where 19 large windows offered a view of the surrounding gardens on both sides. A similar typology could actually be found in the castle at Heverlee, which had been begun a century earlier. Here the (lower) gallery had the same length (35 metres) but it was almost twice as wide (nine metres, compared to four metres in Sint-Joost); as completed by Charles, it also took the form of a 'glass box' with serried rows of tall windows along its long sides. In the *maison de plaisance* at Sint-Joost, however, the gallery became totally autonomous, on a scale hitherto unprecedented in the Low Countries. This building must have particularly appealed to the English ambassadors visiting the Brussels court during the peace negotiations between Spain and England in 1605.<sup>31</sup> An earlier example can be found in England, in Gorbambury in Hertfordshire, where Sir Nicholas Bacon built a L-shaped gallery for the visit of Queen Elizabeth I in 1577.<sup>32</sup> Charles of Croÿ had major plans for his residence at Heverlee, because it also stood at the centre of the duchy of Aarschot,



Figure 5. The castle at Heverlee, as imagined by Charles of Croÿ.  
Source: Jean-Marie Duvosquel (ed.), *Albums de Croÿ*  
(Brussels: Gemeentekrediet, 1985–1993). Photo by Pjerpel Rubens.

the base of his oldest ducal title. Three generations earlier William of Croÿ, lord of Chièvres, and especially his wife Mary of Hamale had realised the groundwork for a new castle on the site. The wing along the Dijle was finished with two towers topped with onion-shaped spires and the ducal apartment, great hall, and chapel all found their place in an L-shaped volume.<sup>33</sup> At the time of Charles' accession to the ducal title, the fortified keep belonging to Rasse de Grez, who held the hereditary title of seneschal of Brabant in the early fifteenth century, still stood on the site, as a reminder of the feudal past and indeed of noble dignity. But, in order to realise Charles' dream, this tower had to disappear, to make room for a regular four-wing plan with a square tower at each corner (Figure 5).<sup>34</sup> As suggested by the so-called 'Sketchbook of Leuven and surroundings', by 1615, the foundations of the new wings and towers completing the early sixteenth-century L-shape had been laid, but construction was never finished, probably due to a lack of money.<sup>35</sup> In Aarschot, Charles of Croÿ commissioned a regular, U-shaped building, containing two superimposed halls of large dimensions at the centre, flanked by a shorter cross wing at each end. In fact, he intended that

the lower part of the ruined mediaeval great hall would be reused as a foundation for the new hall wing, while one of the cross wings would incorporate the (damaged) residence of his local sheriff, and the other wing would mirror the existing one. Nevertheless, the result looked completely new and at the same time, similar to both Heverlee and Sint-Joost, with a central 'glass box' distinguished by its many windows.<sup>36</sup>

### Conclusion

Despite the fact that Charles of Croÿ travelled extensively in service of the new governors at the beginning of his career, he spent large periods of time in his favourite residences from 1595 onwards. These most-visited residences were the ones that were thoroughly renovated from 1595 on. There are different tendencies to discern in his strategy of self-representation. In his architectural commissions, Charles of Croÿ attempted, on the one hand, to emphasise the connection with the glorious past by keeping the Burgundian residences in the Croÿ patrimony in shape, without changing their outer appearance. This strategy also expresses itself in the many genealogies commissioned by the duke, linking him directly to the kings of Hungary, or even to Adam and Eve. On the other hand, Charles of Croÿ did not shy away from innovative architectural concepts, even if representative buildings from that glorious past would have to make room for them. A recurring element in all the cases is the attention to environmental design. The gardens commissioned by Charles of Croÿ were among the most luxurious examples of the time, shaped along long, straight drives with trees cutting across the landscape, and having the residence as the perspectival centre point. We can conclude that, by the end of the sixteenth century, the power and high status of the lord were no longer expressed by the actual attendance of the duke, but rather through the built commissions that represented him. The network thus becomes tangible, through the palaces and residences that – even unoccupied – mark the territory and materialise the ducal presence.

### Notes

- 1 Brussels, Archives Générales du Royaume, Papiers d'Etat et de l'Audience, n° 1955, 1812, 1857, 1858 and Frédéric Auguste Ferdinand Thomas de Reiffenberg (ed.), *Une existence de grand seigneur au seizième siècle. Mémoires autographes de Duc Charles de Croy* (Bruxelles, Leipzig: C. Muquardt, 1845), <https://archive.org/details/uneexistencedeg00croygoog>.
- 2 Based on a method established by Werner Paravicini, where length and frequency of stay are considered paramount in determining the relative importance of Burgundian residences. Werner Paravicini et al., 'Ordonnances de l'Hôtel' und 'Escroes des gaiges'. Wege zu einer prosopographischen Erforschung des burgundischen Staats im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert,' in *Menschen am Hof der Herzöge von Burgund: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2002), 41–63.
- 3 Reiffenberg (ed.), *Une existence de grand seigneur au seizième siècle*: 'Durant la mesme année, je suis devenu, par la mort de feu mon bon seigneur et père, et parvenu à la totale succession

- de la maison de Croy. Pour laquelle occasion et par sa mort advenue l'onxiesme du mois de décembre de l'année 1595, en la ville de Venise, je fus Durant toute l'année ensuivante, empesché à tenir les dueils, faire les obsèques et pourvoir aux affaires de la susdicte maison, sans avoir peu aller ny vacquer avecq Monseigneur le cardinal Albert, archiducq d'Autriche, aux sieges et prinses qu'il a faicts'.
- 4 Jean-Marie Duvoquel, 'Les albums du duc Charles de Croÿ,' in *Albums de Croÿ* (Brussel: Gemeentekrediet, 1985–1993), 9–12.
  - 5 Reiffenberg (ed.), *Une existence de grand seigneur au seizième siècle*.
  - 6 Dries Raeymaekers, *One Foot in the Palace: The Habsbourg Court of Brussels and the Politics of Access in the Reign of Albert and Isabella, 1598–1621* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013).
  - 7 Leuven, University Archives KU Leuven, Arenberg collection, n° 398, f. 291r-292v: 'une belle grande galerie ... painctes de la descence et armoires de feu monseigneur et madame de Chièvres'.
  - 8 Krista De Jonge, 'Schloss Heverlee bei Löwen (Leuven) und die Residenzbildung in den südlichen Niederlanden um 1500,' in Guido von Büren (ed.), *Burgen und Schlösser in den Niederlanden und in Nordwestdeutschland* (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2004), 69–80.
  - 9 Jean Scohier, *La généalogie et descence de la très-illustre maison de Croy* (Douay: Vefur Jacques Boscard, 1589).
  - 10 Dülmen, Herzog von Croy'sche Archive, Hs. 7: Généalogie des Hauses von Croy (Prachthandschrift).
  - 11 The style of the painted views in combination with the elaborate borders featuring fruits, flowers and curly ornament, suggest that this genealogy was illustrated by Adrien de Montigny, the artist appointed to create the albums of Croÿ.
  - 12 Jacques de Bie, *Livre contenant la genealogie et descence de ceux de la Maison de Croy tant de la ligne principale estant chef du nom et armes d'icelle que des branches et ligne collaterale de ladicte maison* (Antwerp: J. de Bye, 1612), <https://lib.ugent.be/nl/catalog/rug01:001271541>.
  - 13 Edingen, Arenberg Archive, box 60/12, no number: 'a main gauche a une petite chambre paincte, estant audessus de celle cydevant, ayant regard de trois costez sur les jardins, illuminee de quatre voirieres painctes des armoiries de la descence de son exce[llence]'.
  - 14 Edingen, Arenberg Archive, box 60/12, no number: 'belle grande salle [15] audessus des salle et sallette dembas estant entierement blanchie avecq les somiers gistes et planchiers ayant son prospectif tant sur les grandes et petites courts que sur les bailles et maison du prince aud[it] bruxelles estant icelle illuminee de soixante belles voirieres painctes des armoiries de la descence de son Ex[cellent]'.
  - 15 Françoise Sabbe, 'Les jardins du château de Heverlee' (MA thesis, Centre d'études pour la conservation du patrimoine architectural et urbain (R. Lemaire Centre for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Buildings), 1990).
  - 16 Edward Van Even, *Notice sur la bibliothèque de Charles de Croy, Duc d'Aerschot* (Bruxelles: Heussner, 1852).
  - 17 Mons, General State Archives (Archives de l'Etat), Archives du Château de Beaumont, n° 10, f. 59v-64v, f. 164r-168v, f. 207v-216v, f. 155v (jardinier), f. 171v-173v, f. 219v-224r.
  - 18 Leiden, University Library Leiden, VUL 101: Letter from Charles of Croÿ, duke of Aerschot to Carolus Clusius, 25 September 1604 at Beaumont, <http://clusiuscorrespondence.huylgens.knaw.nl/edition/entry/803>.
  - 19 Sylvia van Zanen, 'Je me sens infiniment vostre obligée: l'intime amitié entre la princesse Marie de Brimeu et le botaniste Charles de l'Escluse' (paper presented at the conference 'Construire la frontière. Les Croÿ, Montcornet et les guerres de Religion', Montcornet-en-Ardenne, France, 26–27 May 2017).
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## Residential Systems and Spatial Appropriation: The Rise and Fall of a Senatorial Family in Early Modern Bologna

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### Abstract

This paper explores the involvement of Senator Giovanni Angelelli (1566–1623) with a network of residences in and around Bologna, and discusses spatial appropriation as an expression of political ambitions. Angelelli's unanticipated acquisition of the senatorial seat, marriage to wealthy socialite Isabella Ruini, and developing political career were counterpointed by an increasing interest in real estate, with the young Senator transferring his attention – and his residence – from one property to another to mark the different phases of his life. Through the analysis of archival documentation, contemporary documents, and on-site investigations, this paper will discuss Angelelli's ever-changing spatial footprint throughout his life, and his choices as investor and patron in the wider context of his increasing prestige. The discussion will include the modest townhouse of Angelelli's infancy; the residence of his father-in-law, Antonio Ruini, that he frequented as a youngster; the city palace that Angelelli purchased and had decorated to publicly signal his new public role; and the simple estate and farm buildings in the Bolognese countryside which he transformed into a stately residence.

This paper positions these properties within the urban and territorial context, and connects them through a network of daily, seasonal, and once-in-a-lifetime movements and relocations. I argue that this increased physical and symbolic occupation of the Bolognese spaces, culminating in the Senator's funeral procession through the city to his final 'residence', matched Angelelli's growing influence on the political scene. I also argue that the violent deaths of the Senator's successors – ambushed outside their palaces and on the very streets where he had confidently promenaded – and the resulting scattering of Angelelli's properties, represented the response of a local nobility threatened by his abrupt surge to power and overambitious politic of spatial appropriation.

## Images of Wealth, Pride and Power: Country House Prints on the Island of Walcheren (the Netherlands), 1650–1700

Martin van den Broeke

### Abstract

In the course of the seventeenth century, country houses in the Netherlands increasingly became part of a distinguished lifestyle of a town-based elite of merchants and regents. At the same time they were an expression of prosperity and prestige, and exhibiting that to an ever-increasing audience was part of their function. As manifestations of wealth and power, they became even more important than the town houses. This became clear in the country house prints in the *Nieuwe Cronyk van Zeeland*, published around 1700. These appeared at a time when Zeeland was the stage of an intense political struggle. Seen against this background, prints are more than merely pictures of the country seats of wealthy townspeople. They form an expression of power and wealth, of economic as well as social and political prestige, underlined by the quality of their architecture.

### Keywords

Country living culture, country house prints, seventeenth century.

### Introduction

Between 1600 and 1750 a lively country living culture existed in Zeeland, in the coastal Southwest region of the Netherlands. In this period we find the main cities of the province of Zeeland on the island of Walcheren, which had a strategic position in the overseas trade of the Dutch East Indies. Here lived old and new wealthy persons and families (most of them shipowners, merchants, directors of trade companies, rentiers) who owned townhouses as well as country houses. Some of the wealthy country house owners had their estates with their geometric gardens depicted in prints. These prints were published in the *Nieuwe Cronyk van Zeeland*, a chronicle of the history and current state of Zeeland (published around 1700), which served as a major means to boost the region's prestige. The bird's eye views came to dominate the image of Zeeland country living culture. However, these were only the most prominent examples of a more widespread culture, that manifested itself in a variety of ways, ranging from farmsteads and pleasure pavillions in orchards to more sizeable houses.<sup>1</sup>

An important question concerning this cultural phenomenon is how the building or ownership, the scale and form of country houses played a role in the establishment of the wealthy elite at a local, regional and national level and how the developments in architecture, houses and parks reflect that process. And, most of all: what kind of image do the prints intend to give the owners of the country houses?

### Zeeland's Context

Zeeland had a strong urban character in the seventeenth century. Around the middle of that century, more than half of the region's population lived in a town.<sup>2</sup> The predominance of the towns was also reflected in the composition of the regional government: in the States of Zeeland six of the seven votes were allocated to the towns of Middelburg, Zierikzee, Goes, Tholen, Vlissingen and Veere. The nobility was represented by the First Noble, in practice usually the stadtholder of Zeeland. The city also took control in rural areas after the clergy and nobility had fallen away as rulers there. Local government in the form of 'ambachtsheerlijkheden' (lordship of a manor) came largely in the hands of the towns and private town-based persons.

The attractive economic opportunities offered by the Zeeland towns prompted many refugees from the Southern Netherlands to settle there, especially after the fall of Antwerp in 1585. Major economic pillars of the region were overseas trade and agriculture, especially grain cultivation. Released capital was invested in land reclamation, which greatly increased the acreage of agricultural land in the seventeenth century. The entrepreneurial spirit and ingenuity in their economic activities that Zeeland showed, ensured that prosperity was maintained throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup>

The Zeeland trading ports formed a fertile soil for a rich country living culture. The hegemony of the towns would have a major influence on the countryside throughout the century and would determine the development of country estates. Not only town magistrates, but also traders and sea captains purchased a countryside residence. This could be a small summer house on the outskirts of town, a room in a farmhouse or a country house further afield.

### Country Living Culture

The first country estates in Zeeland arose in the early years of the seventeenth century, but the great growth only took place after the middle of the century. They concentrated on Walcheren and Schouwen-Duiveland, where the main trading towns Middelburg, Vlissingen and Zierikzee were. (Figure 1)

Country life in Zeeland was a matter for citizens. Most of the region's aristocracy had died out in the course of the sixteenth century. The remaining families had managed to maintain a certain wealth, but that was



Figure 1. The island of Walcheren. Map by N. Visscher and Z. Roman, circa 1680. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Atlas\\_Van\\_der\\_Hagen-KW1049B11\\_095](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Atlas_Van_der_Hagen-KW1049B11_095)

no longer expressed in power and castles. The presence of castles in any case had little demonstrable influence on the country life of town dwellers.<sup>4</sup>

In the period following the Golden Age, especially after 1672, oligarchisation and aristocratisation led to a cumulation of wealth, power and prestige into the hands of a gradually shrinking regional elite.<sup>5</sup>

The status of citizens was partly expressed in private land tenure and country houses. Now that the nobility had disappeared in Zeeland, the citizens who ruled the region formed, as it were, a new social top layer. Zeeland regarded itself as a 'sovereign and independent' state, and that provided the governors of the region and its most important cities with much prestige. The ownership of an estate was one of the ways to express that. The acquisition and commercial exploitation of agricultural land had a primarily economic goal, but the establishment of a country retreat combined the useful with the pleasant. Rational management of an estate had to improve the yield, which would benefit the owner and be a model of virtue. The notion was also linked to the fact that the management of an estate formed the basis for good government, and for the landowner the source and evidence of his leadership qualities. Owning and managing an estate and showing it to others was, in short, a way to claim or legitimise a position in the government.<sup>6</sup>

An example of a citizen who used his country estate as a means to underline his status was Cornelis Lampsins. This wealthy Vlissingen merchant had earned his fortune in overseas trade and plantations in the



Figure 2. Lammerenburg near Vlissingen. Oil on canvas, maker unknown, 1637. Zeeuws Museum, Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen, inv. G-1664.



Figure 3. Cornelis Lampsins' town house in Vlissingen, built in 1630. Photo, maker unknown, 1952. Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, object number 43.499

West Indies. In 1630 he had a beautiful house built on the harbor in his residence, provided with a stone facade and a tower. He had the house built in Lammerenburg, just outside the town. A painting shows this building with its tower, driveway and gardens. A hunting party in the foreground implies that Lampsins used this house as a hunting lodge. He himself is depicted in the four-horse drawn carriage that is on its way to Lammerenburg. This painting formed the basis for a print that appeared around 1668 in a prestigious collection of images of cities and prominent houses in Zeeland, which appeared in Amsterdam under the title *Speculum Zelandiae*.<sup>7</sup> (Figures 2 and 3)

### Country House Prints

A remarkable collection of prints showing country estates on the island of Walcheren was published around 1700, as illustrations for a book, titled *Nieuwe Cronyk van Zeeland*. This was the work of Mattheus Smallegange (1624–1710), a genealogist, historian and translator from Zeeland. Work for the chronicle began in 1682, when Middelburg publisher Johannes Meertens obtained a patent from the States of Zeeland for publication. It had to be a sequel to the older chronicles of Zeeland. From 1686 he received financial support from the States of Zeeland for his research. The book was richly illustrated with town plans and views of the most important public buildings and churches in the towns, as well as several maps.<sup>8</sup>

In the book, several Zeeland townspeople had a print of their country estate included at their orders, of which 21 are on Walcheren. Most of the prints were completed in 1690. A smaller number of prints show castles and estates on the other islands.<sup>9</sup>

The prints match with an international fashion in the display of large royal and noble palaces and their parks. French engravers set the tone and have published print series of royal palaces since the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>10</sup> In other European states such as Italy and Sweden, similar print series of country houses and their parks also appeared, as a rule from a bird's-eye perspective. They served as an expression of power and respect for the owners, often princes and nobles.<sup>11</sup>

In the republic this trend was followed in the many prints of the seventeenth century from the parks of King-Stadholder Willem III, such as Honselersdijk, Soestdijk, Hof te Dieren and Het Loo, which were published in the 1680s and 1690s. His court also published extensive series of images with bird's eye prints and garden views, such as the series from Zorgvliet and Clingendael near The Hague and Zuylestein near Leersum.<sup>12</sup> These appeared at a time when William III acted as figurehead of the republic and became an important player on the international power scene after his appointment as king of England, Scotland and Ireland. The prints of his palaces, hunting houses and entourage underlined that prestige. In order to influence the public image of William III, extensive political propaganda developed and was

expressed in prints and pamphlets. In the first decades of the eighteenth century, print series of castles and houses around the Veluwe appeared, such as Middachten, Rosendael and De Voorst, which were also part of this political propaganda: after all, they were the seats of noble people from the circles around the Oranges. After 1702 a power struggle had erupted around the succession of the stadholder, and in this connection we can see these images as an expression of the power and standing of Oranje's supporters.<sup>13</sup>

In that light we can see that the prints made by the Walcheren regents of their country estates were also an expression of the self-confidence of persons standing on the side of the rulers and thus part of the regent elite who controlled the republic. That message is not only apparent from the family coat of arms on the prints, but also from the way the estates are depicted: as extensive geometric parks with large houses, while the surrounding countryside is only sketched. Some parks are even larger and displayed more perfectly than they were in real life. The print of the castle Der Boede also appears to carry a political message: five statues representing the stadholders of the republic, William of Orange, Maurits, Frederik Hendrik, Willem II and the young William III, who in 1672 was appointed stadholder of most regions, can be seen in front of the house.<sup>14</sup> Remarkably, almost all of the 21 country house prints by Smallegange are of estates owned by people who owed their positions and rise to power to stadtholder Willem III. Members of the opposition's estates are not among these prints.<sup>15</sup>

### Country House Portraits: Two Case Studies

As the foregoing has pointed out, the *Nieuwe Cronyk van Zeeland* and its country house prints appeared against the background of the development of a wealthy and powerful regional elite that had its power base in the towns. The ownership of a country estate was one of the elements of their lifestyle. However, having it depicted in print served more than the desire to demonstrate the wealth and taste of its owner.

In order to appreciate the political and social meaning of these country house prints, I will briefly discuss two examples that can serve as case studies: the manorial house of Oostkapelle and the Vrijburg estate, near Vlissingen.

### Oostkapelle

The country estate of Oostkapelle, which came into being in 1679, was an expression of a violent political struggle in the town council of Middelburg and the regional government of Zeeland. (Figure 4) Between about 1672 and 1702, the town council of Middelburg was characterised by rivalry between three groups of regents. The first clique concentrated around the Thibaut and Huyssen families. During the last three decades of the seventeenth century, they possessed the power in the town council and



Figure 4. The manor house at Oostkapelle. Engraving, maker unknown, from M. Smallegange, *Nieuwe Cronyk van Zeeland* (Middelburg: Johannes Meertens 1696). Private collection.

showed themselves to be avid supporters of the Oranges. Opponents grouped around the Veth; Van Reygersberge and Van de Perre families. Members of this group were sidelined in the struggles surrounding the appointment of Willem III as stadholder of Zeeland and only succeeded in the beginning of the eighteenth century to play a significant role in the city magistrate again. Furthermore, a third group opposed the aristocratic conglomerate of Thibaut and Huyssen. This consisted, among others, of the families Le Sage, Duvelaer (part) and Van den Brande.<sup>16</sup>

With increasing pressure from the town and rural population, some magistrates had to clear the field. It was members of the group of Veth who had the most trouble to win a place on the council. The group of Thibaut and Huyssen took up positions in the town council and also the group of Duvelaer managed after several years to acquire important positions in the magistrate. Some who had lost their position in Middelburg in this battle took their chance on a new power base when in 1679 this city had to sell the majority of its 'ambachtsheerlijkheden' (manorial rights) to cope with financial problems. The bankruptcy of the town's Wisselbank and the collapse of the West Indies Company had put the town in great financial difficulties, which were aggravated by the wars with England. As a result of these sales, many estates, tithes and 'ambachtsheerlijkheden' on the island of Walcheren came in private hands.

At the auction, the manor of Oostkapelle came in the hands of Willem Le Sage (1646–1721), Lord of Reimerswaal and Lodijke. He had just been appointed as a member in the Zeeland Court of Auditors as representative

of the First Noble. Le Sage was part of the group around the Duvelaer family and Van den Brande, who removed from the Middelburg city council in 1672.<sup>17</sup>

The new Lord of Oostkapelle was given the right to use the title of the manor. The manorial rights consisted of choosing and appointing the 'schout', aldermen, secretary and vendor master, as well as the right of fishing, hunting and birding. Furthermore, there was a windmill where the villagers were obliged to have their grain ground, as well as the hunting rights in the dunes. The lord was allowed to levy taxes on certain 'vroongronden' (a legal category of land) inside and outside the village. Half of the 122 Flemish pounds which the sales conditions calculated as expected income, consisted of the lease of the mill, a quarter of the lease of hunting rights, sixteen pounds to be paid by the secretary and the rest of 'cijnzen' or taxes on consumption.<sup>18</sup>

Le Sage had 'a very beautiful and precious house' built in the village, that 'may be counted as a royal palace'.<sup>19</sup> Work on the park certainly continued until 1697.<sup>20</sup> The facade has a more sumptuous architecture than what was seen elsewhere in the region. The broken tympanum on the facade is derived from decorative architecture of monuments and was rarely applied to private residences. In 1679, such an ornament had already been applied to the new entrance to the meeting room of the States of Zeeland in the Abbey in Middelburg.<sup>21</sup>

The side wall faced the road and thus had a representative function, whereas most contry houses in those days focused the attention only on the front and rear sides. For that reason too, the watchtower will have been given a place on that side of the building. From the observation platform, the lord would have been able to keep an eye on his domain. The main entrance of the country estate is located on the village square. On both sides of the entrance gate cannons point outwards, which seem to contain a reference to a defendable medieval fortress.<sup>22</sup>

Above all, it becomes clear that the owner saw himself as a good Christian. The words 'Soli Deo gloria' on the frieze at the top of the front of the house, indicate this, as well as the inscription 'Le Sage espère en Dieu' which stood above the door of the garden house.<sup>23</sup> On the facade of the house a statue or image of the sun god Apollo adorned a 'solar cart' with the text: 'Sapiens dominabitur astris' ('The wise governs the stars'), a reference to the name of Le Sage itself and an allusion on the wisdom that enables a leader to rule. A description from 1715 suggests that the image refers to Phoebus, another name for Apollo, who as god of light is the protector of arts and sciences. A gilded statue of Mercury could be seen in the garden. He was seen as the messenger of the gods and as god of commerce.<sup>24</sup> The symbolic meaning of this image is obvious: Le Sage's father Johan was an administrator of the Dutch East Indies Company VOC and Le Sage will have received a considerable part of his wealth from that position. Perhaps the statue also had a Christian meaning, referring to an angel spreading its

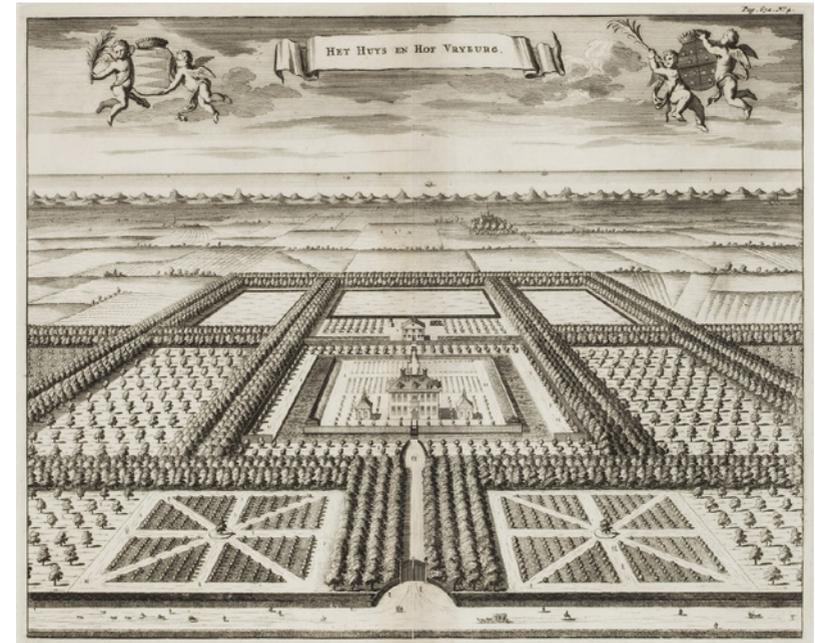


Figure 5. The country house Vrijburg. Engraving, maker unknown, from M. Smallegange, *Nieuwe Cronyk van Zeeland* (Middelburg: Johannes Meertens 1696). Private collection

wings and thus a symbol of the dawn and the sun of righteousness.<sup>25</sup> More references to classical antiquity could be found in the house, where images of the Roman emperors adorned the windows.<sup>26</sup> It is plausible that other busts and statues visible on the print of Smallegange also carried a meaning that contributed to the image that Le Sage wished to present of himself and his power, knowledge and Christian virtue.

This example also points out that the background for the building of the Oostkapelle estate and its manifestation in print were the result of very specific circumstances.

### Vrijburg

In the third quarter of the seventeenth century a country estate developed in West-Souburg that brought together the status of its owner and the profit as a means to show prestige in an architectural unity: Vrijburg.<sup>27</sup> (Figure 5)

A print of this country estate is included in the aforementioned *Nieuwe Cronyk van Zeeland*. The Blauwe Hof (probably so called after the slate roof tiles) or Vrijburg developed into this state after 1670. Anna Meersen had acquired it through inheritance. Her husband Nicolaes van Reygersberge, secretary and pensionary of Middelburg, came from an old Zeeland family who claimed noble origins.<sup>28</sup> After his death she married Johan van de Perre, pensionary of Tholen. When the print was made, Vrijburg was in possession

of Pieter Duvelaer, mayor of Middelburg and Zeeland's steward-general west of the Scheldt.

In addition to a front entrance hall there was a 'salette' with purple wallhangings, a large frontroom, sideroom, kitchen, cellar and a few bedrooms. Remarkably, only a few rooms in the main building were furnished. Almost the entire top floor stood empty. The owner lived in the farmhouse behind the main house and the main building functioned as a representative facade rather than a home for the owner.<sup>29</sup>

The two square outbuildings, with facades decorated with pilasters, make the house resemble that of Vredenburg in the Beemster polder, north of Amsterdam. That country estate was created in the 1640s after a design by the Amsterdam architect Pieter Post and became nationally known through prints. The resemblance can be explained by Van Reygersberge's elder brother Johan being one of the polder board members of the Beemster and having known Vredenburg and its owner.<sup>30</sup>

The house and outbuildings are on an island that was in use as a kitchen garden. The impressive avenue system outside the moat frames orchards and pastures. Only on both sides of the drive are bosquettos. Of the circa 40 hectares that belonged to Vrijburg, about half were used as a park with 'fisheries, avenues, drives, orchards and other plantations'. The rest consisted of fields but 'mostly pastures'.<sup>31</sup> This agricultural function is emphasised by the fact that the farm is prominently placed in the main axis of the park building and is equipped with a classic temple fronton. Inventories from 1684 and 1687 show that the estate owner also owned the cattle and the agricultural tools. Among them were ladders for use in the orchards.<sup>32</sup>

At Vrijburg, country life, economic utility and social standing come together in an architectural framework. We can assume that the later owner Duvelaer had his country estate depicted in this way to emphasise that he lived, just like a nobleman, from the yield of his lands.

### Conclusion

In the course of the seventeenth century, country houses increasingly became part of a distinguished lifestyle of a town-based elite of merchants and regents. At the same time they were an expression of prosperity and prestige, and exhibiting that to an ever-increasing audience was part of their function. As manifestations of wealth and power, they became even more important than the town houses. This became clear in the country house prints in the *Nieuwe Cronyk van Zeeland*. These appeared at a time when Zeeland was the stage of an intense political struggle. Seen against this background, the prints are more than merely pictures of the country seats of wealthy townspeople. They form an expression of power and wealth, of economic as well as social and political prestige, underlined by the quality of their architecture.

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- 8 These were written by Jacob Eyndius (ca. 1614), Johan Reygersbergh (1634) and Marcus Zuerius van Boxhorn (1644). Pieter J. Verkrujssse, *Mattheus Smallegange (1624–1710) en zijn Cronyk van Zeeland* (Schiedam: Interbook International, 1977); Pieter J. Verkrujssse, *Mattheus Smallegange (1624–1710): Zeeuws historicus, genealoog en vertaler* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1983).
- 9 Verkrujssse, *Mattheus Smallegange (1624–1710): Zeeuws historicus...*, 497–500. Some prints are copies from the earlier *Speculum Zelandiae* (Amsterdam: Nicolaus Visscher, circa 1668). For the *Nieuwe Cronyk van Zeeland* the prints of Ter Hooge, Waterlooswerve, Swanenburg and Rusten-Burgh were re-used.
- 10 Henri-Jean Martin, *Print, Power and People in 17<sup>th</sup>-Century France* (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1993).
- 11 Compare Tim Clayton, 'Publishing Houses: Prints of Country Seats,' in Dana Arnold (ed.), *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), 43–60. Also Stefan Schweizer and Christof Baier (eds.), *Illusion und Imagination. André Le Nôtres Gärten im Spiegel barocker Druckgraphik* (Düsseldorf: Gruppello, 2013).
- 12 Van den Broeke, 'Het pryeeel van Zeeland'.
- 13 Compare Erik de Jong, *Natuur en kunst. Nederlandse tuin- en landschapsarchitectuur 1650–1740* (Amsterdam: Thoth, 1993), 115 and 65–6.
- 14 On the print of Rusten-Burgh in *Speculum Zelandiae*, which dates from 1661, there also appear five busts, of which one stands out as more sizeable. This probably represented the (then future) stadholder Willem III.
- 15 Van den Broeke, 'Het pryeeel van Zeeland', 184; Jeanine Dekker, 'Het bezit van heerlijkheden op het Zeeuwse platteland 1678–1848. Een verkenning van de macht van de stedelijke elite in het buitengebied,' in *Archief 2006. Mededelingen van het Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen* (2006), 123–62.
- 16 Murk van der Bijl, *Idee en interest. Voorgeschiedenis, verloop en achtergronden van de politieke twisten in Zeeland en vooral in Middelburg tussen 1702 en 1715* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1981), 22–36.
- 17 Van der Bijl, *Idee en interest*, 22, 23.
- 18 Zeeuws Archief, Verzameling Verheye van Citters, inv. nr. 42d.
- 19 Mattheus Smallegange, *Nieuwe Cronyk van Zeeland* (Middelburg: Johannes Meertens, 1696), 667.
- 20 Mattheus Gargon, *Walchersche Arkadia*,

- Vol. 1 (Leiden: Samuel Luchtmans, 1715), 115.
- 21 Krista de Jonge and Konrad Ottenheim (eds.), *Unity and Discontinuity: Architectural Relationships between the Southern and Northern Low Countries (1530–1700)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 128–35.
- 22 Vergelijk Heimerick Tromp and Ben Olde Meierink, 'Het paradijs versterkt: Fortificaties als motief bij huis en tuin,' *De woonstede door de eeuwen heen* 86 (1990), 49–55.
- 23 Gargon, *Walchersche Arkadia*, Vol. 1, 112.
- 24 Gargon, *Walchersche Arkadia*, Vol. 1, 111.
- 25 Gargon, *Walchersche Arkadia*, Vol. 1, 113–4.
- 26 Gargon, *Walchersche Arkadia*, Vol. 1, 111.
- 27 Van den Broeke, 'Het pryeeel van Zeeland', 121–2; Martin van den Broeke, 'Het profijt voorop? Landbouwbedrijf op buitenplaatsen in Zeeland 1609–1672,' in Kuiper and Olde Meierink (eds.), *Buitenplaatsen in de Gouden Eeuw*, 128–53.
- 28 Vgl. Jeanine Dekker, Peter Don and Albert Meijer (eds.), *Een bijzonder huis op een bijzondere plek. Het Van de Perrehuis in Middelburg en zijn omgeving* (Middelburg: Zeeuws Archief, 2000), 95–7.
- 29 Gemeentearchief Vlissingen (GAV), Rechterlijke Archieven Zeeuwse Eilanden (RAZE), inv. nr. 1511 (15 June 1684 and 11 February 1687).
- 30 J. J. Terwen and Koen A. Ottenheim, *Pieter Post (1608–1669), architect* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1993), 88–99; Koen A. Ottenheim, *Philips Vingboons (1607–1678), architect* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1989), 50–6.
- 31 GAV, RAZE inv. nr. 1478 (14 May 1687).
- 32 GAV, RAZE inv. nr. 1511 (11 February 1687).

# BUILDING KNOWLEDGE: LOCATING ARCHITECTURE IN EARLY MODERN ERUDITE WRITING

Session chairs:

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In the early modern age, architecture surfaced in many ways and with different intentions and meanings in the written work of eminent scholars and erudite thinkers from various backgrounds. Although individual cases have been investigated, the attention devoted to architecture in learned writing and its position within the world of knowing is fragmented and incidental. This session brings together contributions on comprehensive writings on architecture that were produced in early modern centres of learning. These texts were often part of extensive 'scientific' interdisciplinary literary oeuvres, where knowledge was collected and presented in extensive anthologies and repositories. Erudite individuals assembled knowledge related to architecture from multiple branches of scholarly interest. These repositories of architectural thought demonstrate a thorough understanding of architecture and testify to its prolonged, concentrated study. The focus on architecture that appeared in many of these texts could be practical, produced to provide models for building, but was often contemplative or functioned as a

model for thinking. Specific centres of early modern thought and erudition provided particular impetus to this thinking about architecture.

This session focuses on the treatment and appearance of architecture in these writings. How was architecture addressed in these repositories? Particular attention will be paid to writings that do not fit the Vitruvian mould nor follow established types of architectural treatises, but instead offer alternative systems of thought about architecture, its principles, its meaning, its application, and effect. Which sources were used and how, and how was architecture embedded in these repositories of knowledge? What purposes did these writings serve? The contributions improve our understanding of the scope, variety, and originality of early modern architectural thought and knowledge.

## Rabbinical Scholarship, Antiquarianism, and the Ideal of ‘Good Architecture’: Jacob Judah Leon’s *Retrato del Templo de Selomo*

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### Abstract

A true bestseller translated into seven languages, *Retrato del Templo de Selomo*, written in 1642 by Rabbi Jacob Judah Leon, is the representative work for scholarly interest in the architecture of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. It forms a topic that, in the wave of renewed interest for the literal meaning of Biblical text, reoccurs frequently in early modern erudite writing. Although initially intended as a guidebook to Rabbi Leon’s major project, his architectural model of the Jewish Temple, this relatively short, well organized, and concise work became fairly popular due to the fact that it represented a good repertory of contemporary knowledge on the Temple. It appealed not only to scholars, but also served as an introductory reading on the subject for the curious common citizen.

The aim of this paper is to point out multiple ways in which the architecture of the Temple has been addressed and used in Leon’s *Retrato*. The reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, in its different historical stratifications, focuses on its topographical setting within the Holy City, its design, and elevation, based on the detailed inquiry of Biblical texts, Josephus, the Talmud, and other Jewish sources. At the same time, Leon uses the architecture of the Temple as a framework in which he embeds a broader discourse on Jewish worship, biblical history, and numerous other antiquarian and philological observations. Finally, his writing also shows familiarity with contemporary debates on the architecture and style of the Temple in Jerusalem. By taking into account some commonly shared positions of architectural scholarship, his reconstruction became more persuasive in the eyes of his contemporaries, and thus more successful among the broader readership of Jews and Christians alike.

# François Rabelais, *sapiens architectus*

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## Abstract

The Rabelaisian critic has long-time commented on the influence of Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* on François Rabelais's work, and especially on the construction of the Abbey of Thélème in *Gargantua*. Even more than a reminiscence of the Italian work, the architectural structures of Rabelais testify an undeniable architectural mastery.

This paper seeks to reveal new evidence of the influence of the Vitruvian and Italian architectural treatises on Rabelais's work, especially in the imagination of Thélème. The translation of a Vitruvian anecdote in the *Third Book* and thorough descriptions of entire structures permit us to add to the personal 'library' of either the Latin or an Italian edition of the *De architectura*, but also to the French translation by Jean Martin. These elements also participate in a linguistic project linked to the promotion of the French language and to the projects of national architectural orders that have taken place in Europe since the quattrocento. Considering the prescriptions of Vitruvius, Rabelais shows on multiple occasions that he not only masters the rules, but plays with them, creating new meaning and alternative principles. In terms of reception, while the most notable influence of Rabelais in the architectural field might be considered the publication of the *Topographia antiquae Romae*, the absence of documentation surrounding the reception of architectural treatises in the modern editions of Rabelais's work must be pointed out. Ultimately, this paper looks forward to unveiling the architectural watermark of François Rabelais's work.

## Keywords

Rabelais, Vitruvius, Thélème, Renaissance, architecture, abbey.

For the last century, the literary criticism has been involved in a vast initiative to document the multiple inclinations of François Rabelais, a humanist writer of the French Renaissance. The author of *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*, celebrated for the rich development of the French language and the emergence of the novel genre, is well-known for the imagination of the Abbey of Thélème. While early commentators of his work have seen in him as a 'disciple of Vitruvius'<sup>1</sup> and a reformer of the austere French architecture of the sixteenth century, the mark of Vitruvius' work over the five books of Rabelais has yet been left in the shadows. His work deserves to be re-read

today in regard to the important contribution of architectural books to the design and description of structures like Thélème. Thus, the architectural mastery in Rabelaisian novels can be seen through the translation of a Vitruvian anecdote in the *Third Book*, which we intend to present here, and even more in the shift of Vitruvian prescriptions in the construction of Thélème.

The imprint of Book XIX of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* and the gloss on hemp-flax in the description of the Pantagruelion in the *Third Book* constitute a common ground for Rabelaisian study. However, this intertextual legacy cannot justify the entirety of the last chapters of the *Third Book*. The descriptive passage on which the final chapter concludes in fact on the description of the larch, a tree whose properties are compared with the Pantagruelion. This description is deployed through the anecdote of its discovery by Caesar, an episode which is directly taken from Book II of the *De architectura* whose Italian translations came out between 1511 and 1536<sup>2</sup>. The comparison of these passages has been attested in the criticism, but the cross-reference to these texts poses a problem to the extent that Rabelais's loan reveals a true translation, which requires not only a complete reading of the episode, but also of the introductory passages of the text. After a succinct exposition of the properties of the larch in Chapter IX, Vitruvius begins narrating the anecdote:

Ea autem materies quemadmodum sit inuenta, est causa cognoscere. Diuus Caesar cum exercitum habuisset circa Alpes imperauissetque municipiis praestare commeatus, ibique esset castellum munitum, quod uocaretur Larignum, tunc, qui in eo fuerunt, naturali munitione confisi, noluerunt imperio parere. Itaque imperator copias iussit admoueri. Erat autem ante eius castelli portam turris ex hac materia alternis trabibus transuersis uti pyra inter se composita alte, uti posset de summo sudibus et lapidibus accedentes repellere. Tunc uero cum animaduersum est alia eos tela praeter sudes non habere neque posse longius a muro propter pondus iaculari, imperatum est fasciculos ex uirgibus alligatos et faces ardentes ad eam munitionem accedentes mittere. Itaque celeriter milites congresserunt. Posteaquam flamma circa illam materiam uirgas comprehendisset, ad caelum sublata effecit opinionem uti uideretur iam tota moles concidisse. Cum autem ea per se extincta esset et re quieta turris intacta apparuisset, admirans Caesar iussit extra telorum missionem eos circumuallari. Itaque timore coacti oppidani cum se dedidissent, quaesitum unde essente a ligna quae ab igni non laederentur. Tunc ei demonstraerunt eas arbores quarum in his locis maximae sunt copiae. Et ideo id castellum Larignum, item materies 'larigna'

est appellata. Haec autem per Padum Rauennam deportatur; in colonia Fanestri, Pisauri, Anconae reliquisque quae sunt in ea regione municipiis praebetur. Cuius materis si esset facultas adportationibus ad urbem, maximae haberentur in aedificiis utilitates, et si non in omne, certe tabulae in subgrundiis circum insulas si essent ex ea conlocatae, ab traiectionibus incendiorum aedificia periculo liberarentur, quod eae neque flammam nec carbonem possunt recipere nec facere per se.<sup>3</sup>

This passage is lifted as is by Rabelais:

Julius Caesar had issued a command to all the residents and inhabitants of the Alps and Piedmont to bring victuals and provisions to the stations set up along the military road, for his army as it passed through. All obeyed except those who were in Larignum, who, trusting in the natural strength of the place, refused the contribution. To chastise them for this refusal, the emperor had his army head straight for the place. In front of the castle gate was a tower built of stout beams of larch, stacked and bound crosswise upon one another like a woodpile, rising up to such a height that from the machicolations one could easily repel with stones and bars those who came near. When Caesar heard that those inside had no other defenses than stones and bars, he ordered his soldiers to throw around it fagots aplenty and set fire to them, which was instantly done. When the fagots were set on fire, the flame was so great and high that it covered the whole castle. Whereby they thought that soon afterward the tower would be burned down and consumed. But when the flames died and the fagots were consumed, the tower appeared whole and not a bit damaged by it. Considering which, Caesar ordered that all around it, outside a stone's throw, they build a network of ditches and trenches. Thereupon the Larignans surrendered on terms. And from their account Caesar learned of the admirable nature of this wood, which of itself makes neither fire, flame, nor charcoal.<sup>4</sup>

When comparing these extracts, it appears that while writing the Pantagruelion description, Rabelais was in possession of the works of both Pliny the Elder and Vitruvius, whose Book II served as a model. Therefore, it appears the author of the *Third Book* looked up one of the many Italian editions, or even a counterfeit copy of the *De architectura*, which was available in Lyon from 1523. The author respects both the disposition of the text and the properties of the larch as specified by Vitruvius in Chapter IX:

Sed etiam flammam ex igni non recipit, nec ipse per se potest ardere, nisi uti saxum in fornace ad calcem coquendam aliis lignis uratur<sup>5</sup>. (*De l'Architecture*, 44)

larch, in a great furnace of fire coming from other kinds of wood, is finally marred and destroyed, as are stones in a lime kiln: asbestine Pantagruelion is renewed and cleaned by this rather than marred or altered. (*Third Book*, 412)

By this addition at the end of the chapter, Rabelais compares the properties of larch and Pantagruelion, which testifies to the absorption of Vitruvius' teaching beyond the translated anecdote. In fact, mastery over the architect's prescriptions is evidenced a few lines above:

And in this respect it would deserve to be set on the same level as real Pantagruelion – and the more so because Pantagrueu lilled that of this be made all the doors, gates, windows, gutters, coping and wainscoting, of Thélème (*Third Book*, 411–2)

This last extract authenticates the control that Rabelais had of the Vitruvius corpus through the application of his prescriptions regarding larch as a construction wood dedicated to the *aedificatio*<sup>6</sup>. Thus, 'Pantagrueu thinks about using this material in the construction of the arsenal at Thalasse' (*Third Book*, 412), in the Abbey of Thélème, and in particular the 'gutters, coping and wainscoting' (*Third Book*, 412) following Vitruvius' suggestion: 'maximae haberentur in aedificiis utilitates ... certe tabulae in subgrundiis circum insulas si essent ex ea conlocatae'<sup>7</sup> (*De l'Architecture*, IX: 16, 44). Rabelais, as a discerning reader of the *De architectura*, envisages building Thélème by following Vitruvian construction rules, at least where the use of construction materials is concerned.

Rabelais's knowledge of the Vitruvian corpus, which the translation of the anecdote in the *Third Book* testifies to, informs the description of imaginary spaces. In Thélème, the relation to antiquity is revealed by the 'two fine antique arches' (*Gargantua*, 119), an inscription 'in antique letters' (*Gargantua*, 119), 'pillars ... with fine antique arches' (*Gargantua*, 123), an 'orchard, full of all fruit trees, all arranged in quincuncial order' (*Gargantua*, 123), a fountain and the scent of myrrh. Although the modern criticism has shown that the description of Thélème is inspired by contemporary castles, such as Madrid and Chambord<sup>8</sup>, the contribution of French castles in the construction of Rabelais's abbey is not enough to take into account certain architectural details of the anti-monastery. Despite the claim for an antique-style relationship, Thélème reveals a hybrid style between the Renaissance castle, the temple and the *villa suburbana* described in Book VI of *De architectura*. Alberti enumerates the characteristics of a monastery and a

villa, without mentioning the abbey in the proper sense, while the monument corresponds more to sacred buildings and the villa detailed by Vitruvius. Between a royal court and a pleasure ground marked by the inscription ‘Do what you will [Fay ce que voudras]’, Thélème renews the reason for a peri-urban recreational space dedicated to pleasure and intellectual exchange that Vitruvius pointed to as the main function of the Greek villa. Besides, a structuring element seems to support this comparison: the reminiscence of the *andronitis* and the *gynaeceum*, two parts of the house reintroduced in Thélème, which had disappeared from domestic, profane and sacred architecture in France. The Greek villa described by Vitruvius is divided into two areas, that is, the *gynaeceum* reserved for women, and the *andronitis* with small apartments occupied by men without the intervention of women<sup>9</sup>. Vitruvius even established a division of rooms based on the section of the home. The division of Thélème corresponds to this gender separation unlike the contemporary architectural landscape: ‘The ladies’ lodging comprised the part from Artice tower as far as the Mesembrine Gate. [Men occupied the rest]’ (*Gargantua*, 123). While the section reserved for men is much larger in the Greek villa and adjoins all the rooms related to intellectual pursuits, such as the library and the *pinacotheca*, Rabelais re-establishes equality between the female and male quarters by giving them the same symbolic, functional and structural importance, and dividing the galleries and the libraries between the two sections. Neither completely castle nor abbey, at the frontier between a profane and sacred monument, Thélème’s hybrid character and its 9332 individual apartments present a certain novelty in the architectural landscape and literature.

In a recent publication, we have shown that the description of Thélème corresponds to the rhetorical exercise of the *ekphrasis* as defined in the *progymnasmata* treatises<sup>10</sup>. These manuals defined the subject of the descriptive gaze as an element that brings ‘what is shown clearly before the eyes’<sup>11</sup>. To the extent that antique rhetors recommended that ‘one should not recollect all useless details [in the *ekphrasis*]<sup>12</sup>, minutely detailed elements inserted in the *ekphrasis* increase the importance of components on which the descriptive gaze alights momentarily. This is so for the steps of the Abbey of Thélème, a special architectural component, which is the subject of one of the most detailed descriptions:

Between each tower and the next, in the middle of the said building, was a winding staircase, inside the said building, whose steps were in part porphyry, in part Numidian stone [red marble], in part serpentine marble [green, with red and white spots], twenty-two feet long, three fingers thick, the arrangement in the number of ten between each landing. (*Gargantua*, 119)

The meticulous and unusual attention given to the dimensions of the steps and the description of spirals serves less, it appears, to highlight the value of the wealth of the premises, than a calculated concern for the accuracy and an antique-style renovation of the staircase. The steps of Thélème, divided into five landings and easy to climb, speak of a concern for comfort and verisimilitude, while the composition of the structure and the measures testify to genuine technical know-how and almost come under the architectural plan. Thucydides’ description of the temple in Alexandria, used as an example in Aphthonius’ *progymnasmata*, briefly mentions a staircase with a hundred steps leading to the acropolis and ‘reaching a perfect measure’<sup>13</sup>. On the other hand, the importance given to this architectural structure in the Rabelaisian text goes beyond Thucydides’ brief mention of the Alexandrian staircase with ideal proportions and forms a special moment in the descriptive pause. This architectural configuration of the anti-monastery refers to Vitruvius’ requirements for temple staircases stated in Book II of *De architectura*:

Gradus in fronte constituendi ita sunt, uti sint semper in pares: namque cum dextro pede primus gradus ascendatur, item in summo templo primus erit ponendus. Crassitudines autem eorum graduum ita finiendas censeo, ut neque crassiores dextante nec tenuiores dodrante sint conlocatae; sic enim durus non erit ascensus.<sup>14</sup>

Vitruvius’ requirements for the construction of temples clearly illustrate the three qualities of the classical architectural structure: *firmitas*, *utilitas*, *venustas*. With an odd number of steps, the temple staircase must allow the opposite feet to be put down on the first and last steps. These measures are also specified from the point of view of ‘comfort’ to facilitate the climb. Drawing from its characteristics both as a princely castle and a temple, Rabelais’s abbey has a few peculiarities with regard to the staircase: if the three-finger height of the Thélème steps seems to satisfy the Vitruvian requirement for optimal comfort, the number of degrees does not follow the antique building logic because the 60 steps that each spiral has, form an even number. The same logic is at work in the *Fifth Book* of Rabelais where the ‘tetradic steps’ (*Fifth Book*, 688) of the Dive Bouteille temple is deployed in ten landings of ten steps, to which is added the ‘first cube’ (*Fifth Book*, 689) to form a total of 108 steps.

An additional component will catch our attention with regard to Rabelaisian structures, that is, the number six, whose function and haunting permanence criticism has shown in Rabelais’s work.<sup>15</sup> Applied to the Abbey of Thélème from a strictly architectural point of view, the structural use of the number six refers to Vitruvian and Albertan rules in the building of the temple. Construction of a hexagonal form on six floors and incorporating

arcs with a width of six measuring sticks (roughly 12 m), Thélème respects such symmetry ('the building symmetrically made' [*Gargantua*, 119]) that the work fulfils the ideals of the layout and proportional harmony developed in the ten books of architecture. The importance of the number six for Alberti, who finds its origin in nature, is already present with Vitruvius: 'mathematicians ... have declared that the number known as 'six' is perfect'<sup>16</sup>, a common denominator of the human body proportions whose harmony the architect is called on to admire in subdivisions and modular relations between each element of a building. The proportional ideal respected in Thélème and demanded both by Vitruvius and Alberti, is rightly illustrated a few years after *Gargantua* was written by the completion of the Villa Farnese by Vignola, a pentagonal five-floor building with bastions at each angle. The ideal of proportion and symmetry as well as harmony in the layout of premises and modular relations is therefore respected at Thélème, based on Vitruvius' teachings, but is executed not on the basis of mathematical and physiological harmony, but rather on hierology.

Finally, the representation of the abbey as a complex is reminiscent of the antique gymnasium, which Vitruvius describes in Book V, consisting of the port, palestra, theater, promenades and alleys, baths and wood plantation on the periphery of the temple and the city. All these elements around the Abbey of Thélème constitute a renewed Vitruvian complex of sorts to which is added the labyrinth:

on the outside, were the lists, the hippodrome, the theater, and the swimming pools, with the marvelous baths in three stages, well furnished with all accommodations, and myrtle water aplenty. Next to the river was the beautiful pleasure garden; in the middle of this, the fine labyrinth between the other two towers were the tennis courts and the court for the big ball. (*Gargantua*, 123)

Thélème is part of a complex which relates to the basilica environment described by Vitruvius, but its location is different in so far as the architect has located it adjacent to the public square, whereas Alberti suggests that it should be located outside cities, but built like a military fort and equipped with walls and a moat for its defense.

Thélème is therefore erected with a shift in Vitruvian prescriptions and a reversal of the function of the premises that the description of monuments reflects. Through the translation of the *Third Book* and the composition of Thélème, the Vitruvian lecture of Rabelais appears as one of the most interesting examples of application and alteration of its prescriptions in early modern French writing. Moreover, the treatment of the prescriptions stipulated in the *De architectura* by Rabelais, from *Gargantua* to the *Third Book*, constitute the first sign of the reception of the Vitruvian corpus into

French language writing of the Renaissance. Conjointly to the linguistic project of French humanists, the architectural *ars* makes a tripartite appearance in Rabelais's five books between *nomination*, *descriptio* and *aedificatio*. Henceforth, beginning a reconstitution of the author's architectural library and the reception of architectural books into the five Rabelaisian accounts should become the subject of a much vaster study which will be able to convey the scope of the architectural know-how of the publisher of Bartolomeo Marliani's topography of ancient Rome.

### Notes

- 1 Arthur Heulhard, *Rabelais : ses voyages en Italie, son exil à Metz* (Paris: Librairie de l'art, 1891), 7.
- 2 Frédérique Lemerle and Yves Pauwels, *Architectures de papier: La France et l'Europe (XVI<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 252–3.
- 3 Vitruvius, *De l'Architecture. Livre II*, text established and translated by Louis Callebat, introduced and commented by Pierre Gros, with the contribution of Catherine Jacquemard (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2003), 43–4. All of the following quotes from this book will be taken from this edition; the reference will appear in the text between parenthesis. English translation by Richard Schofield: 'When the Deified Caesar had deployed his army near the Alps and ordered the local municipalities to provide supplies, the inhabitants of a well-defended fort in the area, called Larignum, refused to submit to his command since they trusted their natural defences. So the general ordered his forces to move up to the attack. But there was a tower in front of the gate of the castle constructed of beams of this wood laid alternately at right angles to each other, as in a funeral pyre, and built high so that besiegers could be repelled from the top with stakes and rocks. Then, when the Romans noticed that the townsfolk had no other missiles apart from the wall because of their weight, the command was given to approach and set bundles of tied-up brushwood and burning torches against the defences, which the soldiers soon piled up. When the flame had kindled the brushwood around the wooden structure and had risen into the sky, it made

everybody think that the whole mass had already collapsed. But when the fire had burnt itself out and subsided, the tower emerged to view intact; Caesar was incredulous and gave orders that the defenders should be surrounded with a rampart outside the range of their missiles. And so when the fear-stricken townsfolk had surrendered, they were asked where the wood left unscattered by fire came from. They then showed Caesar the trees in question, of which there were great supplies in the region; so the fort is called Larignum, just as the wood is known as larch,' in Vitruvius, *On Architecture* (London: Penguin, 2009), 61–2.

- 4 François Rabelais, *The Third Book in The Complete Works of François Rabelais*, trans. Donald M. Frame, foreword Raymond C. La Charité (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 411. All of the following quotes from the Rabelaisian texts will be taken from this edition; the reference will appear in the text between parenthesis.
- 5 English translation by Richard Schofield: 'larch ... is not ignited even by the flames of fires; nor can it catch fire or produce charcoal unless it is burnt like a stone with other types of wood in a furnace for cooking lime,' in Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 61.
- 6 'Cuius materis si esset facultas adportationibus ad urbem, maximae haberentur in aedificiis utilitates, et si non in omne, certe tabulae in subgrundiis circum insulas si essent ex ea conlocatae, ab traiectionibus incendiorum aedificia periculo liberarentur, quod eae neque flammam nec carbonem possunt recipere nec

- facere per se.' (*De l'Architecture*, IX: 14–6, 42–4). English translation by Richard Schofield: 'If there were some means of transporting it to the City, it would be extremely useful in buildings, though not necessarily in all of them; if the boards in the eaves around house-blocks were constructed of it, buildings would be free from the danger of fires jumping between them because this kind of wood cannot be set on fire by flames or burning embers, or ignite of its own accord,' in Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 62.
- 7 English translation by Richard Schofield: 'it would be extremely useful in buildings...; if the boards in the eaves around house-blocks were constructed of it,' in Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 62.
- 8 Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 1162, n. 2.
- 9 Vitruvius, *De l'Architecture. Livre VI*, ed. Louis Callebaut (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2004), 220, n. 7.
- 10 Olivier Séguin-Brault, 'Thélème. Parcours descriptif et mécanique rhétorique,' *L'Année rabelaisienne* 2 (2018), 283–93.
- 11 Aphthonius, 'On Ecphrasis,' in *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, trans. George A. Kennedy (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 117.
- 12 Aelius Theon, 'On Ecphrasis,' in *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, 47.
- 13 Aphthonius, 'On Ecphrasis,' 119.
- 14 Vitruvius, *De l'Architecture. Livre III*, trans. Pierre Gros (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2003), 23. English translation by Richard Schofield: 'The steps on the front must be arranged so that they always comprise an odd number: for since one climbs the first step leading with the right foot, then one's right foot should arrive at the top level of the temple first. I think that the height of these steps should be worked out so they are no more than five-sixths of a foot in height nor less than three-quarters; in that way climbing the steps will not be tiring,' in Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 80.
- 15 On this topic, see Alfred Glauser, *Fonctions du nombre chez Rabelais* (Paris: Nizet, 1982); Michel Butor, '6/7 ou les dés de Rabelais,' *Littérature* 2

(1971), 3–18; Patrick J. Cook, 'En figures exagone': The Geometry of Rabelais's Abbey of Thélème,' *Romance Notes* 2 (1992), 141–8.

16 Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 68.

# Architecture of Method Theories of Disposition in the *Kunstkammer*<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The increased scholarly preoccupation with early modern collections and the *Kunst- und Wunderkammer* – seen during recent decades – has led to new understandings of how architectural arrangements of collections have developed within discourses on knowledge, scientific method and learning. This paper addresses Johann Daniel Major's *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken von Kunst- und Naturalien-Kammern insgemein* (1674), a treatise on the organisation of collections with regard to the architectural disposition in buildings, rooms, on shelves, in cabinets and drawers. The treatise draws on a vast repertoire of visits to collections, written accounts, catalogues, previously published treatises etc, and mirrors the *Kunstkammer* architecture of the period and contributes to its development. I will be construing Major's nomenclature of *Kunstkammern* and its etymologies as an attempt to establish the ancestry for a building type and contextualise the theory into knowledge management of early modern erudite culture. I am asserting that the ideal architecture of the *Kunstkammer* cannot be understood as the adaptation of Vitruvian or other early modern architectural theory, but emerges in the process of arranging knowledge systems in physical space, relating the architecture to rhetorical and dialectic concepts such as *methodus*, *dispositio*, *ordo*, *memoria* and *loci communes*, ultimately derived from rhetoric and dialectic. Not particularly Vitruvian – albeit often with a classical appearance – I will demonstrate how the *Kunstkammer* interiors were fundamentally indebted to prevailing knowledge practices such as commonplacing and classifying, which had been developed by intellectuals like Erasmus of Rotterdam, Petrus Ramus and Theodor Zwinger.

In order to provide an original understanding of the rationale behind the early modern *Kunstkammer* architecture, the paper will highlight how such practices regarding the ordering of knowledge contributed to the envisagement of entirely new and unprecedented types of spaces, ultimately building the foundation for the museum.

## Keywords

*Kunstkammer*, method, topic, commonplacing, disposition, order.

Recent decades have seen a flourishing scholarship on the cultural and intellectual history of *Kunstkammern*, reappraising their systematics and role in the scientific development during the early modern period.<sup>2</sup> Essentially, the *Kunstammer* was a building type defined by its interiors. Nonetheless, it shared its main problem of spatial organisation of categorised objects with other types such as the botanical garden and sculpture gallery. The *Kunstammer*, I argue, must be regarded as novel, original and idiosyncratic architecture, devoted to exhibiting collections in a systematic manner. It began during the latter half of the sixteenth century against the background of developments such as book printing, colonial trade, and the transformation from scholastic to empirical science. The theoretical preoccupation with systematic, architectural disposition appeared simultaneously, but it was not until a century later that a specific genre of *Kunstammer* literature took form. I intend to scrutinise one of the first treatises of this kind to determine the origins of the *Kunstammer* building type.

Around 1674, Johann Daniel Major published the treatise *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken von Kunst- und Naturalien-Kammern insgemein (Unanticipated thoughts on Kunst- und Naturalien-Kammern in general)*. Although the work in large parts was outlining thoughts on architectural organisation, it was not underpinned by Vitruvian theory or typology. Instead, it traced its architectural genealogy to building types for storage and imported its organisational rationale from prevailing study and research techniques and scientific classifications. Major was a leading exponent for a widespread *Kunstammer* culture. By scrutinising his application of knowledge ordering practices, I propound the idea that the period managed to envisage completely unprecedented kinds of spaces. Arguable, these were a constituent of the foundation upon which the museum ultimately built its edifice.

Major was born in 1634 in Breslau, today known as Wrocław, and studied in Wittenberg, Leipzig and Padua.<sup>3</sup> From 1665, he took up a chair in medicine at the newly inaugurated Christian-Albrecht University in Kiel, in the duchy of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp. He acquired a wide frame of reference by visiting many *Kunstkammern*, conversing with collectors and reading catalogues and descriptions. Major was one of the most prolific writers about *Kunstkammern* of his time, with at least seven published treatises, descriptions and catalogues. Major saw himself as a pioneer, but his thoughts on *Kunstkammern* were not particularly original even if they were stringent and elaborate. Largely, they were refined ruminations about a widespread and established *Kunstammer* culture.

#### Johann Daniel Major and the *Kunstammer* Genealogy

In two chapters of his treatise, Major outlines the etymology of a few dozen contemporary names of *Kunstkammern* in Greek, Latin, Italian, French and

German.<sup>4</sup> The passage has become the standard reference when approaching museum nomenclature *avant la lettre*.<sup>5</sup> I believe that we should also recognise it as an attempt to establish *Kunst- und Naturalien-Kammern* as a specific building type by tracing its perceived ancestry.

As an example, Major construes the term *pinacotheca* as a table, location or chamber for the display of books, paintings, silverware and clothes.<sup>6</sup> He reads *apotheca* as a repository (*Behältniß*) for wine, oil, drugs, books and arms.<sup>7</sup> Numerous names link the *Kunstammer* to household management, for example *thaumaphylacium*, *gazophylacium* and *thesaurophylacium*. *Thauma* means wonder, *gazo* and *thesaurus* a property or something precious. The shared *phylacium* relates to ‘I keep’, ‘I protect’ and prison.<sup>8</sup> Other names pertain to storage, e.g. *promptuarium*, *repositorium* or *Kammer*, or to containers, e.g. *arca*, *scrinium* and *cabinet*.<sup>9</sup> I want to stress that the terms pertaining to household management were used as metaphors to concoct new forms of knowledge management – management of objects in the *Kunstammer* architecture and of entities in catalogues and inventories. Thus, it is not surprising that utilitarian objects such as silverware and linen and cultural artefacts such as rarities, paintings or books were inventoried in very similar ways.<sup>10</sup> The period seems to perceive an affinity between household stockpiling and more curious collecting. Inventories of both kinds generally list objects in the order of the rooms and of each wall or piece of furniture, as if walking through the storage.<sup>11</sup> It is also in the household order that arguments for classification find their rationale due to the benefit of good order and correct placement, allowing things to be found again.<sup>12</sup>

The metaphorical affinity between household economy and collecting is also related to one of the prevailing study techniques of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, referred to as *commonplacing*.<sup>13</sup> Aristotle had distinguished between specific arguments that belonged to a particular science and common arguments that were used by everyone, rhetorically and dialectically.<sup>14</sup> The latter he called *common places* – in Greek *koinoi topoi* and in Latin *loci communes*. Cicero and Quintilian added other kinds of common places, e.g. those that form a stock of memorised views, points, tirades and formulations that the orator can employ in his speech. The various common places share the idea that the argument or piece of text is thought of as if having a precise and logical place. Quintilian explains that ‘for just as all things do not grow in every country, and you would not find a particular bird or animal if you did not know its birthplace or its haunts ... so every argument is not found everywhere’.<sup>15</sup> During the speech, the speaker would go to these ‘places’ in mind, as it were, to retrieve what he searched for.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, pupils were trained from early age to search and select sententious phrases or examples for rhetorical use when reading the Bible and classical authors. The excerpts they retrieved

were categorised and inscribed in an orderly manner in notebooks and likewise committed to memory. The books were thought of as an ordering system and a hierarchy of ‘places’ and the places were typographically expressed as titles or headings. Increasingly during the sixteenth century, the technique was used to structure compendia, encyclopaedias and catalogues and with time students’ personal commonplace books came to organise material objects, e.g. the rarities observed in *Kunstkammern*.<sup>16</sup>

The method of selecting and arranging in common places or *topically* was accompanied by metaphors. The places were cells or receptacles and the commonplace book a garden or a storehouse that the student imagined running through to relocate what he had originally placed there.<sup>17</sup> Some *Kunstkammer* names in Major’s nomenclature were also used as names of commonplace books, e.g. *promptuarium* and *thesaurus*. The metaphorical connection between household stockpiling and management and the learned selecting and ordering text excerpts was already firmly embedded in scholarly practices when the first *Kunstkammern* appeared. I want to put forward the hypothesis that the use of household metaphors to guide literary commonplacing inspired the concept of ordering in *Kunstkammern*.

**Topical Ordering and Collecting**

Some of the most influential recommendations for the use of commonplace books were published in Paris.<sup>18</sup> Rodolphus Agricola (1444–85) remodelled the commonplace book into a system of cross-referenced texts and increased its status as a tool in logical processes.<sup>19</sup> Erasmus of Rotterdam (c. 1466–1536) was himself a collector of both texts and physical objects. He successfully instructed school pupils to keep commonplace books, not only for forensic use but also for persons and things more generally.<sup>20</sup> Commonplacing – he reasoned – should serve to fill the ‘storehouse memory’ with what one had read. The system of places could compensate for limits to the natural memory, just like the granary stores food as a precaution for bad harvests.<sup>21</sup>

During the second half of the sixteenth century, Basle came to play an important role in the development of commonplacing and topical thinking and the application of such ideas in *Kunstkammern*. Konrad Gessner (1516–65) was a collector of *naturalia* and compared the commonplace book to the apothecary’s shop in which drugs were systematically stored.<sup>22</sup> Gessner published two topically ordered bibliographies for which he developed new indexical methods (Figure 1).<sup>23</sup> His ordering principles for books and animals came to influence the keeper of the Munich *Kunstkammer*, Samuel Quiccheberg (Figure 2), and were also of relevance for other thinkers in Gessner’s humanist circle.<sup>24</sup> Petrus Ramus (1515–72) integrated topical thinking into his highly successful scientific method.<sup>25</sup> The method created a system in which individual parts were subsumed into a hierarchy of places.<sup>26</sup> Theodor Zwinger (1533–88) developed tools such as topical organisation and

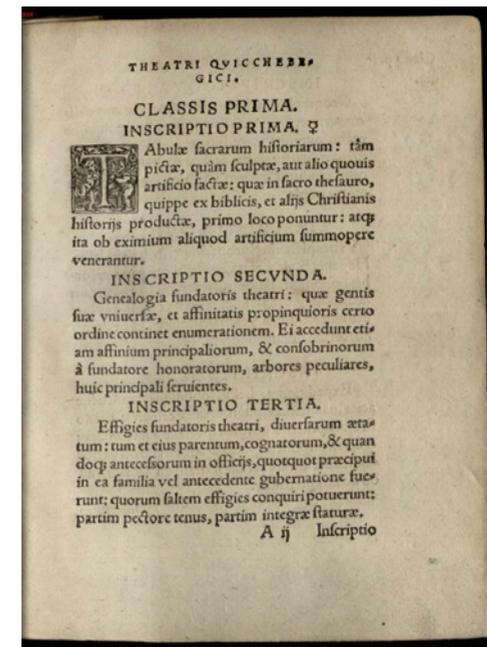
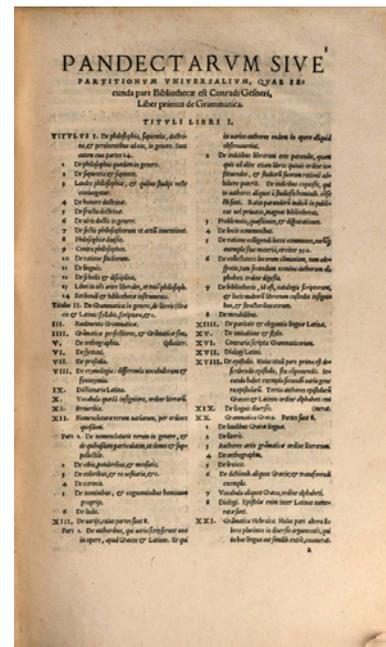


Figure 1 (left). Hierarchy of titles of the contents of the book of grammar of *Pandectae*. Each title referred to a corresponding list of entries (*loci communes*) on that topic. Each entry – of a total of some 37,000 – had a reference to the author and work where the information had been found. Source: Conrad Gessner, *Pandectarum sive partitionum universalium ...* (Tiguri, 1548). Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, <urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10148114-5>.

Figure 2 (right). The hierarchy of classes and inscriptions (sub-classes) of an ideal *Kunstkammer*, with a description of the contents of each inscription. The topical system was in parts followed in the arrangement of the Bavarian *Kunstkammer* in Munich. Conrad Gessner and Theodor Zwinger were two of the authorities that Quiccheberg mentions. Source: Samuel Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimi ...* (Munich, 1565). Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, <urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00025047-8>.

branching tree diagrams for access to the vast material in his encyclopaedia *Theatrum vitae humanae* (first edition 1565; Figure 3). His scientific method (*methodus*), which consisted of creating topical dispositions (*dispositio*), was a development of Ramus’ principles of division.<sup>27</sup> A structure of titles helped the reader create a mental model of the encyclopaedia’s holistic knowledge system.<sup>28</sup>

**Major, Method and Topical Ordering**

In Major’s *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken*, a number of interrelated terms govern the spatial order of the *Kunstkammer*. ‘Method’ (*methodus*) enables the keeper of the *Kunstkammer* to place objects so that he can find them even at night when it is dark, without the aid of labels and the catalogue.<sup>29</sup> We may thus see method as a means for conjuring up an architectural

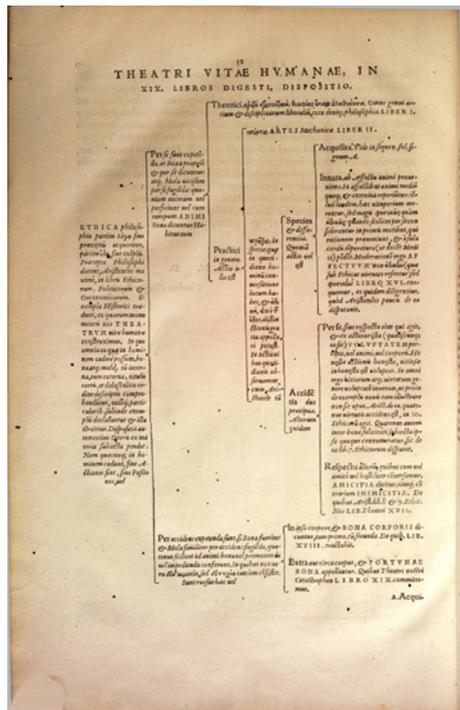


Figure 3. Topical and dichotomous disposition of Theodor Zwinger's encyclopaedia as a means for the reader to grasp the large number of entries of the almost 1500 pages. Source: Theodor Zwinger, *Theatrum vitae humanae* ... (first edition, 1565), 32. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, <urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb1196453-5>.

model in the mind that doubles as a classification and retrieving tool. Major encourages people to order the collection 'methodically, according to natural classes' rather than alphabetically.<sup>30</sup> He exemplifies this by listing sets of sub-classes for minerals and plants. Major's authority is Ole Worm, a professor from Copenhagen.<sup>31</sup> In 1655, Worm published a topically ordered description of his collection, *Museum Wormianum* (Figure 4). I want to put forward the hypothesis that it is essentially by means of Worm's publication that Major assimilates the topical methods developed in the Basle circle in his conception of the ideal *Kunstkammer*.<sup>32</sup> Worm had studied in Basle under Jakob Zwinger, the son of Theodor Zwinger and godson of Petrus Ramus.<sup>33</sup> Jakob Zwinger continued to develop and publish his father's encyclopaedia and was himself preoccupied with applications of commonplacing and method. So was another of Worm's teachers, Felix Platter, anatomist and collector, who had inherited Gessner's collection.<sup>34</sup> In Basle, Worm must have been immersed in a vigorous scientific culture, centred on topical methods and collecting.

Major also frequently employs the rhetorical and dialectic concepts *dispositio*, arrangement or disposition, and *ordo* (*Ordnung*), order.<sup>35</sup> *Dispositio* is the second part of rhetoric; where that which one has found is

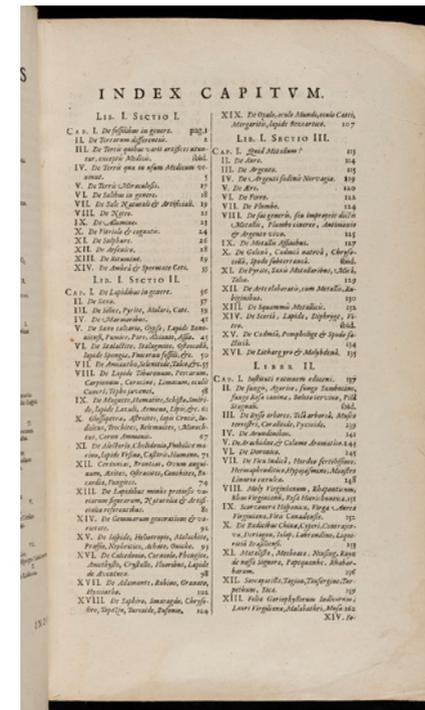


Figure 4. Topical disposition of the headings (classes, sub-classes) as an index or table of contents of Ole Worm's collection. The disposition was largely mirrored in the arrangement of objects in his *Kunstkammer*. Source: Ole Worm, *Museum Wormianum* (Leiden, 1655). Lund University Library, <urn:nbn:se:alvin:portal:record-104022>.

brought to order. *Ordo* appears in several parts of rhetoric to refer to an ordered relation between parts of a whole: in *dispositio*, *ordo* pertains to the logical division of thought and in *memoria*, to architectural or serial organisation. A proper ordering of things promotes remembrance – as Erasmus, Ramus and later Bacon and Descartes argued.<sup>36</sup> In their understanding, working with topical knowledge systems was to work with a device for learning.

For Major, order and disposition are closely linked to method. It seems to me that with 'disposition' he refers to the architectural arrangement of objects and with 'order' to a classificatory logic. He speaks of an order inherent and visible in nature, which in the repository can be maintained in a 'proper' (*gutter*) or 'physical' (*physicalischer*) order.<sup>37</sup> Major discourages not only alphabetical arrangements, but also ordering based on the economic values of objects. Instead, it should be done according to their kind (*Arth*) and parts (*Glieder*).<sup>38</sup> To safeguard the correspondence between the order of the classification and the order of the architectural arrangement, he recommends drawing very small or very large objects on paper, which are then positioned in 'correct order' (*richtiger Ordnung*).<sup>39</sup>

### Architecture of Method

Which kind of architecture did Major's method produce? In a passage, he specifies the architecture of a *Kunstkammer*, but only in rather trivial terms.<sup>40</sup> It should be mounted in a spacious room and have brick walls and a vaulted ceiling. A few windows should face south-east or south-west. The collection should be protected against animals, thieves, wind, dust, downpour and fire. However, the preceding paragraph is far more interesting.<sup>41</sup> With a collection at hand – but before one positions the cabinets and the objects – the keeper should carry the objects around in his mind. He should outline a general and well-founded disposition of the total system (*Werck*) on paper, in which the classification and the architectural arrangement correspond. The system should not be limited to objects at hand, but consider future additions and leave physical space for them.

Two examples from his other writings supplement the treatise. One describes his own *Kunstkammer*, the *Museum Cimbricum*, which he built in the 1680s in Kiel. The single room measured 11.9 x 6.8 x 3.5 metres or 80 square metres.<sup>42</sup> Major's world view was represented with models of the Ptolemaic and Copernican world systems and depictions of the solar system, allegorical figures and Descartes. Too large objects that did not fit into the cabinets had been placed on the four walls, between Corinthian pilasters.<sup>43</sup> The collections were otherwise arranged in eight large cabinets, two and a half metres tall, each with fifteen compartments and a title or class painted at the top (Figure 5). He claimed that the *naturalia* cabinets had been displayed in an order that was so accurate that it could not be found elsewhere in the world.<sup>44</sup> The shelves were mounted obliquely with the result that when the doors of all cabinets on the east side were opened, the one and a half thousand objects were exposed to the visitor at one glance and systematically, as a 'friendly parade'. The architectural disposition of *Museum Cimbricum* thus provided the visitor an immediate visuospatial command of its classification. It was ordered into three parts: *physis* or nature – systematically sub-classified, *techné* or the arts – divided alphabetically, and *antiquitas* – arranged geographically and chronologically.<sup>45</sup> A second order operated crosswise, dividing all objects into *uniformia*, made of one material, and *diformia*, put together by several materials.<sup>46</sup> It offered a solution to the problem of placing crafted and amalgamated objects that might belong to several classes. As *diformia*, a silver microscope might be classified under the titles 'optics', 'metal' and 'toreutics', the art of making designs in relief.

On a far grander scale, Major envisioned the ultimate *Kunstkammer* complex in his utopia *See-Farth nach der neuen Welt, ohne Schiff und Segel* (*Voyage to the new world, without ship and sail*). Daedalus arrives in the land of Cosmosophorum and walks through the castle's one hundred places, rooms and buildings, each assigned to one of a hundred sciences.<sup>47</sup> The narration combines a sequential and architectural ordering – like the order described in the rhetorical *memoria* (the art of memory) – with a topical

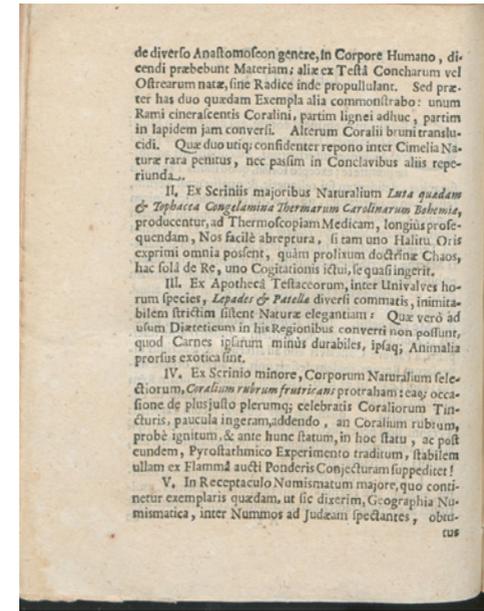


Figure 5. Description of the disposition of kinds of objects in numbered and titled cabinets (spatial, architectural disposition) and likewise in classes and subclasses (topical disposition). Source: Johann Daniel Major, *Musei Cimbrici cum contentis in eo rebus selectioribus privatim declarandi* (Kiel, 1689). Kiel Universitätsbibliothek, <urn:nbn:de:gbv:8:2-2557825>.

classification of the sciences. Several of the sciences are represented with repositories of objects. The astronomical promenade hall contains globes, armillary spheres and other mathematical instruments.<sup>48</sup> The house of anatomy boasts skeletons and preserved body parts. The pavilion of nature displays depictions of renowned *Kunst- und Naturalien-Kammern* from all over the world and an exquisite collection of rarities.<sup>49</sup> Major's utopia is a taxonomy of science-cum-*Kunstkammer* complex, where the topical disposition is concretised into a suite of rooms.

I have tried to demonstrate how Major's treatise *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken* may be understood as an attempt to define the ideal *Kunstkammer* architecture and disposition. In this respect, we may regard his effort as a contribution to architecture theory with topical methods and architecture typology with the establishment of the building type *Kunstkammer*. The theoretical underpinning for the former can be found in knowledge management technologies of the early modern period. The latter is based in an etymological genealogy of storehouses and other household buildings. The *Kunstkammer* type had not been defined by Vitruvius, nor was it governed by Vitruvian theory. Instead, with Major and his contemporaries, its architectural definition found its rationale in the early modern erudite culture.

## Notes

- 1 The research for the paper was done at the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages at the University of Oslo and financed by the Norwegian Research Council. The project is described in Mattias Ekman, 'Spatial Orders of Memory and Knowledge. Architectural Schemes for Collections in Seventeenth-Century Sweden,' *Nordisk Museologi* 1 (2016), 148–58.
- 2 Milestones include Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (eds.), *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (London: House of Stratus, 2001 [1985]); Andreas Grote (ed.), *Macrocosmos in Microcosmo. Die Welt in der Stube. Zur Geschichte des Sammelns 1450 bis 1800* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 1994); Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 2001).
- 3 For recent assessments of Major's biography and his role as *Kunstkammer* theorist, see Jan Drees, 'Das Kieler "Museum Cimbricum" (1688) des Johann Daniel Major (1634–1694) und seine Beziehungen zum Gottorfer Hof,' in Hainz Spielmann (ed.), *Jahrbuch des Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landesmuseums* (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1996), 38–53; Stefan Kirschner, 'Vom privaten Naturalienkabinett zur öffentlichen Schausammlung: Johann Daniel Majors "Museum Cimbricum" (1689),' in Gudrun Wolfschmidt (ed.), *Popularisierung der Naturwissenschaften* (Berlin: GNT-Verlag, 2002), 64–77.
- 4 Johann Daniel Major, *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken von Kunst- und Naturalien-Kammern insgemein* (Kiel, 1674), ch. IV–V. I have used the digital facsimile of the Herzog August Library available at <http://digilib.hab.de/drucke/ub-4f-6/start.htm>.
- 5 Examples: Caspar Friedrich Neickelius, *Museographia oder Anleitung zum rechten Begriff und nützlicher Anlegung der Museorum oder Raritäten-Kammern* (Leipzig: Hubert, 1727), 409; David Murray, *Museums: Their History and Their Use*, Vol. 1 (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1904), 35, note 4; Barbara Jeanne Balsiger, 'The Kunst- und Wunderkammern: A Catalogue Raisonné of Collecting in Germany, France and England, 1565–1750' (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1970), 738.
- 6 Major, *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken*, ch. IV, §16. On 'pinacotheca' and Vitruvius, see *On Architecture*, trans. Richard Schofield (London: Penguin, 2009), 401 'gallery, picture'; *Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Ingrid D. Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 256 'peristyle courtyards ...'. On Major and Vitruvius, see Cornelius Steckner, 'Das Museum Cimbricum von 1688 und die cartesianische "Perfection des Gemüthes". Zur Museumswissenschaft des Kieler Universitätsprofessors Johann Daniel Major (1634–1693),' in *Macrocosmos in Microcosmo*, 618–9.
- 7 Major, *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken*, ch. IV, §18.
- 8 Major, ch. IV, §3, 8, 9.
- 9 Major, ch. V, §5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 15.
- 10 My observation is based on archival studies of seventeenth-century inventories of royal and noble households in Sweden. Cf. note 1.
- 11 On the spatial organisation of inventories, see Mattias Ekman, 'The Birth of the Museum in the Nordic Countries. *Kunstkammer* Museology and Museography,' *Nordisk Museologi* 1 (2018), forthcoming.
- 12 Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 249–51.
- 13 For introductions to commonplacing, see e.g. Sister Joan Marie Lechner, *Renaissance Concepts of the Commonplaces: An Historical Investigation of the General and Universal Ideas Used in All Argumentation and Persuasion with Special Emphasis on the Educational and Literary Tradition of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, repr. edn (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1974); Ann Blair, 'Humanist Methods in Natural Philosophy: The Commonplace Book,' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 4 (1992), 541–51; Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
- 14 Lechner, *Renaissance Concepts*, 11.
- 15 Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, Vol. 2: Books 3–5, The Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 377 (5.10.21–2).
- 16 On commonplacing in *Kunstkammern*, see e.g. Katharina Pilaski Kaliardos, *The Munich Kunstammer: Art, Nature, and the Representation of Knowledge in Courtly Contexts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), ch. 2; Koji Kuwakino, 'The Great Theatre of Creative Thought: The *Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimi* ... (1565) by Samuel von Quiccheberg,' *Journal of the History of Collections* 3 (2013), 303–24; Ekman, 'The Birth of the Museum.'
- 17 Lechner, *Renaissance Concepts*, 70, 136.
- 18 Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books*, 166.
- 19 Moss, 76–7.
- 20 Moss, 108.
- 21 John Hunter, 'The Well-Stocked Memory and the Well-Tended Self: Erasmus and the Limits of Humanist Education,' in Donald Beecher and Grant Williams (eds.), *Ars Reminiscendi: Mind and Memory in Renaissance Culture* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2009), 175.
- 22 Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books*, 191. On Gessner and other Basle collectors, see Hans Christoph Ackermann, 'The Basle Cabinets of Art and Curiosities in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,' in *The Origins of Museums*, 81–90, 383–410.
- 23 *Bibliotheca universalis* (1545) and *Pandectae* (1548). On Gessner's topical systems, see Helmut Zedelmaier, *Werkstätten des Wissens zwischen Renaissance und Aufklärung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 22–32; Paul Nelles, 'Reading and Memory in the Universal Library: Conrad Gessner and the Renaissance Book,' in *Ars Reminiscendi*, 147–69.
- 24 Lothar Schmitt, 'Ordnung im Gedächtnis: Alternative Überlegungen zum funktionalen und theoretischen Kontext des frühneuzeitlichen Sammlungswesens im deutschsprachigen Raum,' in Wessel Reinink and Jeroen Stumpel (eds.), *Memory & Oblivion: Proceedings of the XXIXth International Congress of the History of Art* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), 185; Samuel Quiccheberg, *The First Treatise on Museums: Samuel Quiccheberg's Inscriptiones, 1565*, trans. Mark A. Meadow and Bruce Robertson (Los Angeles: Getty, 2013), 9, 18.
- 25 On Ramus and method, see Neal W. Gilbert, *Renaissance Concepts of Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), ch. 5; Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, *Topica Universalis. Eine Modellgeschichte humanistischer und barocker Wissenschaft* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1983), 39–52.
- 26 Schmidt-Biggemann, *Topica Universalis*, 44.
- 27 Zedelmaier, *Werkstätten des Wissens*, 35.
- 28 Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 149.
- 29 Major, *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken*, ch. VI, §1.
- 30 'Methodicé, nach ihrer Natur in richtige Classes einzuteilen' in Major, ch. VIII, §11.
- 31 Major, ch. VIII, §2. Major refers to Worm's description as 'very accurate' ('gar-accurat ... beschrieben'). Johann Daniel Major, *See-Farth nach der Neuen Welt, ohne Schiff und Segel* (Hamburg, 1683), 104. On Worm as collector, see H. D. Schepelern, 'Natural Philosophers and Princely Collectors: Worm, Paludanus and the Gottorp and Copenhagen Collections,' in *The Origins of Museums*, 167–85. On Worm's collecting systematics, see esp. Camilla Mordhorst, 'Systematikken i *Museum Wormianum*,' *Fortid og Nutid* 3 (2002), 204–18.

- 32 Major knew Gessner's works first-hand. Wolfgang Rudolph Reinbacher, *Leben, Arbeit und Umwelt des Arztes Johann Daniel Major (1634–1693). Eine Biographie aus dem 17. Jahrhundert, mit neuen Erkenntnissen* (Linsengericht: M. Kroeber, 1998), 10, 54. Major did not refer to Quiccheberg and the conjecture that Major despite this knew Quiccheberg's museological writings has not been underpinned adequately. Eva Schulz, 'Notes on the History of Collecting and of Museums in the Light of Selected Literature of the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century,' *Journal of the History of Collections* 2 (1990), 210. It remains to determine if Major was influenced directly by Ramism, the works of Theodor and Jakob Zwinger and the methods developed by Francis Bacon and René Descartes, two of Major's idols.
- 33 H. D. Schepelern, 'Museum Wormianum. Dets forudsætninger og tilblivelse' (PhD thesis, Københavns Universitet, 1971), 61.
- 34 Camilla Mordhorst, *Genstandsfortællinger. Fra Museum Wormianum til de moderne museer* (København: Museum Tusulanum, 2009), 33; Schmitt, 'Ordnung im Gedächtnis,' 185. On Platter's collection, see Ackermann, 'The Basle Cabinets,' 84–5.
- 35 On these concepts, see L. C. Montefusco et al., 'Dispositio,' in Gert Ueding (ed.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, Vol. 2: Bie–Eul (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1994), 831–66; U. Ernst, 'Ordo,' in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, Vol. 6: Must–Pop (2003), 416–23. It lies outside the scope of the paper to compare with the Vitruvian concepts *dispositio* and *ordinatio*. On these, see Hanno-Walter Krufft, *A History of Architectural Theory from Vitruvius to the Present*, trans. Ronald Taylor et al. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 25–7.
- 36 Hunter, 'The Well-Stocked Memory,' 176; Peter Ramus, *Arguments in Rhetoric against Quintilian: Translation and Text of Peter Ramus's Rhetoricae Distinctiones in Quintilianum*, trans. Carole Newlands (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), 13; Walter J. Ong, *Ramus. Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 213, 80; Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory: The Quest for a Universal Language* (London: Athlone, 2000), 102, 8, 14.
- 37 Major, *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken*, ch. II, §4, ch. III, §1, ch.VI, §1, 4, 5.
- 38 Major, ch.VI, §5.
- 39 Major, ch.VI, §6, ch.VIII, §5.
- 40 Major, ch. VII, §5.
- 41 Major, ch. VII, §4.
- 42 Steckner, 'Das Museum Cimbricum,' 616; *Kurzer Vorbericht betreffend Johann Daniel Majors Museum Cimbricum*. In the following description, I lean on Steckner's reconstruction.
- 43 *Kurzer Vorbericht*, 8, ch. II, §11.
- 44 *Kurzer Vorbericht*, 23, ch. IV, §8.
- 45 Steckner, 'Museum Cimbricum,' 618.
- 46 Steckner, 618, 26–7. Cf. *Kurzer Vorbericht*, 34–5, §9–10.
- 47 Major, *See-Farth*. Cf. Reinbacher, *Leben, Arbeit und Umwelt*, 60–4, 218–21; Karin Unsicker, *Weltliche Barockprosa in Schleswig-Holstein* (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz, 1974), ch. 5.
- 48 Major, *See-Farth*, 33–4.
- 49 Major, *See-Farth*, 86–109, 10–12.

## Architectural Transactions: Communicating Architectural Knowledge in the Early Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society (1665–1677)

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### Abstract

In 1665, three years after the Royal Society of London was officially established by King Charles II, the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* were created. This was the revolutionary monthly peer-reviewed journal of the Society, initiated and edited by its secretary, Henry Oldenburg. In Oldenburg's own words, the publication's primary objective was 'improving natural knowledge and perfecting all *Philosophical Arts and Sciences*', by 'the communicating of [...] such things as they are discovered or put in practice by others'. The journal's intense publishing, at once erudite and inclusive, was meant to transfer the achievements of natural philosophers to a collective milieu, in line with Oldenburg's own pansophic intentions. Alongside astronomers, doctors, chemists, anatomists, antiquaries, mathematicians, and physicists, 'Architects [Oldenburg added in 1666] do require some variety and store of Materials for the further satisfaction of their Judgement in the Choice'.

This paper presents the ways in which Oldenburg's foundational editorship (1665–1677) drove and displayed such 'variety' of architectural knowledge in the early *Philosophical Transactions*. For the first time, architecture, largely intended as an experimental and 'mechanick' meta-knowledge, was being discussed in a scholarly periodical – one specifically dedicated to natural philosophy. Within the contexts of post-1666 London and the growing European culture of periodicals as radical intellectual media, Oldenburg's architectural intentions were voluntarily made of 'promiscuous experiments'. Through such figures as Henry Justel, Robert Boyle, or Martin Lister, Oldenburg was building a disjointly connected architectural field, made of antiquarian accounts, optical devices, building experiments and treatises, travel reports, mechanical drawings, and maps. These and other philosophical experiences promoted a quintessentially non-prescriptive 'store' of profoundly anti-Vitruvian 'Materials'.

This paper ultimately locates the early *Philosophical Transactions* as the innovative vehicle for a promiscuous, 'transactional', and largely ephemeral architectural culture of polymaths and *virtuosi*, driven by exploratory Baconian convictions and struggling to legitimize their ideal of modernity.

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# THE PERSISTENCE OF A PROVINCIAL BAROQUE

Session chairs:

**Maarten Delbeke**, ETH Zürich

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The historiography of the baroque has involved concepts and periodization drawn from religious and political history combined with, or opposed to, formal and stylistic categories. This session wants to add to – and challenge – existing historiography by postulating the existence of an at once persistent and provincial baroque. We hypothesize that the recatholization of large parts of Europe over the course of the seventeenth century not only spurred the dissemination of architectural models and vocabularies first developed in the centres of power, but also made available an architectural repertory for centuries to come, to the extent that in certain regions – in Europe but also elsewhere – a long baroque period almost imperceptibly segued into the neo-styles of the nineteenth century.

This session wants to provide an opportunity to map the phenomenon of an at once persistent and provincial baroque, by beginning to address the following questions:

Is the *longue durée* of the baroque a function of repeated campaigns of reinforcing or sustaining the Catholic identity in certain areas, or have other programmes (institutional, political, etc.) adopted the baroque repertory as well?

Is the concept of a ‘popular’ appreciation and adoption of provincial baroque a provable fact, or a myth based on the opposition between an

## THE PERSISTENCE OF A PROVINCIAL BAROQUE

‘urban’ classicism and a ‘rural’ baroque (Tapié)?

What does provincialism mean in the context of the baroque: a zone of passive reception, of invented traditions, or of unfettered experiment?

Is the ‘provincial’ a matter of boundaries and topographies, or rather of political, religious, and economic conditions?

Is the persistence of the baroque conditioned by zones of liminality and (confessional) conflicts, or does it depend on continuity, cross-fertilization, and patterns of dissemination?

How can we define the formal repertory of a provincial baroque and understand the conditions of its definition, transmission, and practice?

Is the repertory a matter of typology, structure, materiality, ornament, etc.?

The session brings together case studies from across Europe, over a period ranging from the early seventeenth century up to the twentieth, each demonstrating how a persistent baroque emerged in the interplay between canonical and internationally known models and the requirements of local circumstances, be they religious, political, artistic, or technical. Above all, they sketch the contours of a baroque presence that transcends the confines of Rome, Turin, or even Italy, and of the seventeenth century, and that touches on questions of regionalism, the vernacular, and the long history of neo-classicism.

*Extra moenia.*  
**The Developments of  
 Roman Baroque in Romagna during  
 the Eighteenth Century**

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**Abstract**

The baroque experience not only renewed the image of Rome, but also modified the outlook of all those local centres that adopted this experience as a modern cultural address. However, the process of diffusion and internationalisation was not an either immediate, or a straightforward one. Roman baroque architecture and urban planning was characterised by a rigorous spatial configuration and a solid internal coherence, which made most built organisms unavailable to an outright emulative process. Therefore, an operation of simplification and geometric clarification was presumed a much-needed prerequisite in developing this heritage. In this regard, Carlo Fontana (1636–1714) played a key role, both in the definition of new models through his professional pursuits and in the academic teachings, which were based on a process of regularisation of these innovations. Subsequently, the baroque models initiated to be easily interpreted and exported to suburban areas. Indeed, within the Pontifical State itself, only at the beginning of the eighteenth century through the spreading of printed material and the opportunity to pursue a local version of the ‘Grand Tour’, provincial architects took advantage of expertise and offered fully developed interpretations of the new language.

To explore this process, the issue of the Legation of Romagna – one of the suburban regions of the Pontifical State – is an interesting case study. This is because not only are architectural results perfectly aligned with the Roman practices, but also for the particular dialogue that its operators establish with the capital, the phenomenology of the case cannot be overviewed as a simple dependence. On the opposite, it allowed the suburbs to develop autonomously their contents, constituting themselves as *pars construens* of the very concept of the late baroque.

**Keywords**

Baroque, architecture, Romagna, Merenda, Buonamici, Fontana.

**Introduction**

During the eighteenth century, an important aspect of baroque internationalisation was performed by its spread within the Pontifical State: a gradual grip of conscience, which imposed a rationalisation of Roman experience to be adapted to the provincial areas and life conditions that were poor in economic resources.

In this regard, an emblematic case could be recognised in the development of Romagna architecture, in which, through a constant process of acquisition and simplification, the architects of the legation succeeded in defining a new media-representation-language, varied and rendered available for exceptional and virtuous declinations or – according to the requirements – emerging as essential and standardised.<sup>2</sup> In fact, compared to the capital, the purposes in the province were different. The legation represented an institutional perimeter, which collected heterogeneous urban realities in a frequent competition amongst each other. Consequently, it was necessary to improve firmly the image of the power of the church on the one hand and, on the other, it appeared appropriate to search for a not so expensive homogeneous architectural idiom. Particularly, the roman Good Government Congregation was especially involved in this strategic address. The office controlled the city budget and authorised the ordinary and extraordinary maintenance costs of local public buildings. Moreover, its responsibility was the coordination of taxes and the administrative supervision of the municipal projects and infrastructures. For this reason, the relationship with Rome was tight not only on the political stage, but also on the aesthetic one.

**The Roman Training of Romagna Architects**

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Rome was one of the major international cultural poles of Europe and yet the privileged destination for anyone who intended to undertake and pursue an artistic career. Hence, many neophytes came to improve their knowledge, often after attending the first trainings in their birth cities. Since this study program could require a long-term journey, solely the wealthiest families were able to afford such a financial commitment.<sup>3</sup> For the same reason, just a few group of Romagna apprentices had access to this education: the noble Forlì knight of the Order of Malta Giuseppe Merenda (1687–1767),<sup>4</sup> the Rimini ‘Knight of the Golden Sponon’ Giovan Francesco Buonamici (1692–1759)<sup>5</sup> and Friar Giuseppe Antonio Soratini (1682–1762), living in the Abbey of Class of Ravenna.<sup>6</sup> According to the tradition, the first two were introduced to the practice of drawing at the workshop of the painter Carlo Cignani (1628–1719)<sup>7</sup> – in Forlì from 1681<sup>8</sup> – and then they moved to Rome. Unfortunately, no documentary evidence has emerged from their attendance within the Roman circles. Nevertheless, some circumstantial evidence suggests the existence of a bond with the St Luke Academy. On the one hand, some graphical elaborations of the aristocratic monk report an adherence to teaching methods appropriated to the

Capitoline institute;<sup>9</sup> on the other, the acclamation of ‘Mr. Francesco Bonamici our Accad.c of honour’<sup>10</sup> testifies the existence of some form of relationship.

Instead, it is certain that the Camaldolese religious visited Rome several times from the 1712, when he was commissioned to modernise the church of San Gregorio on Celio hill.<sup>11</sup> However, it seems that the friar just studied the texts of experts – such as Vitruvio or Leon Battista Alberti (1404–72) – and observed antiquities and contemporary artefacts.<sup>12</sup> Probably, this sort of self-training was also supported by the many collections of printed material in circulation – such as the *Studio d’architettura civile* (since 1702)<sup>13</sup> – and the esteem that Soratini collected together with some papal architects, including Giuseppe Sardi (1680–1753).<sup>14</sup>

For the other major Romagna operators of the time, there are currently insufficient elements to certify where their studies took place. Perhaps the Ticino architect Pietro Carlo Borboni (ca 1720–73) – being active mostly in Cesena – studied in Bologna in his youth. Instead, the noble Faenza ‘Captain’ Carlo Cesare Scaletta (1666–1748) got the chance to visit the city as well as his predilection for the extroflexed columns is seemingly explored. However, by observing his model – subsequently abandoned – for the new church of St Teresa (from 1705) in Forlì, it appears a desire for the gradual correlation between the building and the surrounding urban fabrics, offered by the lateral building corps. This solution was typically Roman and had been attempted by the most famous papal designers: since early St Susanna’s brick wings (about 1603) – built by Carlo Maderno (1556–1629) – up to Francesco Borromini’s St Agnes in Navona square (1653).

Anyhow, it is certain that all of these architects returned to their respective communities of origin ‘after acquiring amid long study’<sup>15</sup> the necessary theoretical bases. Most probably, the decision was caused by the general absence of job opportunities in Rome.

This means that the visits became more sporadic in Rome. In spite of this, for example, Merenda was kept informed by an intense correspondence with his brother Cesare (1700–53) – ‘auditor of the Eminent Cardinal Borghesi’<sup>16</sup> – who did not fail to send him several books of architecture in the years following to his return to Forlì: from ‘Fontana Cav.e Carlo – Tempio Vaticano, and its origin with the most conspicuous edifices’<sup>17</sup> to ‘Rossi – Domenico Studio d’Architettura Civile’<sup>18</sup> without underestimating publications as well as ‘Serlio Sebastiano Architettura e proportione’<sup>19</sup> or ‘a planimetry, among others, and a cross-section of St Peter, which was supposed to be as Michelangelo had imagined’.<sup>20</sup> Instead, Buonamici could count on the constant presence of his brother Nicola in the capital city and amidst the aid of their influential cousin Giovan Antonio (died 1761), ‘General contractor of Tabacco of all Ecclesiastical State’<sup>21</sup> who was in touch with Luigi Vanvitelli (1700–73).<sup>22</sup>

In this manner, the Capitoline artistic debate began to animate even in the most suburban realities, making them take part in it, and its experiments

were transformed into models that – once split up into its components – were then available to original formulations which were suitable for any circumstance: a *modus operandi* image of the same internationalisation of baroque.

#### The Contribution of the Roman Experts to the Partial Influence of Bologna

Also papal expert’s local actions reinforced the importance of Roman apprenticeship for provincial architects. They moved to the legation in accordance to various assignments, ranging from advisers for factories of special interest to the inspection of all those artefacts related to the Reverend Apostolic Chamber. In particular, during the early eighteenth century, the names of Girolamo Caccia (1650 – ca 1728), Abram Paris (ca 1641–1716), Francesco Fontana (1668–1708) and Sebastiano Cipriani (1660–1740) appear recurrent and replaced by operators such as Vanvitelli and Ferdinando Fuga (1699–1782).

Indeed, in contrast to the rest of the State of the Church, in Romagna the construction sector prospered; for instance, the new city of Cervia that was founded in 1698.<sup>23</sup> It was the result of an intense collaboration between institutions and experts, such as Caccia, Fontana and Paris: an extraordinary re-foundation, which symbolised the potential of the Government, underlining its great operational power as well as the lack of organisation subtended to its application; an issue that slowed down this realisation as well as many others. However, the given opportunity drew the attention of many workers from all over the peninsula, who moved to the region looking for a job opportunity. This situation provided new ideas and solicited a widespread desire for change.

In addition, at that time the conditions were favourable because King Clement XII Corsini (1730–40) had restored the lottery and was thinking of investing these funds in public works. Therefore – in line with this renewed interest to the *res publica* – several other cities undertook generalised modernisations of their infrastructures, taking advantage of the pope’s help. In fact, with this exceptional financial support, Rimini began the renovation of its port and the main monuments of the imperial era – such as the ancient bridge of Augusto – with Vanvitelli’s supervision (1732),<sup>24</sup> whereas Fuga visited Cesena to provide a new design for the *diroccato* bridge along with Via Emilia (1732) over the river Savio<sup>25</sup> and to evaluate the conditions of the port of Cesenatico, which was strategic for the export of sulphur.<sup>26</sup> Finally, Ravenna started the long-awaited diversion of the Ronco and Montone rivers that worried its people (1735):<sup>27</sup> a massive hydraulic reorganisation tended to both the local *securitas populi* and the relaunch of the city with the predisposition of a new port. The first project was commissioned to the famous mathematicians Bernardino Zendrini (1679–1747) and Eustachio Manfredi (1674–1739), whose intentions were converted into more majestic



Figure 1. Giovan Francesco Buonamici, Church of St Bernardino in Rimini, interior.  
Source: I. Benincampi.

forms by the Legate Giulio Alberoni (1664–1752). The cardinal wanted to monumentalise the structures ‘permutando il gran Ponte fatto sopra i due fiumi uniti nella via romana dal farlo di legno, à farlo di pietra’:<sup>28</sup> a manner to synthesise the novelty of baroque language in its essential parts without losing its communicative power. The work faced many difficulties, but it was almost completely achieved by mid-1700s.

Furthermore, there were also interventions promoted by private citizens and religious congregations. In this regard, Francesco Fontana was commissioned to build Spreti Palace and the Church of St Maria del Suffragio (1701)<sup>29</sup> – both in Ravenna – as well as his father Carlo and Vanvitelli had been consulted in Cesena upon the project for the new church of St Agostino (1748)<sup>30</sup>.

Definitely, it seems possible to identify a constant relationship between Rome and the papal outskirts. This situation favoured the artistic upgrade of the province and set off a virtuous circle of transformations, in which local architects also took part.

#### A Decorous Contamination

Hence, it is evident that the contact between the legation and the main national art centres did not settle in a simple reciprocal dependence. Architects from Romagna did not accept to reproduce Roman or Bologna’s solutions passively. On the contrary, in many regional areas they tried to develop previous acquisitions and reassembled them to personal interpretations.<sup>31</sup>



Figure 2. Giovan Francesco Buonamici, Church of St Bernardino in Rimini, detail.  
Source: I. Benincampi.

In this sense, there can be found several examples. Nevertheless, exceptional cases should be recognised in the Church of the Suffrage in Forlì (1723)<sup>32</sup> – an idea of Soratini – and in the Church of St Bernardino in Rimini (1757), work of Buonamici.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, while the first elaboration simplified the model of the Church of the Novitiate by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) according to a more rigid and hierarchical scheme, the second (Figure 1) introduced some baroque expedients, borrowing the experiments of the roman Church of the Holy Stigmata of St Francis in Rome (1704), projected by Giovan Battista Contini (1642–1723). Particularly, the Rimini realisation seems to sum up the dominant position of the province over the architectural debate.

Structured as a single hall lined with three side-chapels on each lateral row, St Bernardino addresses the issue of the angles in a plasticised way, introducing angular bevels with a strong unifying value: a smart design which respected the longitude requirements of Catholic liturgy on the one hand, and, on the other, centralised the space which is made suitable for ideological and visual reasons. However, in respect of the Roman reference, Buonamici’s elaboration seeks a clearer organisation of the components, treated mostly with a decorative meaning (Figure 2). Nonetheless, the choir’s mistilineous perimeter betrays the intentions of the composition, leading to a fragmented perception.

Thus, it is possible to see emerging the limits of the research undertaken by architects from Romagna, who – being unable to coordinate all the elements through a strong consistency – gave rise to products that are



Figure 3. Pietro Carlo Borboni, Church of St James in Cesenatico, front.  
Source: I. Benincampi.

usually heterogeneous and far from the coherence characteristic of papal artists. The Counter-Reformist model is not denied in its essence although is mitigated through the adoption of three-dimensional adjustments and finally summed up with the presentation of an austere celebratory lexicon: a choice clearly dictated by financial reasons, namely the opportunity to reduce the ornamentation to a minimum. As a result, a substantial attitude to design took form in the subsequent aggregations, in which the technique and the erudition was based on the needs of both community and the client, are balanced and in variable equilibrium. The architecture abandons its ideals of greatness and magnificence and places itself to the service of the local municipality with the aim of representing the signs of its identity.

*Decorum* becomes the essential part of these elaborations and this tendency to synthetise – still under investigation by the architects from Bologna – seems to find a way to fit within these elaborations. Borboni tested the potential of this combination in his constructions, such as the Parish of St James in Cesenatico (1763). Here, while the traditional layout is preserved, the architect introduced sharp corrections to the corners, centralising the interior space of the nave, like in the church of San Bernardino. On the contrary, in the facade, the articulation lost its components and the capitols disappeared in favour of a simple linearism ‘per non impegnare il Popolo a spesa maggiore da quella, che il Popolo medesimo aveva fissato’<sup>34</sup> (Figure 3). In this way, although two different tendencies coexisted, each one fulfilled a specific task.



Figure 4. Giovanni Battista Boschi, Raffaele Campidori, Church of St Umiltà in Faenza, interior. Source: I. Benincampi.



Figure 5. Anonymous, Church of St Ippolito e Lorenzo in Faenza, interior. Source: I. Benincampi.

In addition to these forms of contamination, there were also some cases where the reflection on the references gave rise to a juxtaposition of sequences extracted from the selected *exempla*. This was especially true in Faenza in the churches of St Umiltà (1740) and of St Ippolito and Lorenzo (1770).

Supposedly, the master builders of the city – Giovanni Battista Boschi (1702 – ca 1788) and Raffaele Campidori (1691–1754) – were the authors of the first artefact<sup>35</sup> and updated the perimeter of the hall using some

solutions directly covered from the exceptional model of Borromini's San Carlino (Figure 4). Instead, in the Camaldolese rear building,<sup>36</sup> the anonymous author of the project – perhaps resident in Rome – ennobled the Counter-Reformist model through decorations and ornamental motifs taken from the central nave of the Basilica of St John in Lateran (Figure 5).

### Conclusions

In conclusion, it appears to be confirmed that the first half of the eighteenth century was one of the crucial moments of maximum diffusion and internationalisation of baroque language and, in this respect, the architectural industry of Romagna could boast of a specific contribution, which expressed comprehensively a clear effort to consider and develop Roman and Bologna's experiments. Probably, the various issues that affected the region – not least, the various armed conflicts and the continued famines<sup>37</sup> – slowed down the updating process of the province. In spite of this, these difficulties imposed a parsimony that turned into a research for the essential: an address to design for subsequent subtractions that was synthesised by quality.

### Notes

- This contribution is an in-depth study of some of the extracted themes of the doctoral thesis of the author (Iacopo Benincampi, 'La Legazione di Romagna nel Settecento. Il 'Buon Governo' dell'architettura nella periferia dello Stato Pontificio' (PhD diss., University of Rome – Sapienza, 2018). Special thanks go to Professor Augusto Roca De Amicis for the broad support given during the development of this report and to Mr. Aban Tahmasebi for putting in order the English translation.
- About Romagna architecture: Werner Oechslin, 'Contributo alla conoscenza dell'architettura barocca in Romagna. Fra G. Merenda e G. Buonamici,' in Pier Fausto Palumbo (ed.), *Barocco europeo, barocco italiano, barocco salentino* (Lecce: Centro Studi Salentini, 1970), 265–277; Anna Maria Matteucci and Deanna Lenzi, *Cosimo Morelli e l'architettura delle legazioni pontificie* (Bologna: University Press, 1977); Bruno Adorni, 'L'architettura dal primo Cinquecento alla fine del Settecento,' in Aldo Berselli (ed.), *Storia della Emilia Romagna* (Bologna: University Press, 1976), 701–30; Pier Giorgio Pasini, 'Tra architetti e manovali, artefici e artisti: Introduzione ai cantieri romagnoli del Settecento,' *Romagna, Arte e Storia* 15 (1985), 5–26; Giovanni Rimondini, 'Il manuale e il cantiere,' *Romagna, Arte e Storia* 15 (1985), 27–65; Anna Maria Matteucci, *L'architettura del Settecento* (Torino: Utet, 1988), 60–2, 76–9, 100–4; Marinella Pigozzi, 'Legazioni di Ferrara e della Romagna. Scali portuali e sbocchi a mare in età moderna,' in Giorgio Simoncini (ed.), *Sopra i porti di mare. Lo Stato pontificio*, Vol. 4 (Firenze: Olschki, 1995), 281–317; Anna Maria Matteucci, 'Lo Stato della Chiesa,' in Giovanna Curcio and Elisabeth Kieven (eds.), *Storia dell'architettura italiana. Il Settecento*, Vol. 1 (Milano: Electa, 2000), 240–59.
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- About Merenda: Giovanni Rimondini, 'Materiali per la ricostruzione del registro di G. Merenda architetto forlivese,' *Romagna, Arte e Storia* 10 (1984), 21–40.
- About Buonamici: Federica Murra,

- 'Giovan Francesco Buonamici Architetto Riminese del '700' (MA thesis, Firenze, 1997).
- About Soratini: Ruggero Boschi and Rita Morrone, *Paolo Soratini architetto lotanese (al secolo Giuseppe Antonio)* (Brescia: Grafo, 1982).
  - Iacopo Benincampi, 'Frà Giuseppe Merenda, dilettante in architettura,' *Studi Romagnoli* 67 (2017), 166–7.
  - Syra Vitelli Buscaroli, *Carlo Cignani (1628–1719)* (Bologna: Arti Grafiche, 1953), 133.
  - About Merenda drawings: Francesco Divenuto, *La mosca d'inchiostro: l'inedito album di Giuseppe Merenda* (Cesena: Il Ponte Vecchio, 2013), 142–7.
  - Historical Archive of the Academy of San Luca (ASL), *Registri*, box 51, 114r (2 April 1758).
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## Translatio: Provincial Architecture of the Baroque Baltic Relic, c. 1600–1800

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### Abstract

The proposed paper interrogates the historiography of the provincial baroque taking up the question of the issues of baroque provincial architecture attending historical incidents of *translatio* – the ceremonial physical relocation of relic remains of saints and holy persons – within territories of Counter-Reformation Catholicism along the Baltic littoral circa 1500–1800, with an emphasis on architecture conceived for relics of indigenous Baltic so-called '*Beati moderni*' (modern Blesseds), would-be saints contemporary to the early modern period.

The paper plots a cluster of intra- and extra-Baltic *translatio* case studies in architecture and attendant performative ritual, against the fluctuating territories historically comprising principally Old Livonia, a region claimed for the Roman Church by Medieval crusaders and largely lost or endangered – but vigorously mythologized – according to early modern Catholicism, and corresponding to present-day areas in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Belarus. It frames the ritualistic movement of sacred relics between frontier zones at the perceived edges of Catholicism and the conventional center, Rome. Postulating the existence of an at one persistent and provincial baroque enacted through the translated relic, the paper considers the hypothesis that the recatholisation of the Baltic over the course of the 17th century by means of the practice of building for relic translation was vitally implicated in the fashioning of long-duration geographical, political, and ideological borderland peripheries, in the service of volatile intra-European colonial dynamics, inter-religious relations, and emergent episteme encompassing the (super)natural and manmade worlds that played out through architectural morphologies for centuries to come; ultimately raising the question of possibility of the *longue durée* of the Baltic baroque relic-as-architecture.

# At the Peripheral Edge – Baroque Architecture in Malta

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## Abstract

Malta can be considered to be the southernmost frontier of baroque culture in Europe. The flourishing of baroque architecture in Malta coincides with the period when the Order of St John ruled the island between 1530 and 1798. The Order of St John as a military and religious order, introduced baroque architecture in Malta by engaging various architects and military engineers from Italy, France and Spain. The foundation of the new city of Valletta, in the aftermath of the Great Siege of 1565, followed by its gradual transformation as a baroque urban setting was only possible by the contribution of eminent foreign architects such as Giovan Francesco Buonamici, Romano Carapecchia, Mederico Blondel and Stefano Ittar. However, beyond the foreign academic tradition there was also a rich local building culture centred around the activities of the master mason or *capo maestro* under the supervision of the local architect. Beyond the urban centres in various local towns and villages, baroque churches were being built in accordance to the local vernacular and beyond the formal strictures of the academy.

The paper will argue that the baroque as it evolved depended on the cross-fertilisation and synergy of both the academic architects and that of the local non-academic practitioners. Following the departure of the Order of St John and the establishment of British colonial rule, the baroque as disseminated in the local towns persisted and thrived in counter-response to the various historicist revival styles that were being promoted by the British authorities. One can argue that the prevailing baroque language at the local grassroots level constituted a so-called 'architecture of resistance' to the Anglicising efforts of the British colonial authorities. Although during the nineteenth century the baroque was considered to be *passé* on the continent, a provincial baroque still persisted in Malta.

## Keywords

Baroque architecture, Malta, Order of St John, Valletta, scenography, British colonial rule.

Malta is the southernmost frontier of baroque culture in Europe. In spite of its miniscule physical size, the arrival of the knights of the Order of St John in 1530 was a major turning point in the island's history. The Order of St John as a military and religious institution introduced baroque architecture to Malta by engaging various architects and military engineers from Italy, France and Spain. The foundation of the new city of Valletta in the aftermath of the Great Siege of 1565, followed by its gradual transformation as a baroque urban setting, was only possible by the contribution of eminent foreign architects such as Giovan Francesco Buonamici, Romano Carapecchia, Mederico Blondel and Stefano Ittar.

## The Legacy of the Order of St John

The Order of St John was a chivalric institution composed initially of eight different *langués* (languages) with knights coming from various noble families from Castille, Leon, Aragon, Auvergne, Provence, France, Portugal, Italy and Germany. The presence of such a diverse multi-cultural order on a small island on the periphery of Europe served as the impetus to establish a thriving cosmopolitan milieu on the island. Vadanletta, the new city of the order, was founded in 1566 primarily as a defensive war machine, with the massive line of fortifications around the new city on the barren Sciberras Peninsula designed and constructed so as to repel any future Ottoman Turkish invasion.<sup>1</sup> Various Italian military engineers had been consulted from Bartolomeo Genga to Baldassare Lanci who both came up with their own proposals.<sup>2</sup> However, ultimately it would be Francesco Laparelli, a military engineer from Cortona who had assisted Michelangelo in the construction of the fortifications around the Vatican, who would be entrusted with the design of the new city.<sup>3</sup>

The knights were keen to ensure that the urban model to be adopted for the new city would be representative of the latest developments of contemporary Renaissance urban culture. Laparelli's strict orthogonal grid-iron plan engirdled within an elaborate network of fortifications is in stark contrast to the prevailing organic form of traditional local Maltese settlements with their maze-like narrow streets and alleys converging to the central square, an urban form more reminiscent of North African and Middle Eastern cities. In such manner the knights through Laparelli's plans were keen to impose an academic urban model that ultimately was more akin to a sophisticated war-machine than a normal city. When it came to the construction of the new city and some of the more important earlier buildings of the order, the knights had to rely on the engineering and construction skills of locals, further reinforced with the presence of imported Sicilian workers. In this respect the engineering abilities and pragmatism of the Maltese architect and engineer Girolamo Cassar stands out. In Laparelli's absence, Cassar was ultimately responsible for realising Laparelli's plans and the design and construction not only of the fortifications but of the

order's first auberges, the Conventual church, the Sacra Infermeria, bakery, the *polverista* and various other buildings of the order.<sup>4</sup> It was this dynamic synergy between Laparelli's urban vision and Cassar's hands-on pragmatism that would ensure that Valletta would see the light of day and evolve into a thriving cosmopolitan city.<sup>5</sup>

Over the course of the seventeenth century Valletta shed its severe and austere architectural appearance befitting that of a religious and military order into one that gradually embraced the baroque architectural language. Architect Buonamici, originally from Lucca but who had also worked on the construction of the Palazzo Barberini in Rome, served as the resident military engineer of the order from 1635 to 1659.<sup>6</sup> He was a pioneer in introducing the baroque architectural idiom in Malta, particularly with his remodeling and new facade for the Jesuit church in Valletta and that of the parish church of St Paul in Rabat.<sup>7</sup> Whilst based in Malta, Buonamici even had the opportunity to undertake various ecclesiastical projects in Sicily, such as designing the facade of the Jesuit church and college in Trapani and the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament within Syracuse cathedral.<sup>8</sup>

It was not only Italian architects who left their imprint on the gradual transformation of Valletta into a baroque showpiece. The French architect Mederico Blondel, who succeeded Buonamici in his post as resident military engineer of the order, also designed several prominent buildings in Valletta, with the new facade of the Auberge de Provence being his most important work. The knights always sought to commission established foreign architects, sculptors and artists to design and embellish their buildings. As an order of international standing they consistently strove to import the latest artistic movements on the continent. However, one should not dismiss the contribution of emerging local architects and artists who were mentored by their more illustrious counterparts. Some of these Maltese architects such as Tumas Dingli and later Lorenzo Gafà had risen through the ranks. Although both Dingli and Gafà did not have the opportunity to pursue a formal academic education they came from local families of established *scarpellini* (stone-carvers) and *scultori* (sculptors). At an early age they would have been directly exposed to the construction activities at the building site. With their artisanal background, they would have absorbed the more formal principles from the academically-trained foreign architects supervising the works.

### Embracing the Baroque Triumphant

The overtly rhetorical stance of the baroque was also particularly well-suited for the Order of St John's political objectives. The order strove to promote itself as a brave and triumphant one, where the knights (and to a lesser extent the locals) were constantly engaged in fighting the Ottoman Muslim forces and hence serving on this peripheral outpost as valiant defenders of the Christian faith. This representation of the order is vividly encapsulated

in the fresco entitled *The Allegory of the Triumph of the Order of St John* by the renowned Calabrian artist Mattia Preti.<sup>9</sup> The oil on stone painting in the lunette over the main door to St John's Conventual church formed part of a series of frescoes on the vaulted ceiling that depicted the life and martyrdom of St John the Baptist. In 1661, Preti was commissioned by the order to undertake the entire fresco cycle, a commission which took six years to be completed. The tangible manifestation of the emergence of the baroque triumphant during the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth century is the radical transformation of St John's Co-Cathedral from the sombre and dark almost-cavernous interior as built by Girolamo Cassar into the resplendent interior of the cathedral replete with the Mazzuoli's high-altar marble sculpture of the Baptism of Christ, Preti's fresco cycle, the ornate marble tombstones and various baroque funerary monuments of past grand masters prominently displayed in the chapels of the various *langues* of the order.

The reification of the term 'baroque' with the Maltese context can be defined in the form of highly-charged rhetorical and propagandistic modes of artistic representation that projected the Order of St John both as staunch defender of the Christian faith and, also as an influential power-broker within the Mediterranean region. On another level, baroque art forms were also appropriated by the local ecclesiastical authorities and disseminated at the grassroots level. Beyond Valletta, the city of the order, baroque-styled churches were being built in various towns and villages in accordance to the local vernacular and beyond the formal strictures of the academy.

In contrast to the Order of St John who preferred to engage foreign architects and military engineers, the Diocesan church commissioned Maltese architects and master masons to design and build the local parish churches. Maltese architects such as Tumas Dingli, Lorenzo Gafà and Salvo Borg had all risen through the ranks, working as understudies to foreign architects, for some time serving as master masons and eventually, being appointed as fully-fledged architects. They disseminated the baroque style particularly in ecclesiastical architecture beyond the walled city of Valletta.<sup>10</sup> The parish churches of Attard, Birkirkara and the Mdina cathedral are some of the finest examples of local churches. I would argue that baroque architecture as it evolved depended on the cross-fertilisation and synergy of both the foreign academic-trained architects and that of the local non-academic practitioners. One interesting example is the mid-eighteenth-century parish church of Għarb, a small village in the island of Gozo. Although from a typological viewpoint the church appears to be inspired by the baroque church of Sant'Agnese in Piazza Navona, Rome, the architect-in-charge together with local *scarpellini* gave the church a distinctive scenographic imprint where the rather naïve sculptural decoration takes centre-stage.<sup>11</sup> The display of finely-executed sculptural works by local

*scalpellini* is also manifested in a number of small churches and chapels dispersed throughout the local towns and villages; one good example being the architectural decoration within the interior of the *jus patronatus* chapel known as *tal-Abbandunati* in Ħaz-Żebbuġ.<sup>12</sup>

### Scenography and Architecture

As the threat of an Ottoman invasion abated, the Order of St John became more conscious of its image and of projecting itself in the guise of the European sovereign rulers. Scenography became ever more relevant particularly during the eighteenth century in projecting the absolutist image of the order. For example, whenever a new Grand Master of the Order was elected he would undertake the ceremonial ritual of taking *posesso* of the former medieval citadel of Mdina, whereupon the *Capitano della Verga* would symbolically present the keys of the city to the grand master as an act of loyalty and allegiance. For this special occasion, an ornamental triumphal arch would be temporarily erected within Mdina whereby the grand master together with his entourage would walk through it on their way to the cathedral. Two designs of these ornate temporary arches have survived and are known to be the work of the versatile designer Pietro Paolo Troisi, who had studied at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome.<sup>13</sup> These temporary arches were erected, one upon the election of the Grand Master Marc'Antonio Zondadari (1720–2) and the other, upon that of his successor, Grand Master Anton Manoel de Vilhena (1722–36).<sup>14</sup> The element of scenography was not only manifested in ephemeral structures, but also permeated architectural projects that were commissioned by the order during the eighteenth century.

During the mid-eighteenth century, the Auberge de Castille et Leon in Valletta was rebuilt on a more monumental scale and in an ornate baroque architectural style that was overtly rhetorical. Whereas the earlier buildings of the order were devoid of decoration and were rather severe in their external appearance, now architecture became far more ornate and richer in terms of sculptural decoration and allegorical imagery. Ornate scenography and explicit political rhetoric were closely affiliated with each other. This is specifically manifested in the case of two imposing staircases that were designed as scenographic centerpieces – one being that of the Auberge de Castille, whereby the monumental staircase flows outwards in the public space in front and that of the former Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta which was designed as a free-standing staircase at the very heart of the palace.<sup>15</sup> In both cases, it appears that their designer, the Maltese architect Andrea Belli was inspired by the grand and opulent baroque staircases of Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt at the Belvedere palace in Vienna and that of Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach at the Stadtpalais, also in Vienna.<sup>16</sup>

When considering the case of Malta, situated as it is, at the peripheral edge of Europe and its physical insularity as an island, one must also

take into account a certain time-lag or delay, for the diffusion of certain architectural movements from the mainland. Thus, whereas the baroque style in Europe was by the mid-eighteenth century well and truly superseded by neoclassicism and other movements, in Malta it was only upon the arrival of the Italian architect Stefano Ittar around 1783, and his design for the order's Bibliotheca building that the prevailing baroque architecture was tempered with neoclassical overtones.<sup>17</sup>

### The Persistence of the Baroque during British Colonial Rule

Following the departure of the Order of St John and the establishment of British colonial rule, the local Catholic church became the sole interlocutor in ensuring the continuum of baroque art forms. The baroque as disseminated in the local towns can be perceived as a form of religious-based counter-response to neoclassicism and the various historicist revival styles that were being promoted by the British authorities. One can postulate that the prevailing baroque language at the local grassroots level constituted a so-called 'architecture of resistance' to the Anglicising efforts of the British colonial authorities. The main public buildings and monuments commissioned by the British colonial government were usually expressed in a neoclassical style or in architectural variations of Romanticism.

Although the baroque during the nineteenth and early-twentieth century was stylistically considered to be *passé* on the European continent, variations of it still persisted in Malta. The late historian Leonard Mahoney made the following astute observation:

The popularity of the Baroque style, especially in church architecture, never died out, so that it would be wrong to describe the latter as a Revivalist style. What would seem in other countries, as absurdly anachronistic, is nothing of the sort in the local environment, where the tradition of building in the Baroque style is unbroken, and where the once 'Courtly' style has now become the common man's expression of affluence and splendor.<sup>18</sup>

This lingering predilection for the baroque was actively promoted by the local ecclesiastical authorities as it considered it an authentic display of Maltese Catholic sentiment to be seen within the context of the British Protestant colonial rulers. Two examples of the so-called late-baroque style will suffice here. The first one is the parish church of Msida dedicated to St Joseph and for which the foundation stone was laid in 1891. It was built to the design of the local architect Andrea Grima (1853–1918) and the wide multi-bay facade with twin bell-towers seems to have been inspired by the church of San Domenico, Palermo.<sup>19</sup> However, instead of free-standing columns as at the Palermo church, Grima employed plain pilasters which

were integrated within the facade. The second example, which dates to the post-World War II period, is the church of Saint John the Baptist built as the new parish church of the village of Xewkija in Gozo between 1951 and 1978.<sup>20</sup> The new monumental church designed by the Maltese architect Guzè Damato was closely modelled after Baldassare Longhena's church of Santa Maria della Salute, Venice.<sup>21</sup> For a small village with a population of a few thousands, the enterprise of building such a monumental church towering over the village's skyline verges on the megalomaniac. One can only attribute the underlying motif as a yearning by the local community for wider recognition and that such an iconic building would affirm its autonomous status in relation to the other parishes of Gozo. The late art historian Hanno-Walter Krufft commented as follows:

The interior of a building like this is quite remarkable. The perfection of the stone craftsmanship exhales the same coolness and rigidity as one often observes in nineteenth century buildings. The proportions of the architectural elements and the handling of light actually places the building in a tradition in which architecture is canonically understood and Vignola seems to have lain on the architect's table.<sup>22</sup>

One can argue that as a devoutly Catholic country where secularism has only made inroads during the past few decades, the baroque *Zeitgeist* has conditioned the locals to warmly embrace baroque architectural forms as authentic manifestations representative of the community's affection for the cults of patron saints, village feasts and religious festivities. In this case-study the Maltese baroque is perceived more as an ethos or timeless way of life rather than a time-bound art form.

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## Baroque(s) in Piedmont: Survival, Revival, Regionalism, 1780–1961

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### Abstract

The use of baroque language, its critical reconsideration among architects, and the revival of its forms in the contemporary age has often been considered in Italy as a negligible phenomenon, if not one of bad taste. While in the case of the rediscovery of the Middle Ages, a well-established historiography has highlighted not only the stylistic drifts, but also the meaningfulness of proposals and the legitimating role that the medieval period had throughout the nineteenth century, the same cannot be really said in regard to baroque (and Piedmont is no exception). Criticism has, in fact, often given the same negative account of phenomena that are indeed very different: the continuity of construction sites between the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries; maintenance policies, along with the persistence of craftsmen trained to work in continuity with ancient buildings; regionalist approaches searching for new identities through the valorization and proposition of local traditions; the dynastic legitimation of the House of Savoy, in the new buildings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, through the reproduction of language linked to the ‘magnificent’ ages of the dynasty; the bourgeois eclecticism of the palaces and elegant interiors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – luscious, epidermic, and heterodirected – often inspired by non-native models transposed by international magazines and repertoires; the stylistic restoration of major buildings in the first decades of the twentieth century.

The re-use and continuity of the baroque is therefore a complex practice between ingenuity and erudition, continuity and invention, centre and provinces – nevertheless shaping an area of freedom and experimentation. This paper therefore suggests a reflection on the baroque provinces/frontiers in geographical terms, as well as in terms of chronologies and practices often at the margins of an official historiographic recognition. Some examples will be discussed: late baroque building sites in the years of the neo-classical vogue; the application in architecture of early studies on the Piedmontese baroque; the eclecticism of interiors and exhibitions (Turin 1911); down to the scarcely known restorations ‘à l’identique’ in the context of ‘Italia 61’, the 1961 celebrations related to the 150 years of national unification.

## The Neobaroque Style in Private Secular Architecture in Spanish and French Catalonia in the First Half of the Twentieth Century:

## From a Cosmopolitan to Vernacular Model

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### Abstract

The rediscovery of baroque was one of the components of *Noucentisme* in Spanish Catalonia, as shown by the interests of historiography (Eugeni d’Ors, *Du baroque*, 1935) as well as by the use of formal languages inspired by this tradition (school architecture in Barcelona by Josep Goday and the Coliseum theatre by Francesc de Paula Nebot, among many examples). The *Noucentist* phenomenon has been treated by historiography for the city of Barcelona and for most of Catalonia. In this paper we will focus on the comparative phenomenon of the neo-baroque along the border zone between France and Spain, and more specifically in the towns of Figueres and Perpignan. South of the border, the reference to baroque in private architecture represents an evolving regional cultural and ideological component. On the one hand, baroque represents a regional historical component represented within vernacular architecture – the baroque *masia* (peasant mansion house), for example. On the other hand, baroque is a reminder of a Mediterranean cosmopolitan tradition that embodies different ideological contexts: a statement of Catalan nationalist politics under the *Mancomunitat*, Hispanic rhetoric under the dictatorships (in the 1920s and after 1940) – in each case the traditional position in relation to the ideologies conveyed by modernism. The buildings and town houses by architects such as Ricard Giralta Casadesus and Joan Gumà Cueva at Figueres, among others, stand as examples of this.

On the French Catalan side, the national aesthetics of the *Beaux-Arts* and the emergence of a Roussillon regionalism defined the framework in which a taste for baroque appeared, in a more fractioned and timid way. French ‘taste’, the *Beaux-Arts* aesthetics, is confirmed in the great stately architecture of Viggo Dorph Petersen. Yet the ambition of some patrons also called for the use of baroque solutions of composition or ornaments, in an eclectic approach. Simultaneously, from the beginning of the twentieth century and coinciding with *Noucentisme*, French Catalonia saw the emergence of a

regionalist aesthetic advocated by architect and sculptor Gustave Viollet. The architectural transcription of this regionalism was late, starting in the 1930s, and took on the stylistic model of Romanesque Art. Yet the regional baroque taste was not entirely excluded from it, as the Paynard house by Pierre Sans in Perpignan illustrates. Around the neo-baroque, intellectual attitudes and identity quests converge, but differ – within their respective historical contexts on both sides of the border – due to the cultural traditions of two states and by the expectations of the patrons.

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# THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE ORIENT BEFORE ORIENTALISM

Session chair:

**Anne-Françoise Morel**, KU Leuven

This session seeks to create a new understanding of the visualization and conceptualization of the architecture of the Orient and its introduction in architectural theory and practice in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, before the era that architectural historiography traditionally associates with Orientalism. The aim of this session is to improve our understanding of the ways in which eastern architecture was perceived, historicized, and conceptualized before a more generalized (if always problematic) notion of ‘oriental’ architecture emerged.

We are interested in the different channels through which knowledge of eastern architecture was obtained, communicated, and conceptualized (travelogues, diaries, collections of engravings, etc.). From the early eighteenth century onwards, the Grand Tour became more accessible to an ever larger group of travellers. Its circuit expanded beyond the Mediterranean, opening up a new world of architectural forms. This expansion coincided with a renewed critical scrutiny of the canon, and the introduction of new aesthetic notions such as ‘taste’ in the architectural debate.

This session seeks to investigate if, how, and why the Early Modern imagination of the Orient transformed into an architectural imagery that would resonate with contemporary architectural debates, and eventually stimulate the emergence of Orientalism. Particular attention is due to the ways in which eighteenth-century sources associated eastern

architecture with moral connotations, and construed its relation with European architecture: between assimilation into a general architectural history (with emerging notions of the oriental origins of the Gothic) and the definition of a distinct 'otherness' (i.e. non-western, non-classical, non-Christian) of eastern architecture.

The questions we wish to raise include:

- In what terms were the non-classical architectural forms described, and what referents were used?
- How exactly did the acquaintance with eastern architecture affect the interpretation of the Greco-Roman canon?
- How was oriental architecture defined, characterized, or categorized?
- How did new knowledge of eastern architecture recast deeply engrained Early Modern notions of the Orient as the site of architectural opulence and wonder, vanity and idolatry?
- Where and how did new notions of oriental architecture emerge, and how were they communicated?
- What exactly was the role of descriptions by travellers?
- How did travelogues filter moral, religious, and political connotations?
- How were their architectural descriptions mediated in design?
- Did the description of eastern architecture coincide with a renewed architectural attention for medieval architecture?
- What was the role of the emerging bourgeois class in making a supposedly 'barbaric' style socially acceptable?
- Which buildings and architects adopted or pioneered forms taken from oriental architecture before the emergence of Orientalism?

## Spatial Narratives on Ottoman Architecture: Aegean Port Cities through the Eyes of Western Travellers

Çağla Caner Yüksel, Başkent University  
Ceren Katipoğlu Özmen, Çankaya University

### Abstract

This paper aims to discuss spatial narratives on Aegean ports by European travellers during the seventeenth century. The seventeenth century was a significant time period, particularly with the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, which was a turning point in Ottoman history. The geographical focus of this study comprises the Western Anatolian territories of that time period, including newly developing and favoured settlements, as well as gradually abandoned former settlements. For instance, İzmir was a newly emerging overseas port accommodating noteworthy trade activities, which, in turn, had an influence on the shaping of the architecture of the city. In contrast to İzmir, ancient Ephesus, the once-proud hub of the Aegean and later the holy centre for Christians and a significant port of the Middle Ages, had shrunk into a deprived village by the seventeenth century, as has been revealed by travel accounts depicting these cities.

Among these accounts were those of French botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, French traveler Jean Thévenot, British clergyman and scientist John Covel, and Armenian priest Simeon of Poland, who passed through Western Anatolia and are some of the names this paper will address.

This study attempts to understand how the architecture of the seventeenth century Ottoman port cities along the Aegean Sea was mentioned, defined, and characterized by the western travellers through their textual and visual depictions. In the end, it questions whether it is possible to detect any architectural imageries relating to the soon-rising 'oriental image' in the multiple narratives of the travellers.

## The Spectator and the Orient: The Case of William Chambers

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### Abstract

‘I cannot conceive why it should be criminal in a traveller to give an account of what he has seen worthy of notice in China, any more than in Italy, France, or any other country; nor do I think it possible that any man should be so void of reason as to infer that an Architect is ignorant in his profession, merely from his having published designs of Chinese buildings.’

William Chambers, while writing these words in his *Designs of Chinese Buildings* (1757), was well aware of the problematic nature of publishing on oriental architecture. In a period when the Orient was seen as inferior to classical architecture, while at the same time offering tantalizing new visions for contemporary building projects, Chambers was the first European architect to travel to China, return with measured drawings, and publish his findings. His publications reveal, however, a paradoxical approach to the Orient.

My paper proposes an exploration of this paradoxical attitude in Chambers’ treatment of the Orient, in his publications, and in his unpublished lecture notes for the Royal Academy of Arts. It analyses how Chambers, while judging the architectural language of China as second-rate to the classical, exposes a fascination for the way the Chinese orchestrate their gardens, and the buildings situated in it, as spectacles. His fascination extended to the implementation of his ideas in stone, in his major building, Somerset House in London. The designs for this building, at first sight merely influenced by classical architecture, reveal the complex process of appropriating elements of Oriental architecture and culture. I argue that this can only be understood when analysing Chambers’ writings and designs from the viewpoint of his focus on a moving spectator. The paper aims thus to expose the multifaceted dynamics of appropriating the Orient in both text and design.

## Reception and Dissemination of Oriental Imagery in the Eighteenth Century: from Fischer von Erlach’s and Piranesi’s Architectural Plates to Lequeu’s Architectural Fantasies

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### Abstract

In the first half of the eighteenth century, political and economic relationships between European nations and the Ottoman Empire increased the number of travellers to sites ranging from the Syrian desert to Cairo. These relations were reflected in art and culture: the *Vedute* – together with maps, sculptural and architectural drawings – exposed readers to sophisticated images of this little known world.

With his *Entwurff einer historischen Architektur*, Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723) relies on an unfettered architectural fantasy that immediately fascinates the architects of the Enlightenment: in addition to the Temple of Solomon and the most important archaeological structures of Rome, there are several reconstructions that have influenced the imagination of European architects. These include the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus (I, 6), the Temple of Nineveh (III, 10); the pyramids of King Moeris (I, 11); the pyramids of Thebes (I, 13) and of King Sotis (I, 14); the obelisk of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus in Corinth (I, 20). In France, as early as 1724, the *Mercure de France* had presented the book to its readers as ‘an incomparable work’; while in 1754 Jacques-François Blondel included it among the essential books for the study of architecture. A similar, albeit more troubled process may be found in Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–78) and his crowded compositions, where Rome, Greece and Egypt find a perfect, precarious equilibrium, to the point where they collapse into his *Prisons of Invention*, finding a follower in the work of Jean-Jacques Lequeu.

The aim of this paper is, therefore, to trace an imaginary line that connects the reflections of the ‘historical’ inventive strength from Fischer and Piranesi, creators of oriental architectural models that spread across Europe in the eighteenth century, contributing to the creation and popularisation of the taste for the Orient that was perceived as a chimera by the West.

### Keywords

Orientalism, imagery, Entwurff, Fischer von Erlach, Piranesi, Lequeu.

### European Reception of Fischer von Erlach's *Entwurf einer historischen Architektur* (1721)

Fischer von Erlach started working on his most challenging project around 1705. In 1712, together with his collaborator Carl Gustav Heraeus (1671 – ca 1725), he presented a manuscript version of his *Entwurf* to Emperor Charles VI, who succeeded his older brother Joseph I in 1711. Finally, the book was published in 1721<sup>1</sup> in a complete historical scheme elaborated over four books and eighty-six plates, guiding the reader from ancient to contemporary world<sup>2</sup>.

The treatise is considered the first project for a universal and comparative history of architecture entirely made by images: the *Entwurf* included several buildings belonging to the imaginations of Oriental and Islamic worlds, which were mostly unknown in Europe at that time. (Figure 1.) The representation technique is successful, and included plans, sections and perspective views in very detailed engravings, accompanied by short texts. Fischer von Erlach illustrated each building and reconstructed and reinvented the disappeared historical constructions based on various descriptions he found in historical treaties and illustrated accounts of travellers.

Its architecture, which speaks Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Egyptian, Chinese and Japanese circulated through the cabinets of artists and architects, as well as among collectors. By the end of the 1730s, interest in Fischer's work seems to have spread through several European architects.

As we know, the English architect Nicholas Hawksmoor (ca 1661–1736) and the Scottish James Gibbs (1682–1754) used some of Fischer's reconstructions as models for their own projects. In particular, Gibbs' Boycott Pavilion at Stowe landscape garden (ca 1728) and the project for the Turner Mausoleum at Kirkleatham (ca 1740) remember several of Fischer's architectural details<sup>3</sup>. The German architect Balthasar Neumann (1687–1753) owned the first edition of the *Entwurf*, and the Italian Bernardo Antonio Vittone (1704–70) used some of Fischer's architectural monuments – like the pyramids of Sotis – as models in his *Istruzioni diverse concernenti l'officio dell'architetto civile* (1766) and in his *Istruzioni elementari per indirizzo dei giovani allo studio dell'architettura civile* (1760)<sup>4</sup>. Finally Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–78), one of the most brilliant minds of the eighteenth century, remains fascinated by Fischer's graphic treaty: the Morgan Library in New York holds two pages of sketches after *Entwurf* made by Piranesi, dating back to the 1740s<sup>5</sup>.

In these drawings we see the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the temples at Ephesus and Nineveh, the pyramids at Thebes and Heliopolis, as well as other ancient monuments and oriental vases.

Piranesi was strongly engaged in the debate on the primacy of Greek or Roman art, but Fischer's work, as well as Athanasius Kircher's drawings, influenced his early architectural fantasies, in a critical reflection on one's own time and memory. (Figure 2.)



Figure 1. Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, Pyramid of King Sotis, in *Entwurf einer historischen Architektur*, I, 14, (1721).



Figure 2. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Sheet of Sketches Showing Temples, Tombs, Sarcophagi, Ground Plans, Vases, and a Circus (ca 1740). Pierpont Morgan Library, Dept. of Drawings and Prints.

Furthermore, when in 1757 William Chambers (1723–96) designed his Alhambra, with the pagoda and the mosque for the Kew gardens, he shows a good knowledge and understanding of Fischer's architectural drawings.

A few years later, the French architect and draughtsman Jean-Jacques Lequeu (1757–1826) designed and coloured architectural plates using the *lavis* technique, a particular type of ink drawing and watercolour on a highly absorbent cotton sheet, halfway between painting and artistic drawing<sup>6</sup>. The legacy of Lequeu at the National Library of France is full of references and shapes borrowed from *Entwurf*, as in the case of the Mausoleum of

Halicarnassus, which was presented by Fischer as one of the seven wonders of the world, in drawings by Lequeu in 1792.

Lequeu's references are flanked by literal quotations from Fischer's work: among these, the *Orthographie du pont antique d'Oelius* and the *Orthographie ... du pont d'Auguste*<sup>7</sup> presenting an artistic manipulation of the plates by *Entwurff* (Book II, Plates III and VIII). In fact, in each plate, Lequeu reproduced the two ancient coins depicting the emperor's face, and a stylisation of the monument, while Fischer's perspective was placed in a prospect, in the middle of a vertical sheet, under which the French architect reported entire parts of citations taken from the 1721 treaty.

However, flipping through the pages of the *Architecture Civile*, Lequeu's real interest in the plates of Fischer's *Entwurff* can be seen in two different aspects: on the one hand, the very method of composing the work, an innovative treatise that gathers among its images 'all the architectures of the world'; on the other, the French architect and draftsman's interest in architecture, monuments, and the materials and details of Oriental art and architecture started to invade his vivid imagination.

An imagination not only linked to the fantasies of the eighteenth-century garden pavilions, but also his deep personal interest in a salvific architecture, capable of overcoming the corruption of modern Man's soul, through the creation of an 'other' city, that sank its origins in the myths and mysteries of the East.

#### Jean-Jacques Lequeu (1757–1826) and the Construction of an Architectural Memory

Born in Rouen, Jean-Jacques Lequeu moved to the pre-revolutionary French capital in search of its identity. What he finds is a city that is fast and deeply changing the structure of his society: he tightens political and cultural friendships, learning the basics of the French architectural culture and trying to build links with prominent figures close to the king<sup>8</sup>.

The small studio of Lequeu, located on rue Saint-Sauveur in Paris, is the apartment in which the architect created his artistic and architectural masterpieces until its death, creating a bridge between French Revolutionary art and European Romanticism.

This little Parisian studio, full of objects (books, drawing tools, but also memorabilia from all over the world) becomes during the years of post-revolutionary terror a secret personal place where imagination prevails over the political turmoil of the time.

Indeed, among the documents of the National Archive in Paris the *Inventaire après décès de Jean-Jacques Lequeu* is preserved<sup>9</sup>. This disordered list is extremely useful to reconstruct what might have been the artist's studio in the years immediately preceding his death.

The rue Saint-Sauveur apartment is simple and consists of a narrow corridor, two small service rooms and a luminous space of approximately



Figure 3. Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, Temple of Solomon, in *Entwurff einer historischen Architectur*, I, 2, (1721).

20 square metres, furnished with a few antiques, collectables and novelties, as well as many drawings and art prints. Among the property inventoried the only grocery is half a kilo of coffee beans, while numerous Indian and Chinese silk garments, jewellery and medals, engravings, paintings, prints and stones are preserved in the drawers.

The myths of nature and exotic landscapes (especially the myth of Cythera), the incunabula *The Dream of Poliphilus*, became a rediscovery in the revolutionary years, especially among secret circles of intellectuals and Parisian literati. A new form of art originated from the Enlightenment myths, that of the imagined city, a place to experiment and try to flee from the barbarism of the Revolution. These same sources become the architectural models for Lequeu's most important work, his utopian city named *Architecture Civile*<sup>10</sup>. But this 'revolutionary city' is not an idyllic place: profoundly marked by his time, the *Architecture Civile* becomes the memory of the Renaissance myths, an echo of the ancient foundation cities, still wetted by the blood of the Revolution, which runs through its pages. The art of memory becomes a cultural model, a resource and a point of departure for the creation of Lequeu's innovative architecture, basically working on the transmission of literary and architectural images taken from the past (one example, Thomas More's Utopia), and modified to adapt to the times of the Revolution.

#### The Oriental Imaginary

Fischer opened the *Entwurff* with the monumental plan for the Temple of Solomon, or the Temple of Jerusalem (Figure 3). The theme is one of a mythical place, sacred to the three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the header to the first plate, Fischer immediately declares the influence of the works pursued by Juan Bautista Villalpando (1552–1608), whose canonisation of the Salomonic order guided Fischer in its reconstruction.

Previously, in 1650, Roland Fréart de Chambray (1606–76) had published in his *Parallèle de l'architecture antique avec la moderne* the 'Gerosolimitano order' or 'Order of Orders', borrowed from Villalpando's proposition, which we find in chapters XXVI and XXX<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, in the treaty 'Plagiarism of the Heathen Detected'<sup>12</sup> (1741), John Wood's Solomonic order is based on a very slender column, whose order derives directly from that of the Corinthians or pseudo-Corinthians.

Finally, Claude Perrault (1613–88) drew a reconstruction of the temple in the eighth book of the *Code of Maimonides, the Mishneh Torah*, translated from Latin and published in Paris in 1678 by Louis Compiègne de Veil, suggestive of a mingling with forms of Egyptian architecture which was later picked up by Luigi Canina (1795–1856)<sup>13</sup>.

When Fischer reproduced the mythical Solomonic building, he placed the temple for the first time into a territory composed of hundreds of smaller individual constructions, composed of pure geometric forms. This almost chaotic system constructs a spectacular view of the relationships between the parts and the main building, supported by monumental buttresses.

Abandoning the frontal view of the temple, Fischer is not interested in the concept of monumental architecture in the classical sense: for the first time, he deprives the monumental temple of the privilege of solitude, inserting it in an urban system where the difference between the human and the divine is dictated by chaos.

The clean, precise geometry that defines the construction of religious buildings finds its counterpoint in the restlessness of the city – with its surrounding backdrop of civic buildings and workplaces.

A process that was repeated in the following plates, creating a new image of Oriental architecture in the imagination of Western readers: the architecture of the Orient is no longer simply a question of antique dealers and archaeologists, intent on reconstructing the forms of the past, but reveals extremely interesting urban relationships, capable of stimulating the imagination of architects and scholars, who recognise and reinterpret an upward path in these devotional architectures, leading towards man's initiation. Fischer's plates combine heterogeneous classical and baroque motifs to obtain hybrid results, the 'architectural whims' deriving from the fantasies of Fischer's imagination: in the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, a pyramid on steps terminating in a *quadriga* is opposed by four Roman triumphal columns, while in the Temple of Nineveh, the illustrations combine medieval, Renaissance and baroque parts and motifs.

The setting up of the various architectural parts, together with Lequeu's interest in detail and his taste for single and isolated pavilions perpetuated in France, stimulated his imagination for an idealised city, composed of mythical, monumental buildings, and small pavilions placed in close proximity to them. Even before, several similarities can be found between Fischer's plates and the work of Pieter van der Aa (1659–1733), Dutch publisher and

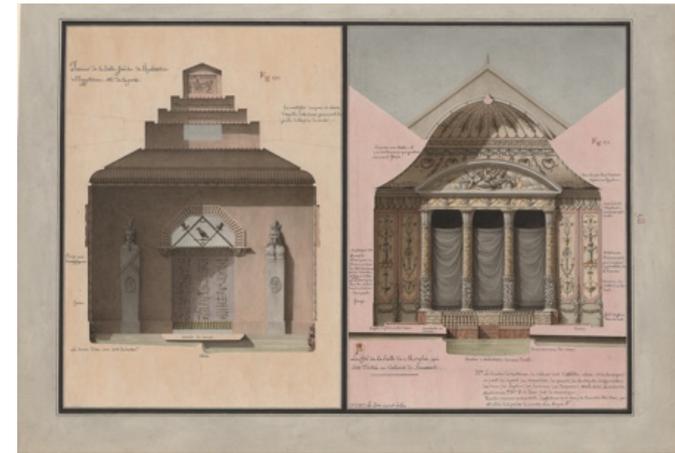


Figure 4. Jean-Jacques Lequeu, pl. 58, in *Architecture Civile*; Bibliothèque nationale de France (Gallica).

bookseller in Leiden: in his *La galerie agréable du monde*<sup>14</sup>, issued in 1729 and bound into 27 volumes, which contained about 3000 plates, the Solomon's Temple is shown surrounded by swarming life, working men and construction materials. Van der Aa represents the seven years of his construction site in one plate<sup>15</sup>, but the strongest innovation is that, after the publication of the *Entwurff*, Man and God are no longer distant: they are both necessary to one another, and they live strongly connected in the Oriental cities.

Finally, isolated geometrical combinations are rooted in the architectural compositions at the turn of the French Revolution: the small temple inserted in the smooth pyramid behind the much larger pyramid of Thebes becomes an icon of the mixture of Egyptian and Roman forms. And while Etienne-Louis Boullée and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux draw theoretical lessons about the monumentality of form from the plates<sup>16</sup>, architects like Lequeu – who we cannot simply dismiss as an 'eclectic' today – ascribe a moral stature to the architectural ghosts of Fischer and Piranesi, so that only an understanding of the respective historical period can help us to understand their motives.

Focusing on the buildings on the margin of Fischer's second plate, we can see various architectural forms and models that we find in Lequeu's *Architecture Civile*. Moreover, the arid and mountainous landscapes returned in different plates, while the articulated descriptions of *Entwurff* appear promptly in the only written and completed text that Lequeu has left us: his *Nouvelle Méthode*<sup>17</sup>, completed in 1792.

The shapes and models of the pavilions presented by Fischer in his plates are clearly visible in the *Petite Habitation à l'Egyptienne*<sup>18</sup> that Lequeu inserted into Plate 35. (Figure 4.)

The facade of his Egyptian house made a great impact thanks to the perfection of the dome that reaches the very top of the composition. Lequeu's building is located 'just in front of the Cataract' of the Nile River: still a mythical place described by Fischer in plate XII of the first *Entwurf* book, which Lequeu composed with the Arabic forms presented in Fischer's third book (Plate VII).

Finally, it's looking at the well decorated Arabian domes – and in particular the Imperial Baths of Budapest presented by Fischer in Plate I (third book) – that Lequeu took his inspiration for one of his most famous plates, the spherical *Temple de la Terre* (Plate 72)<sup>19</sup>. His internal dome, pierced by tiny celestial stars, was clearly borrowed from the dome presented by Fischer in section and elevation.

Fascinated by the reconstructions of the Austrian architect, Lequeu applied an analogical transposition within his own present, using a temporal translation of the ancient myth, reading it under the light of the political and social events that occurred during the French Revolution.

Thus Plate XVIII by Fischer, which represents the colossal statue carved in Mount Athos in Alexandria of Egypt attributed to the architect Dinocrates, is reinterpreted by Lequeu in one of the Revolutionary artistic competitions of Year II.

In his left hand, the Colossus of Fischer, dressed in military style, holds one of the palaces in a city of 10,000 inhabitants that rested under his protection. The Colossus by Lequeu on Plate 74 is located on the *Porte de Paris* *qu'on peut appeller l'arc du Peuple*<sup>20</sup>, which was dedicated to the 'Supreme Dignity of the Parisian People'. Dressed in a French bonnet and with a cape made of lion skin, the huge statue holds the effigies of Liberty in its hands. A mandatory gesture, in Lequeu's own words, that before donated its archival legacy to the National Library of France, added the sentence 'This drawing was made to save me from the guillotine' to the reverse of the sheet.

The theme of mankind's moral poverty, stained with the barbarism perpetuated during the Revolution, led Lequeu to seek a final redemption in the Orient's artistic and religious forms.

Together with the *Entwurf*, the *Diverse maniere d'adornare i cammini*<sup>21</sup> – the neo-Egyptian engravings of Giovanni Battista Piranesi sold from 7 January 1769 in his atelier in Rome – in contrast the totalistic adherence to hellenistic cult has been suggested by Johann Joachim Winckelmann<sup>22</sup>. (Figure 5.)

Piranesi gave a fresh vision of classical antiquity to eighteenth-century amateurs, architects and collectors. From 1756 until his death in 1778, he published eleven major publications: settled permanently in Rome in 1747, most of his plates were created using burin and ink and appeared bundled together in folio.

His volume reveals the value of his contribution to the larger eighteenth-century intellectual project of creating an epistemology of the ancient past.



Figure 5. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, engraving from *Diverse maniere d'adornare i cammini* (1769), 125.

His initial thirty-five-page essay, titled 'An Apologetical Essay in Defense of Egyptian and Tuscan Architecture' appears in three columns of text in Italian, French and English. The purpose is clear:

What I pretend by the present designs is to shew what use an able architect may make of the ancient monuments by properly adapting them to our own manners and customs. I propose shewing the use that may be made of medals, cameos, intaglios, statues, bassorelieves, paintings, and such like remains of antiquity, not only by the critics and learned in their studies, but likewise by the artists in their works, uniting in an artful and masterly manner all that is admired and esteemed in them.<sup>23</sup>

Like the Anne-Claude-Philippe de Tubières, Count de Caylus (1692–1765) and Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68), Piranesi's aspiration was to create a chronological and stylistic frame of references based on the analysis and comparison of artistic objects. Piranesi's work falls within a more general framework, in which we find books like Robert Wood and James Dawkins's *The Ruins of Palmyra* (1753) and *The Ruins of Baalbek* (1757), Nicholas Revett's *Antiquities of Athens* (1762), and Robert Adam's *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia* (1764).

However, none of these works shares the artistic deepness of the Piranesian mind.

Jean-Jacques Lequeu certainly knew the work of Julien-David Le Roy, his professor at the Academy of Architecture, and the National Library in

Paris holds some Lequeu's sketches after *The Ruins of Palmyra*<sup>24</sup>. However, Lequeu's interest in Oriental forms is much closer to the thought of Piranesi.

Piranesi proposes that modern architects – instead of writing antiquarian books – should create new architectural buildings inspired by what they learned from the serious observation of cameos, medals, statues or paintings. Compared to the *modus operandi* of his academy masters, the work of Piranesi suggested the experimental research dictated by the analogy that we find in Lequeu's *Architecture Civile*. The Egyptian-style decorations of the Piranesi's chimneys become large-scale architectural decorations in Lequeu's work. Sphinxes, lions and obelisks decorate the interiors and protect the outside of these bourgeois shelters.

Nevertheless, when we think about Egyptomania and its strong expansion at the end of the eighteenth century, we cannot neglect the influence of various Oriental cultures in modelling artistic and architectural tastes in eighteenth century Europe.

The gardens were designed according to the rules drafted by the main monotheistic religions, from the vision of the Christian Eden to the very technically elaborate gardens of the Arabic-Islamic world<sup>25</sup>, which brought improvements in both the field of hydraulics and in agronomy, flanked by a pagan Greek-Latin model and an imperial model, that looks towards the traditions of Persian Pardes which were first described by Xenophon<sup>26</sup>.

Lequeu inserted these models into his *Architecture Civile*: these buildings all speak about 'an other world', generated by the archetype of *hortus conclusus*, and by the need to create a bridge linking us to the beauty of the divine. To the visual reconstructions and transcriptions handed down over the centuries, Lequeu, who probably never left the kingdom of France, promoted the reading of several novels set in a mythical Arabic world: amongst these was *Séthos, Histoire ou vie tirée monuments anecdotes de l'ancienne Egypte*<sup>27</sup>, written in 1731 by Abbot Jean Terrasson (1670–1750), which was successful all over Europe.

The pages and travels of *Séthos* inspired more than one plate: the *Section perpendiculaire d'un souterrain de la Maison Gothique*<sup>28</sup> was based on the initiatory trial of the three elements (fire, water and air); the *Temple de la Sagesse*<sup>29</sup> is the deep underground vault that the ancients recognised as the place of descent to the Hell by Orpheus, Theseus and Pirithous. Finally, the *Temple de la Devination*<sup>30</sup>, which was described by Terrasson as a vast underground of flames, rising from a sulphurous and fluffy liquor canal. From this continuous contrast between places of delight and places of increasing terror, Lequeu develops the entire *Architecture Civile*, whose territories, adorned with 'masked' buildings, decorated with the various styles of the century, reveal a latent anxiety, a personal search for a path of moral purification.

Finally, his *Lettre sur le beau savonnage*<sup>31</sup> turned out to be a social metaphor, written with encyclopaedic details, dedicated to 'good mothers

of the family'. The streets of the city of Paris, bathed by the blood of the Revolution, were bleached like white clothing, hanging out to dry beneath a new and luminous sun.

Closed in his apartment, Lequeu creates his architectural visions and his controversial portraits. Here, hundreds of objects, books and prints return obsessively in his works, crowding its imaginary drawings. The small studio and his personal library became for Lequeu a *Wunderkammer* from which taking ideas and inspiration for his personal artistic work.

Outside of this room, due to revolutionaries' constrictions, Lequeu is an employee of the Parisian land registry. Inside, it's one of the greatest interpreters of the late French Enlightenment, visionary forerunner of the spirit of Romanticism. His mind is anchored in a glorious past, where the Orient meets the Occident in the essence of spirituality: an artist in his secret space, intent on defeat, his personal demons fighting with the weapons of his oriental imaginary.

### Notes

- 1 Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, *Entwurf einer historischen Architectur* (Wien, 1721).
- 2 Cf. George Kunoth, *Die Historische Architektur Fischers von Erlach* (Düsseldorf: Schwann 1956); Werner Oechslin, 'Fischer von Erlachs "Entwurf einer Historischen Architectur": die Integration einer erweiterten Geschichtsauffassung in die Architektur im Zeichen des erstarkten Kaisertums in Wien,' in Elisabeth Liskar (ed.), *Wien und der europäische Barock* (Wien: Böhlau, 1986), 77–81; See Hans Sedlmayr, *Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1997).
- 3 See Kristoffer Neville, 'The Early Reception of Fischer von Erlach's *Entwurf einer historischen Architectur*,' *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 2 (June 2007), 160–75.
- 4 In plate IX of his *Istruzioni elementari* – a capriccio of different ancient monuments – he introduced the pyramid of King Sotis at Heliopolis, presented in the plate 14 of the *Entwurf*. Cf. Bernardo Antonio Vittone, *Istruzioni diverse concernenti l'officio dell'architetto civile* (Lugano: Agnelli, 1766) and *Istruzioni elementari per indirizzo de' giovani allo studio dell'architettura civile* (Lugano: Agnelli, 1760). Cf. Werner Oechslin, *Bildungsgut und Antikenrezeption im frühen Settecento in Rom. Studien zum römischen Aufenthalt Bernardo Antonio Vittones* (Zürich: Atlantis, 1972), 11–106.
- 5 See Felice Stampfle, *Giovanni Battista Piranesi: Drawings in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York: Dover, 1978).
- 6 For Lequeu's sources, cf. Elisa Boeri, 'Architecture, théories et représentation au temps de la Révolution française. Les dessins de l'Architecture Civile de Jean Jacques Lequeu (1757–1826) à la Bibliothèque nationale de France' (PhD diss., Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, 2016).
- 7 Jean-Jacques Lequeu, *Orthographie du pont antique d'Oelius, bâti sur le Tybre / Dessiné par In Jque Le Queu*, 40,7 x 27,9 cm (f.), BnF, Ha-80 (a,3).
- 8 See letters and papers in AnF, Ref. O1/1267 and Lequeu, BnF, AC-1.
- 9 *Inventaire après décès de Jean-Jacques Lequeu, 17 avril 1826*, in AnF, M.C., XXX, 693; Cf. Werner Szambien, 'L'inventaire après décès de Jean-Jacques Lequeu,' *Revue de l'Art* 90 (1990), 104–7.
- 10 Jean-Jacques Lequeu, *Architecture Civile*, BnF, Ha-80 (a,1–2).
- 11 Roland Fréart de Chambray, *Parallèle de l'architecture antique et de la moderne* (Paris: Edme Martin, 1650).
- 12 John Wood, *The Origin of Building: or, the Plagiarism of the heathens detected*

- in five books (Bath: S. & F. Farley, 1741).
- 13 Luigi Canina, *Ricerche sul genere di architettura propria degli antichi giudei, ed in particolare del tempio di Gerusalemme* (Roma, 1845).
- 14 Pieter van der Aa, *La galerie agréable du monde, où l'on voit en un grand nombre de cartes très exactes...* (Leiden, 1729).
- 15 Plate 13b: 'De Hand-dadige Bouwing des Tempels, welke de Koning Salomon in't vierde Jaar fijner regeering te Jerusalem op den Berg Moria begonnen en uit'd overgrootte Voorraad van allerlei toe-Bereij de MATERIALEN, in Seven Jaren voltrokken heeft'.
- 16 For Boullée and Ledoux concept of Monumentality, cf. Emil Kaufmann, *Three Revolutionnary Architects. Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1952); Anthony Vidler, *Claude Nicolas Ledoux – Architecture and Social Reform at the End of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990); Daniel Rabreau, Étienne-Louis Boullée, 1728–1799. *L'architecture régénérée par les Lumières et la poésie de l'art* (Paris, Bordeaux: Annales du Centre Ledoux, 2000); Daniel Rabreau, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736–1806). L'architecture et les fastes du temps* (Bordeaux: William Blake, 2000).
- 17 Jean-Jaques Lequeu, *Nouvelle méthode appliquée aux principes élémentaires du dessin, tendant à perfectionner graphiquement le tracé de la tête de l'homme au moyen de diverses figures géométriques*, 1792, (manuscript), 33 p21 drawings, lavis and watercolor, 31 cm, BnF, KC-17-4.
- 18 Jean-Jacques Lequeu, *Architecture Civile*, BnF, Ha-80 (a,1–2).
- 19 Lequeu, *Architecture Civile*, BnF, Ha-80 (a,1–2).
- 20 Jean-Jacques Lequeu, Pl. 74, Fig. 174, 51,7 x 35,8 cm (f.), 1794, in *Architecture Civile*, Ha-80 (a,2).
- 21 Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Diverse Maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizii desunte dall'architettura Egizia, Etrusca, e Greca con un Ragionamento Apologetico in difesa dell'Architettura Egizia, e Toscana* (Rome: Generoso
- Salomon, 1769).
- 22 See Rudolf Wittkower, 'Piranesi's Parere su l'architettura,' *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2 (1938–1939), 147–58; John Wilton-Ely, *The Mind and Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978); Manfredo Tafuri, *La sfera e il labirinto: avanguardia e architettura da Piranesi agli anni '70* (Torino: Einaudi, 1980), 25–54.
- 23 Piranesi, *Diverse Maniere...*, 2.
- 24 Robert Wood and James Dawkins, *The Ruins of Palmyra, otherwise Tedmor, in the desert* (London, 1753).
- 25 Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (eds.), *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the symbolic representation, design and use of past environments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Philippe Nys, 'Jardin et institution symbolique,' in Jackie Pigeaud et al., *Histoires de jardins. Lieux et imaginaire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001), 1–24.
- 26 Xenophon, *Economics*, book IV, 4, 13, 20–5.
- 27 Abbé Jean Terrasson, Séthos, histoire ou vie tirée des monumens et anecdotes de l'ancienne Egypte. *Traduite d'un manuscrit grec* (Paris: Desaint, 1731).
- 28 Jean-Jacques Lequeu, *Section perpendiculaire d'un souterrain de la Maison Gothique, au droit de la ligne de milieu, en la largeur des mamelons, et suivant la voute de la montagne*, Pl.61, Fig. 156, 51,7 x 36,4 cm (f.), in *Architecture Civile*, BnF, Ha-80 (a,2).
- 29 Jean-Jacques Lequeu, *Portail du Temple de la Sagesse, coté de l'entrée principale*, Pl. 76, Fig. 165, 51,5 x 34,8 cm (f.), in *Architecture Civile*, BnF, Ha-80 (a,2).
- 30 Jean-Jacques Lequeu, *Temple de la Devination, qui forme le fond Septentrional de l'Elisée*, Pl. 63, Fig. 158, 51,7 x 36,4 cm (f.), in *Architecture Civile*, BnF, Ha-80 (a,2).
- 31 Cfr. Jean-Jacques Lequeu, *Lettre sur le beau savonnage, qu'on pourroit appeller savonnement de paris; Adressée aux mères de famille, An 11 de la République* [1803], BnF, LH-34.

## Shifting Perceptions of the Orient: Pococke, Dalton, and Hope

Lobke Geurs,  
KU Leuven

### Abstract

In the eighteenth century, the Grand Tour guided travellers through Europe culminating in a sojourn in Rome. Few, however, extended their Tours beyond the beaten path. Exceptions were Richard Pococke (1704–1765), Richard Dalton (c. 1715–1791), and Thomas Hope (1769–1831). They widened their scope and included the Ottoman Empire and were, moreover, connected to architects/craftsmen/designers. Current research has mostly consisted of gathering data on and completing the biographies of these explorers. However, the impact of their encounters with 'modern' Greece and the Ottoman Empire on the formation of architectural taste in England has been neglected.

Through a comparative analysis of the drawings by Pococke, Dalton, and Hope, I show the evolution in the perception of Greece/Egypt: from motives to uncover the region's ancient past (Pococke and Dalton) to the re-evaluation of the Ottoman Empire as a gateway to the remains of ancient Greece/Egypt (Hope). Pococke, guided by personal motives, was one of the earliest travellers to the Middle East. He published his travels in two volumes. Instigated by the Society of Dilettanti, James Caulfeild (Earl of Charlemont), and Richard Dalton (draughtsman-engraver), Pococke embarked in 1749 on a Tour of Greece/Egypt. Both Pococke and Dalton had an 'antiquarian-archaeological' approach towards Greece/Egypt and paid only marginally attention to the culture/architecture of the Ottoman Empire. At the end of the century, Thomas Hope ventured into Greece/Egypt. Although inspired by earlier travelogues, he displays a different approach, leaving antiquarian attitudes aside and paying particular attention towards the influence of the Ottoman Empire on ancient Greece/Egypt.

The drawings made by Pococke, Dalton, and Hope will be (a) part of a comparative analysis on style, representation, and themes, (b) connected to the narratives constructed through the travelogues and letters, and (c) evaluated with regard to the architectural production in England.

## Egypt and the Interior: Thomas Hope and ‘Interior Decoration’

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### Abstract

The interior, as a conceptual category applied to architecture, can be seen as an emergent feature of early nineteenth century European culture. After 1800, in England and in France, interior/intérieur began to be used to describe the domestic spaces inside buildings where society was performed. During the same period, however, interior had another significance. From the 1780s, interior was used to denote the geographical expanse of a country that lay inside its well charted coastline. This geopolitical interior represented the unseen and partially known; a space removed from the realm of the domestic. These simultaneous new significances for the interior seem paradoxical. Resonant with the idea of wide spaces of geopolitical significance partially known, the interior began to be associated with small spaces of social significance that could be wholly known. This paper considers how the spatial conceptualisation of the geopolitical interior was implicated in this development of the interior as an architectural category.

The paper considers Thomas Hope’s Household Furniture and Interior Decoration, published in London in 1807. The architectural interiors described in that text, designed for Hope’s own house, can be mapped onto the geography of his own travels. Focussing particularly on his encounter with Egypt and the interior of Africa, the paper reveals how Hope characterised rooms through objects and designs plucked from this geopolitical space, highlighting parallels between Hope’s habits of representation and those used to communicate geopolitical interiors to domestic audiences during the first years of the nineteenth century. Further, the paper considers how Thomas Hope’s activities as a collector and designer were financed by a spectacular series of trades involving geopolitical interiors, including the orchestration by Hope and Barings banks of the Louisiana Purchase during 1803. Such transactions indicate that the significance of the geopolitical interior was itself interiorised in Hope’s close family context.

# REDISCOVERING THE REDISCOVERY OF ANTIQUITY: NEW SOURCES AND NEW INTERPRETATIONS OF OLD ONES

Session chair:  
Bernd Kulawik, Independent researcher

If we understand the Renaissance as the rebirth of Roman antiquity, then especially our built environment is still the best place outside of museums to study its consequences: from Brunelleschi to postmodernism, Roman architecture served as a template for studies or a background for critical, even ironical, remarks in built form. Therefore, we find citations from antiquity almost everywhere. While the main directions of this development have been described and the best known examples of studies have attracted researchers’ interests since the beginnings of architectural history, many such studies have not even been examined, let alone edited. This is true for the largest surviving group of architectural surveys and studies (‘Baufnahmen’) from the sixteenth century, centred around the so-called Codex Destailleur D at the Berlin Kunstbibliothek and comprising some 850 sheets with more than 3,500 single drawings – most of them more precise than anything made before or later, and many showing buildings or details that disappeared already in the *Cinquecento*. But these drawings by anonymous (mostly French) draughtsmen were only one part of the far larger project by the (erroneously) so-called Accademia della Virtù or Vitruviana to document and study every Roman artefact related to architecture: buildings and parts of them, inscriptions, coins, reliefs, statues, vases,

ornaments, paintings, etc., and, of course: Vitruvius' *Ten Books*. While it was always thought that this project (described in Claudio Tolomei's famous letter to Agostino de'Landi from 1542) never achieved any state of realization, it can now be said that – on the contrary – it was almost completely executed. The high documentary standard, equalling later research at least up to the nineteenth century, led Theodor Mommsen to use Jean Matal's collection of inscriptions (now in the Vatican) as the starting point for the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. For all the other sources, something similar still remains to be done. In addition, many important architectural books of the time (by Philandrier, Vignola, Labacco, Barbaro, Palladio) seem to be closely related to this project.

The aim of the session is to bring together researchers working on the rediscovery of this and other related materials from the sixteenth century and their (possible) later reception and who are interested in its contextualization within the large interdisciplinary, international network of archaeological research active in Rome between c. 1537 and 1555. The understudied materials presented in here have the potential to change our image of the rediscovery of ancient Roman architecture in the Renaissance.

## Mapping Across Space and Time: Renaissance Views of Ancient Rome

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### Abstract

Rome is a city of ancient and Christian monuments where architectures from juxtaposed pasts stand out like stars or signposts against a compact array of streets, palazzi, houses, and open spaces. Its maps capture the city's different cultural, archaeological, and architectural strata across space and time to give an integrated image of how the Renaissance viewed antiquity. As *fons et origo* of the Roman past, the city yielded its many layers to scholars in the sixteenth century who documented objects, artefacts, inscriptions, and fragments in order to gain a more complete understanding of the many architectural remains that still stood half-buried, half-standing, or incorporated into the city's contemporary urban reality.

The 1570s also saw a rising interest in archeology and ancient topography based on the work of the Accademia and thanks to the important discovery of the third century marble Forma Urbis. Cartographers worked alongside antiquarians and architects like Ligorio and Vignola to give the ancient fragments an urban dimension by representing them within actual and imagined contexts. They either represented Rome's ancient monuments in their present state within the urban fabric of the sixteenth century *Roma nova* or as more or less fanciful reconstructions of an unspecified *Urbs antiqua*. But Étienne Dupérac and his rival Mario Cartaro did something rather unusual: they each created a map of an imagined past from the time of the emperors (*descriptio*) and they each drew up a spatially accurate urban present (*delineatio*) that foretold a future transformation under Gregory XIII (1572–1585) and Sixtus V (1585–1590). A comparative analysis of the maps by Dupérac and Cartaro will show the centrality of the city's ancient past for two popes intensely involved with their own political present and the urban future which would become the splendour of Baroque Rome.

## Antiquated Antiquarianism and Enduring Invented Antiquities in the Sixteenth Century

Michael J. Waters,  
Columbia University

### Abstract

The archeological investigation and graphic reconstruction of the architecture of antiquity has traditionally been understood as progressing teleologically from inventive fifteenth-century all'antica drawings to precise, analytical mid-sixteenth-century studies. This overarching narrative of antiquarian progress has been revised to some extent in recent years, nevertheless it is widely accepted that the visualization of antiquity in the Renaissance progressively moved towards veristic representation. Consequently, few studies have examined how sixteenth-century draftsmen continued to reproduce seemingly antiquated reconstructions and even create newly invented antiquities. This paper seeks to begin to correct this lacuna by exploring how both of these phenomena transpired at the same time artists, architects, and scholars engaged in the vast archeological project this session seeks to understand. Specifically, this study will discuss how so-called Roma Antica drawings of fantastic church-like temples continued to be copied and reinvented in the sixteenth century. It will also investigate the propagation of a variety of invented centrally-planned temples and how this various material came to circulate along with highly accurate drawings of known monuments. Through their transmission and replication, the fictitious and authentic became part of an undifferentiated continuum in which ancient architecture was rendered progressively fungible. This process even continued into print with Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, who in 1550 celebrated finding some of these very same 'models of temples built in the ancient manner' which he 'reproduced with the most possible fidelity and truth,' while also 'adding others, drawn freely, without any model'. Thus, this paper aims to shed light on how the increasingly scientific study of antiquity had to contend with the continual creation, replication, and circulation of antiquated reconstructions and invented ancient buildings. In a culture steadily inundated with drawn and printed visual imagery, ancient architecture remained constantly in a state of graphic flux during the sixteenth century.

## Palladio and the Knowledge of the Antique, c. 1550

David Hemsoll,  
University of Birmingham

### Abstract

While it seems that the Renaissance architects' studies of ancient Roman architecture have been the subject of already far too many studies themselves, the opposite seems to be true if we look closer into special cases. Michelangelo's reception of antiquity is characterized by the rather creative approach of an artist. Antonio da Sangallo the Younger tended to be a hypercritical follower of Vitruvius and criticized or even corrected ancient buildings like the Pantheon. While even these pictures may not fully reflect the attitudes of these architects in all their complexity, the case of Palladio is even more confusing: He seems to be the most 'classicistic' architect – the forerunner of any classicist revival in architectural history – but his many surviving studies of ancient architecture, though looking very precise at first sight, show many differences in comparison to the buildings.

Even though Palladio's works have been studied, described, and copied many times, the same cannot be said about his studies of ancient architecture. It is not even known, for example, when exactly and how he took the measurements from which his later drawings derive. Surely, this happened during the 1540s while Palladio was in Rome for several months, accompanying his mentor Trissino who was an active member of Tolomei's circle. Therefore, it is no wonder (and has been observed by Heinz Spielmann already in 1966) that many of his studies closely resemble those in the Berlin Codex Destailleur D – but they are not identical. And this poses questions not only about Palladio's relation to the Roman circle, but also about the special interest he – as an becoming architect and not an antiquarian – had in Rome's architecture. That book IV of his *Quattro Libri* and Barbaro's edition of Vitruvius (to which he contributed not only the illustrations) seem to fit into the list of books announced by Tolomei makes his case even more interesting.

# BODY AND MIND

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# ARCHITECTURE'S RETURN TO SURREALISM

Session chairs:

**Wouter Van Acker**, Université Libre de Bruxelles

**Stefaan Vervoort**, Ghent University and KU Leuven

In 1978, coinciding with the exhibition *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed* in the Hayward Gallery, Dalibor Veselý edited a double issue of *Architectural Design* on surrealism and architecture. The issue mined manifold connections between modernist architecture and surrealism, and it marked a penchant for surrealism among postmodern architects. It included, among others, essays by Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi referencing the key ideas of Salvador Dalí and the playwright and surrealist Antonin Artaud, respectively. In hindsight, such links seem ubiquitous in postmodern architecture. John Hejduk's *Masques* call upon a self-proclaimed 'medieval surrealism'; Aldo Rossi's images are indebted to the metaphysical paintings of Giorgio de Chirico; designs by Oswald Mathias Ungers include René Magritte's bowler man and doll-in-doll motif; and Peter Eisenman's work deals with psychoanalysis, automatism, and the links between perception and representation.

Surprisingly, this reuptake of surrealism in the architecture of the 1970s and 1980s has seen scant attention in the historiography. While most of the essays in *Surrealism and Architecture* (2005), edited by Thomas Mical, examine how surrealist thought, critiques, and techniques affected the architectural practices of the modernist avant-garde, Neil Spiller's *Architecture and Surrealism* (2016) maps out routes of congruence between surrealist thought and the

contemporary, 'surreal worlds' drawn up by advanced digital fabrication techniques and computer visualization. Still, surrealist tendencies in postmodern architecture warrant an inspection of their own, which accounts for the secondary nature of these tendencies with regard to modernist interplays of surrealism and architecture. As Michael Hays notes in *Architecture's Desire* (2010), many of the architects above do not simply replay modernism, but they home in on its limits through an extreme reflexivity and a deep understanding of its forms, references, and ideologies. Yet, what does such secondariness or lateness imply for the referential framework of surrealism in these works?

This session aims to explore how the reanimation of surrealism in architecture can be interpreted historically at this tangled, asynchronous juncture of the modern and the postmodern. It will investigate how surrealist strategies, both visual (e.g. collage, analogy, scalar play) and discursive (e.g. Jungian, Freudian, or Lacanian), allowed formulating a critical project for architecture in reaction to a neoliberal economy that produces its own dreams, needs, and desires.

## From the Fulfilment of Needs to the Mediation of Experience: The Uncanny Theater of the Urban Enclaves of Ricardo Bofill and Taller de Arquitectura

Anne Kockelkorn,  
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### Abstract

Ricardo Bofill and his office Taller de Arquitectura are widely known for their neoclassicist housing schemes in the Parisian New Towns built during the 1980s. Less well known are the surrealist strategies that the office members deployed from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s, which became apparent in a series of urban micro-centralities for the peripheries of Madrid, Barcelona, and Paris. The transdisciplinary team of Taller de Arquitectura conceived these multifunctional housing projects as semi-autonomous urban enclaves, which were to induce pleasure and desire among inhabitants and visitors alike. Bofill's office included sociologists, writers, and poets, and it adopted a multi-faceted, transdisciplinary design approach, combining strategies and insights from geometric 3D-clustering, scenography, environmental psychology, and the behavioural sciences, in particular the writing of the psychiatrist R.D Laing and the neuroscientist Henri Laborit. This multi-faceted approach resonates with Catalan surrealism and a latent trope of French surrealism and poststructuralism, i.e. the Hegelian 'thought of the master'.

The surrealist and avant-garde strategies, which influenced the design of the urban enclaves designed by Taller de Arquitectura, were effective in shifting attention from the modernist quest for the fulfilment of basic human needs towards the mediation of experience. By inducing moments of shock or déjà-vu, Bofill and his office members aimed at exerting influence simultaneously on the subject's mental disposition and on the power structure of urban territories. This paper will show how these surrealist strategies were applied in projects such as the House of Abraxas (1972–1973), an urban renewal project for a nineteenth century military fort. Based on research of unpublished archival materials, an analysis of this project will reveal how it was envisaged by Bofill's office as a 'leisure time palace' for Parisian intellectuals, commodifying experiences of sexual and mental transgression.

## A Surrealist Earthwork: Museum Abteiberg, Hans Hollein, and the Indiscipline of Collage

Craig Buckley,  
Yale University

### Abstract

When Kenneth Frampton described Hans Hollein's Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach (1972-1982) as a 'surrealist earthwork' in 1982, he was right in tune with the resurgence of surrealism taking place in architectural culture. The critic's invocation of 'surrealism' is most productively read not as an attribution of style, but rather as a symptom, a historical reference deployed to name something whose meaning remained unsettled. The qualities that troubled meaning at Abteiberg were bound up with the uncertain place of collage and montage within architectural culture in the twentieth century. Collage and montage, this paper will argue, are not stable mediums reactivated from the repertoire of the historic avant-gardes. Rather they are historically labile conceptual techniques that seek to make disjunctive, heterogeneous, and composite entities productive in particular ways. The history of collage and montage has been marked by a series of such productive analogies; Dada montage likened the combination of photomechanical materials to the assembly of machines, while Surrealism likened improbable visual conjunctures to visionary states.

The paper will read the problem of collage within the Museum Abteiberg at three levels. First, it asks how and why collage and montage techniques came to be so prominent in Hollein's early career, and how aspects of Surrealism and Dada figured in critiques of functionalism during the 1960s. Second, it asks how the collage techniques pursued at Abteiberg bring to light challenges particular to the 1970s, notably those of site and typology. The composite conditions Hollein constructed at Abteiberg responded to, and worked against, the disciplinary action to which collage was subjected in urban design discourse in the 1970s, particularly in the work of figures such as Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown or Colin Rowe. Finally, it will consider the role of the museum amid the deindustrialization of the Rhineland in the 1970s and 1980s. Hollein's Museum Abteiberg represents a distinct approach to the problem of museum as it entered what would soon be called the 'cultural logic of late capitalism'. Offering a third way, it avoided both monumental pastiche and the model of the museum as a flexible machine for culture.

## Happening in Japan: Arata Isozaki's Surreal Intakes and the Gunma Museum of Modern Art

Marcela Aragüez,  
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### Abstract

The art scene in post-war Japan exponentially grew after the end of the US occupation in 1952. Emergent radical practices started to shape independent voices in tune with international artistic discourses. During the 1960s, the Sōgetsu Art Centre in Tokyo became a buzzing hub where film makers, painters, and musicians realized surrealist-inspired 'happenings', inviting figures like John Cage and David Tudor to take part. Architect Arata Isozaki was also a common guest, and a number of artistic collaborations in the form of set designs, exhibition layouts, and interactive works of art originated during these years. Among the generation of architects raised under the avuncular protection of Kenzo Tange, Isozaki took a remarkable interest in contemporary arts, to such an extent that it informed his prolific building production both morphologically and in its theoretical background.

This paper analyses the influences surrealist Japanese practices had on Isozaki in the first two decades of his architectural career. It interprets the design of the Gunma Museum of Modern Art – completed in 1974 and considered one of Isozaki's masterpieces – as a product of such influences. The study starts with a discussion of Isozaki's role alongside film director Hiroshi Teshigahara, musician Toru Takemitsu, and Neo-Dadaist Genpei Akasegawa, and then moves to an analysis of the design process of the Gunma Museum and related texts Isozaki wrote at the time. Drawing upon conversations with Isozaki in Tokyo and from his archive, the paper intends to unveil a continuity of topics derived from the artistic practices in Isozaki's changing production. This will serve to describe his work not only as 'ironic' and 'platonic' (as it is referred to in recent scholarship), but also as a unique receptacle of surrealist trends in early postmodern Japanese architecture.

# From Miller to Mollino: Carlo Mollino's Interiors as Surrealist Cabinets

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## Abstract

Casa Miller (1936) and Casa Mollino (1959–68) respectively mark the beginning and end period of Carlo Mollino's career, spanning the period from the modernist avant-garde to the emergence of postmodernism. As a contemporary, Mollino was inspired by the surrealist movement in Paris of the 1920s and 1930s, and he pursued this interest further even after the supposed decline of the movement. Insofar as his oeuvre is characterised by a dual logic of tradition and eccentricity, Mollino always remained an outsider to both the modernist and Surrealist movement.

This paper sets out to investigate the connection between Surrealism and Mollino's interiors by approaching these interiors as radically autobiographic, or, in other words, transitional spaces, which mediate the personal inner world with the real world in a creative act. In Casa Miller and Casa Mollino, the roles of a professional and private person collide as Mollino acts as both collector-inhabitant and interior designer. Therefore, these interiors can be discussed and theorized as cabinets, as spaces wherein Mollino brought together both found and designed objects in a private *mise-en-scène*. The concept of the cabinet encompasses previous readings of Casa Mollino as *garçonnière* (or male cabinet) and final resting place (holding burial objects) – yet here we want to articulate the creative interaction between collector and collection as echoing the way the Surrealists used the autobiographic collection of the cabinet, namely as a trigger for poetic and imaginative thinking.

## Keywords

Mollino, cabinet, surrealism, self-projection, objectification, imagery.

## Introduction

In November 1936, the newly completed interior of Casa Miller is first mentioned in a local art review by Eleonora Doleatto, who describes her impressions after spending an evening in the company of Turinese painter Tina Mennyay 'in the chrome yellow studio of a modern architect'.<sup>1</sup> Doleatto's account not only offers an insight into the perception of this interior at the time as a place where 'everything was very attractive' and 'surprisingly modern and glinting', it also indicates who its visitors were and hints at its ambiguous function as both a studio and place for artistic gatherings. This paper will investigate the place this interior takes up in the Turinese art scene and in what ways this example of 'modern architecture' is connected to the avant-garde of the time. Doleatto describes in detail both architectural elements considered modern (Securex glass furniture, mobile electric lighting systems, large photographic prints) and surrealist elements (Max Ernst's collage books, Albert Skira's *Minotaure* magazine, Man Ray's photography). Through a close reading of these elements that make up the interior of Casa Miller, the paper intends to cast light on the interplay between modernism and surrealism in Mollino's private interiors. Followed by an analysis of Mollino's last interior in Via Napione 2, today known as Casa Mollino and referred to as such, the paper investigates the continued presence and influence of surrealist elements at the end of Mollino's career, parallel to late-surrealism on the verge of postmodernism.

To study the relation between Mollino's first and last private interior, the paper draws on the idea of the cabinet, investigating the creative interaction between collector and collection in the interiors made by the architect-designer. Both Casa Miller and Casa Mollino are known through the photographs that circulate of them. In fact, they have been identified precisely as stage sets for Mollino's photography.<sup>2</sup> This research departs from the imageries springing from Mollino's cabinets. Although the long-term historical background of the cabinet and the development of its main characteristics cannot be addressed within the scope of this paper, we wish to argue that Mollino in many respects seems to radicalise fundamental and often paradoxical aspects of the multifaceted historical cabinet. As an enclosed space and an exhaustive, complete microcosm, the historical cabinet was on the one hand an exhibitional space, a space in which things were shown, seen and represented. On the other hand, the 'cabinet' could also be a highly subjective place of intimacy, of secrecy, of hiding and of personal projection as if the cabinet were the second skin of its dweller. We argue that Mollino radicalises both aspects and at the same time creates, in the surrealist context, a 'playful cabinet' and thus also gives a radically new, twentieth-century direction to the historical cabinet. Mollino's playful cabinet may in this respect also point forward to a subject that deals in new ways with concepts of meaning, and also with otherness and alienation, in photography, in writing, in self-fashioning, and in the very architecture of the

home. The faith of Mollino's 'playful cabinet', between Casa Miller and Casa Mollino may illustrate in this sense his position between the continuities and ghosts of the historical cabinet and the contemporary subject/dweller.

**CASA MILLER, 43 VIA TALUCCHI (1936)**

**Casa Miller as a 'Character'**

Carlo Levi, artist and friend of Carlo Mollino, introduced the *Domus* reader to Casa Miller in an article published in September 1938.<sup>3</sup> In the article, Levi points at the complexity of the interior and the different layers from which its meaning can be wrested. The plan and photographs published of Casa Miller can be perceived by the *Domus* readers as inspirational, proposing 'practical solutions' as well as ideas about decoration, style and inhabitation. Yet, for Carlo Levi 'Mollino's purpose ... is another one: to express himself through these means'<sup>4</sup>. Levi then raises the question: 'What does the Miller House say or try to say?' Attempting an answer, he states that it is 'born from autobiography', like a:

'character' described by Mollino through the means of architecture and set design.... Rather than the house of this invented character, the Miller House wants to be the character himself (or his first attempt at existence) in whose belly, like that of the whale, the real inhabitants will live.

A strong parallel can be seen between Levi's understanding of Casa Miller as a 'character' and our reading of it as a cabinet that as a cultural code of a subject/dweller is intrinsically connected to its creator/occupant to the point where architecture is anthropomorphised as a 'character'. This already occurs before Mollino in the description of cabinet-type interiors in which architecture becomes subjective projection and imagination incarnated. Casa Miller then can be seen as Mollino's self-projection in space, his imagination turning it into a radically closed microcosm, a heterotopic world that is held together by the internal references between architecture, object, decor and dweller. In Casa Miller, Mollino repeatedly trespasses into another world, a world of his own creation. Like the cabinet, Casa Miller:

wants to be everything. The first consequence of this is that, in its representation, space (because this, spatial, is its nature) must be *fa/se*. This is a closed world; we are on a stage or within a chapter. The door is locked; what is outside is totally arbitrary.<sup>5</sup>

With this in mind, we will, through plans and photographs, enter Via Talucchi no. 43 to find Mollino represented by his alter ego Miller.

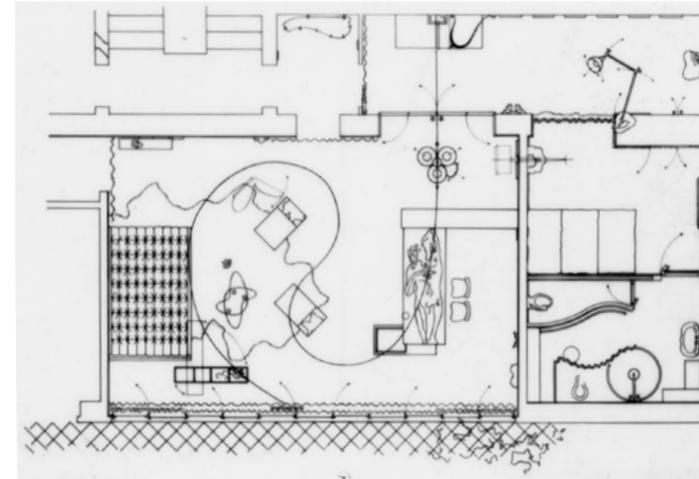


Figure 1. Plan of Casa Miller, photographic reproduction Carlo Mollino. Source: Politecnico di Torino, Sezione Archivi Biblioteca Roberto Gabetti, Fondo Carlo Mollino, ACM 1.36.62.

**Surrealistic Deception**

Mollino selected the top floor of the newly-built Via Talucchi no. 43, just a few blocks from his father's architecture office and the family's city home, as the site for Casa Miller. The site is in itself remarkable: the top floor was originally designed as a studio for painter Paolo Biancchi and had a fully glazed facade overlooking the street. The building plans of 1934 show the studio as a single, generous rectangular space measuring 5,15 m x 7,60 m with two adjacent attic spaces located under a lower, slanted roof. When comparing the plans of the building application to Mollino's interior design as published in *Domus*, at first sight, both plans do not seem to match (Figure 1). Mollino draws a terrace where there is none, the staircase is turned 90 degrees and a bathroom is invented at a place that is in reality a low attic space. It becomes clear that Mollino's plan is, in part, imaginary.<sup>6</sup> For publication in *Domus*, Mollino draws the plan of Casa Miller in its ideal form, it is a plan of an 'ideal house'. In doing so, Mollino fully exploits the capacity of a plan to represent a non-existing reality. Although many examples are known of architects 'idealising' their plans for publication, Mollino's collage of existing 'real space' and space as 'imagined' is rather extraordinary.<sup>7</sup> The documentary and projective aspects of the plan are combined, or in other words, fact and fiction are merged into the representation of a 'surreal' reality, which includes that 'bit of falsification' that characterises all of Mollino's works made for publication.<sup>8</sup> For Casa Miller, no site measuring nor as-built plan is to be found in Mollino's personal archives. Like the imagery of the cabinet, Mollino fully controls the representation of his interior design. In a way, the drawing is an interior in itself. For Mollino it is a matter of

'inhabiting a drawing' ('abitare un disegno') as he writes in April 1942 in a letter to the editor of *Il Selvaggio*, Mino Maccari.<sup>9</sup> Again, Mollino continues in the vein of existing cabinet imagery, in this case that of the bookish cabinet interior, the interior that becomes readable as a text, or, like in some late nineteenth-century examples of novels, even becomes made out of heaps of papers, documents or books (Huysmans' *À Rebours* (1884) and Galdòs El Caballero's *Encantado* (1906)).

### Dynamics of Showing and Viewing

Looking at the photographs taken within the studio space, there seems to be only one entrance: a double set of doors connecting to the hallway. Other remaining openings are screened with floor to ceiling curtains (Figure 2). The curtains of the fully glazed facade drawn closed, the interior is fully turned into itself. Fabrics are omnipresent in the studio: from red carpet, white fuzzy rugs, red velvet curtains to a pleated textile ceiling, and intensify the experience of interiority. A curved lighting rail on the ceiling guides the movement towards a mirror in the shape of the Venus of Milo that reflects the gaze back inwards. The interior is distinctly theatrical. Entering Casa Miller is like stepping onto a stage, into the spotlight.

On the plan published in *Domus*, the movement of the photographer is indicated with a line, zigzagging around the sinuous lighting rail along which a cluster of spotlights moves. Along the trajectory, arrangements of furniture, decorations and objects are put in the spotlight and photographed like still lifes. The visual path along which we 'see' Casa Miller is thus indicated. This visual path has a strong imaginary character and enhances the notion of seeing as an act of imagination and subjectivity: in connecting photographs and numbers on the plan, the static reader constructs a mental image of Casa Miller. The trajectory lines, and the visual sequence in numbered images, emphasise that Mollino directs the perception. The dynamics of showing and viewing, essential to the cabinet, are themselves rendered visible by the zigzagging line.

### Artistic References

Interestingly, the picture frames hanging on the walls of Casa Miller are precisely indicated in the plan. Some of the pictures are easily identifiable as they include reproductions of known artworks, prints of popular culture and personal photographs. By displaying these recognisable images, Mollino indicates his references. As much as being decorations of the interior, these images expose Mollino's frame of reference against which to read the interior.<sup>10</sup> Mollino thus brings out iconic imagery to engage the viewer in his enclosed, staged, theatrical world. In this sense, Casa Miller performs the cabinet dynamics of representation.

Mollino makes direct references to the world of film, surrealism and the female figure by selecting and materialising images from Max Ernst's



Figure 2. Studio space of Casa Miller with various plaster casts. Curtains cover window- and door openings, photos by Carlo Mollino. Source: Politecnico di Torino, Sezione Archivi Biblioteca Roberto Gabetti, Fondo Carlo Mollino, ACM 1.101.10, 1.26.2.

surrealistic novel in collage *Une Semaine de Bonté* (*A Week of Kindness*) (1934) and including a photograph of Marlène Dietrich in Casa Miller.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, he makes numerous allusions to Jean Cocteau's surrealist film *The Blood of a Poet* (1930). Casa Miller and the Poet's room (both with wainscoted walls) contain recurring elements and themes from the artist studio: a mirror, plaster casts and the Venus of Milo. Furthermore, in an experimental set of photographs, Carlo Mollino and artist-friend Italo Cremona make a filmic quotation. In the opening sequence of *The Blood of a Poet*, the Poet is surprised while painting when the lips of his portrait come to life. When he tries to erase them with his hand, he finds the lips transposed and animate on his hand. Running his hand (and thus lips) over his own mouth and bare chest, he is caught in excitement. A subsequent scene shows the Poet asleep with his head and hand resting on his working table. This scene is recalled in a series of photographs taken at Casa Miller, in which Mollino, and in turn Cremona, let their head and hand rest on a glass shelf amidst a collection of objects such as a plaster hand, gloves, keys and a glass ashtray. In *The Blood of a Poet* the expository intertitle following the scene of the sleeping Poet reads: 'The sleeper seen from up close or the surprises of photography - or how I got caught in a trap by my own film' signed by Jean Cocteau. It seems to be a leitmotif for Casa Miller. In his photographic self-portrait, Mollino is, much like Cocteau, caught in his own work. Cocteau's *Orphic Trilogy* has been recognised as a cinematic self-portrait, in which he tries to illustrate 'the process of developing an "artistic" identity'.<sup>12</sup> Within the cabinet space of Casa Miller, Carlo Mollino shows a similar quest for artistic identity. In evoking Cocteau's dreaming Poet in the dreamlike scenery of Casa Miller, Mollino presents himself in connection with the surrealist avant-garde.

The title of the film's second chapter 'Do walls have ears?' is echoed by the multiple plaster body parts scattered throughout Casa Miller: an ear (on the bathroom wall), an eye (on a glass console in the corridor), a hand (resting on glass tops), a hand holding a breast (hanging from the studio wall), two shaking hands (in a cantilevering glass cabinet), a foot (on the radiator), a nose (next to the main entrance), a mouth (on the bedroom wall) and a female head (reflected in the bedroom mirror) (Figure 2).<sup>13</sup>

Further, the presence of the Venus of Milo in Casa Miller as a mirror could be seen as a reference to Lee Miller's rendition of the Venus statue in *The Blood of a Poet*. In placing his hand over the statue, mouth on mouth, the Poet brings the Venus figure to life. Mollino makes more references to Lee Miller in his photography. For example, Mollino's series of photographs of Lina Surawowski, his girlfriend at the time, behind the net curtain in Casa Miller's bedroom are reminiscent of Man Ray's 1930 iconographic nude photograph of Lee Miller standing at a window. We could even perceive an allusion to Lee Miller in Mollino's choice of the English pseudonym 'Miller' in naming his first interior.

### The Double

The concept of 'the double' in relation to surrealism articulates itself in different ways within the architectural discourse. Bernard Tschumi in his text 'Architecture and its Double' sees the double of (modernist) architecture, or its 'irritant', in the surrealist movement.<sup>14</sup> Richard Becherer, on the other hand, introduces the mannequin as 'double' in his analysis of the surreal photographic portrayal of Le Corbusier's houses, where attributes refer to the invisible dweller or 'l'homme type' and 'where the spirit of the house might also be no other than the carefully constructed and anonymous mannequin, mankind's deceptive "double"'.<sup>15</sup> Casa Miller can then, viewed from the perspective of the cabinet, be seen as Mollino's second skin or 'double'. Because this second skin is a surrealist playful cabinet, he relates in a very ambiguous way with the modernist disintegration of the subject. Mollino's playful cabinet rather presents itself on the thin line between, on the one hand, the explosion of form and the embrace of otherness and alienation in surrealism, and, on the other hand, the strong self-objectification of the protagonist-dweller in a double-interior that thus threatens subjectivity. The latter aspect of the cabinet is again radicalised by Mollino in the construction of a *mise en abyme* of representations. The representational space of the cabinet and its architect-inhabitant are in turn represented in an experimental series of portraits, in which both Mollino and artist-friends take altering positions in front of and behind the camera. Taking similar poses and using the same attributes, Mollino and Cremona (looking from under the glass console with scattered objects or eyes closed with the head resting amidst them) or Martina (with aviator hat and glasses posing in front of an aerial picture of Manhattan) become each



Figure 3. Respectively Carlo Mollino and Italo Cremona looking from under the glass shelf in Casa Miller's gallery.

Source: Politecnico di Torino, Sezione Archivi Biblioteca Roberto Gabetti, Fondo Carlo Mollino, ACM 1.6.2, 1.28.8.

other's playful 'double' (Figure 3). In these photos, Mollino and his friends assume roles – a playful act, but also an act of escapism that is aimed at the temporary suspension of reality. The portraits manifest a dimension of otherness in between the experiencing self and the represented self (who becomes an image) while the double in disguise displays an indefinite 'I' and an impossible desire for 'the other'.<sup>16</sup>

### CASA MOLLINO, 2 VIA NAPIONE (1959-68)

#### Interior without an Exterior

From 1968 to his death in 1973, Mollino occupied a first-floor apartment owned by the Piedmonts Society for Archeology and Fine Art in a small villa at Via Napione 2. Mollino spent a long period of time, from 1959 to 1966, planning the refurbishment of the interior. His interventions were far-reaching. Already in his first drafts he removed an internal staircase leading to the second floor, and introduced a continuous hallway from the front door to the master bedroom (Figure 4). In doing so, the wedge-shaped plan is divided in two, allocating a service area (vestibule, kitchen and two bathrooms) towards the busy Via Napione, while organising the living room, dining room and a small bedroom in an enfilade towards the side of the garden bordering the river Po. This rather functional update of the plan made the apartment a comfortable home (especially in contrast to Casa Miller, which did not even have a kitchen), yet Mollino only occasionally spent time in the apartment.

As early as 1960, Mollino indicated on the plan in red curved lines the curtains that would cover windows and walls. The heavy pearl grey, purple and red drapes evoke the historical motif of the curtain-shell, typical for the

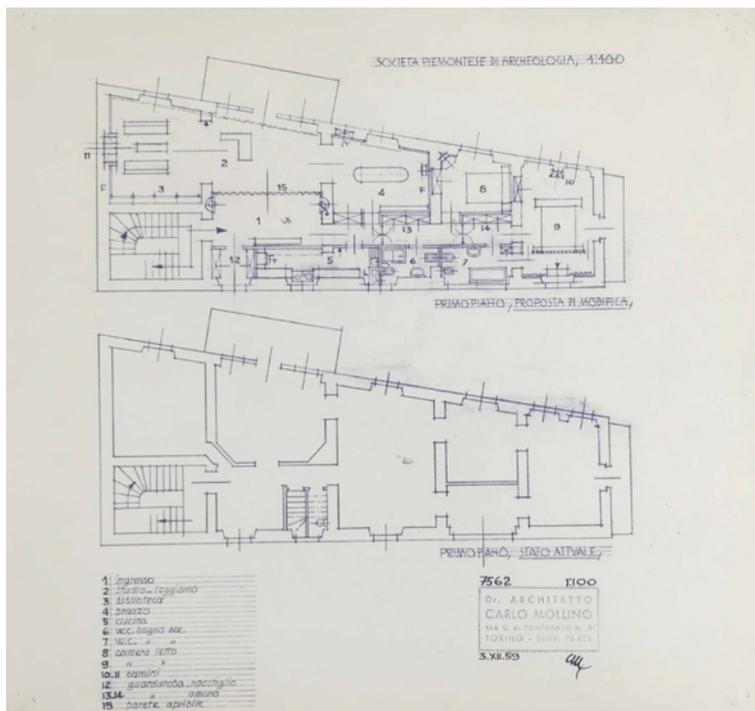


Figure 4. Proposal for the refurbishment of the apartment in Via Napione 2, owned by the Piemontese Society of Archeology (1959). Source: Politecnico di Torino, Sezione Archivi Biblioteca Roberto Gabetti, Fondo Carlo Mollino, ACM P8F.70.05.

boudoir.<sup>17</sup> In the vestibule, a Japanese sliding door screens the central living area. Curtains and screens form a secondary mobile segmentation that, combined with mirrors, disorients the visitor. The front door has two oval mirrors, one from the inside and one from the outside. A first image of the visitor is captured, immobilised in front of the entrance door, even before he or she enters the apartment. On the other side, the inhabitant finds his gaze turned upon himself. Opening the door breaks the spell of the mirror. Pulled away from their self-reflection, both gazes are confronted eye to eye. One enters through a threshold of red velvet curtains into a disorienting vestibule where all openings are covered with red velvety curtains. Once one has entered the vestibule, the curtain veils the exit. The interior tolerates, following the logic of the cabinet as a radically closed space, no reminder of the outside.

When studying the development of Mollino's drawings for Casa Mollino, a major difference between the first and last set of drawings are the changes that occur in the small bedroom, marked by its change of name to 'butterfly room' ('camera delle farfalle'), referring to the 64 frames with butterflies set around the window. A series of sketches first reveals the idea of an alcove-

like bed turned against the wall and screened with drapes. The nineteenth-century boat-style bed, given to Mollino by painter Piero Martina, replaces Mollino's typical modern bed design. Placed on a blue carpet, the bed is believed to symbolise the journey the souls of the dead make according to ancient Egyptian beliefs.<sup>18</sup>

During Mollino's lifetime, this interior was not published and known only by a few people. For Mollino, the apartment in Via Napione offered both a space of radical isolation, and a stage for his private dandy-esque activities. Today, it is recognised as the site of Mollino's act photography. Indeed, Mollino received and photographed numerous women in the apartment. He made polaroids, that are no longer concerned with spatial qualities of the interior, but rather focus on the erotically dressed female subject. The collection of erotic polaroids seems to bear parallels to the collection of butterflies. Both are part of Mollino's cabinet collection.

### Authorial Space

Casa Mollino has been described as 'a late world of self-quotations'.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the interior contains various references to his work, to his persona and to others that form his frame of reference. In 1973, the year of his death, Mollino writes:

I am preparing, like the Chinese of rank who in life adorns his own mausoleum, a corridor of my house to be a twilight avenue where the photographs and many other mementos of my life shall follow in sequence: all beautiful, or almost.<sup>20</sup>

Casa Mollino is a fully autographic space, yet it purely exists of self-quotation or self-objectification in a *mise en abyme* of representations. We retrieve Casa Miller's symbolic elements such as the shell-shaped drawer and the print of Michelangelo's dying slave, here set into a bookcase. Other elements that reoccur as representations are 'treasures' stemming from nature: flowers, leopard skins and butterflies, artificially reproduced as a floral Murano glass chandelier, wallpaper and photographic prints. Not only do elements from Casa Miller reappear, they are radicalised in the 'mausoleum' of Casa Mollino. In a certain sense, the self-created mausoleum is the epitome of theatricality and self-objectification. One is nowhere more an 'object' than in the death. Duplicated and solidified as plaster casts (*gesso al vero*), body parts are spread around the interior. The fragmented body, taken apart in the interior like a collage, evokes the componential constructed mannequin or mechanic doll. We retrieve an eye (looking down from a beam in the living room), a mouth (merging with a beam between the living and dining room), a breast (projecting from a beam in the 'twilight' corridor), two hands (gesticulating from the bathroom walls), an androgen head (with closed eyes in the master bedroom), the back of a man (diving

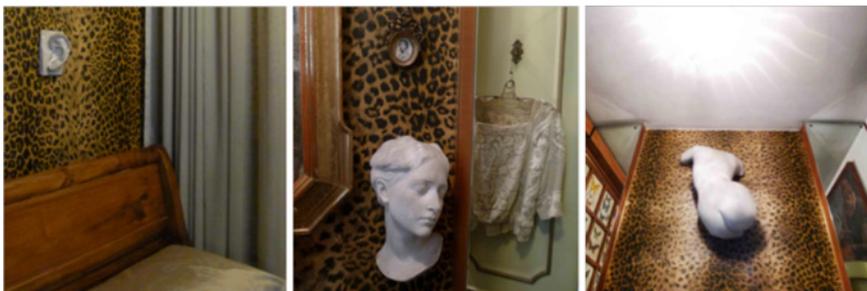


Figure 5. An ear, a woman's head and back emerging from, closing its eyes on and turning against the walls of the butterfly room.  
Source: Photos by Gerlinde Verhaeghe.

into the corridor wall), and an ear, a woman's head and back (emerging from, closing its eyes on and turning against the walls of the butterfly room) (Figure 5).<sup>21</sup> These plaster casts, immortalised by endless multiplication, emphasise the apparent objectification within Casa Mollino.

### Conclusion

To Carlo Mollino, both Casa Miller and Casa Mollino were an escape from the outside world into an inner world, set apart from ordinary time and history. While, in Casa Miller, a young Mollino made a biographical space in relation to the surrealist avant-garde of the thirties, in Casa Mollino, an aging and isolated Mollino takes stock of his career in a mausoleum as a space of self-objectification. In both, however, the central idea for Mollino was the cabinet; a space filled with objects, fragmented and collaged similar to the persona and body these cabinets are meant to evoke. In a Surrealist, 'playful' spirit, Mollino combined and reproduced objects and images in potentially endless possible settings. As an interior without an exterior marked by secrecy and eroticism, Casa Mollino became, in line with late Surrealism, a place of fetishist obsession in which objects and persons merged. These 'other places' formed an enclosed, theatrical world, balancing between the real and the imaginary, subjectivity and objectification, intimacy and exposure, life and death.

### Notes

1 Eleonora Doleatto, 'Pittura Giovane Tina Mennyey Prampoli,' in *Torino. Rassegna mensile della città* 11 (1936), 32. English translation by the authors. The fragment came to our attention through its publication in the footnotes of an article by Turinese art historian Federica Rovati: Federica Rovati, 'La camera incantata. Carlo Mollino e la cultura artistica torinese 1935-41,' in Sergio Pace (ed.),

2 *Carlo Mollino architetto (1905-1973). Costruire le modernità* (Milan: Electa, 2006), 75-6 and Michela Comba, 'Carlo Mollino's Enchanted Rooms: Face-to-Face with Art in a Company Town, 1930-60' (paper presented at the biannual international conference of European Architectural History Network, Turin, Italy, 19-21 June 2014).  
Beatriz Colomina, 'A Slight Nausea,'

in Chris Dercon (ed.), *Carlo Mollino. Maniera Moderna* (Köln: Walther König, 2012), 251-60.  
3 Carlo Levi, 'Casa Miller,' *Domus* 129 (1938), 6-11.  
4 English translation of Carlo Levi's text by Bradley Baker Dick appeared in Charlotte Fiell and Peter Fiell (eds.), *Domus 1928-1939* (Köln: Taschen, 2016), 717-21.  
5 Fiell and Fiell (eds.), 717-21.  
6 The existing walls and openings are an important precondition to Mollino's interior design of Casa Miller. We can clearly see how in specific points Mollino's design reacts to the given building structure and tries to re-interpret it where necessary. Existing openings that Mollino eliminates - a staircase window looking into the studio-space and attic doors - are 'memorialised' in the plan by furnishings, e.g. a built-in radiator cover and a little drawer in the shape of a shell.  
7 Palladio for instance strongly idealised his plans to attain perfect symmetry. In contrast to Palladio, for Mollino falsifying has a meaning in itself. It is not just about correcting an unsatisfactory realisation of a project. Rather, the imagined reality is an integral part of the project.  
8 See Wilfried Kuehn, 'Mollino's Conceptual Mannerism,' in Dercon (ed.), *Carlo Mollino. Maniera Moderna*, 282.  
9 Mollino's letter, with a butterfly imprinted on the heading, is held in the collection of the Museo Casa Mollino Archives. English translation by courtesy of Napoleone Ferrari and Andrea Migotto: 'I am designing / drawing a house where the inhabitant with an enigmatic smile (am I a fool?) will be I in a perspective. In conclusion it is a matter of inhabiting a drawing. Farewell measurable spaces, tangible plan dimensions. Illusion, illusion.' Mollino is presumably referring to 'Bedroom for a house in the ricefields', published in January 1943 in *Domus*. In the presentation of this project, Mollino places himself in the interior perspective drawing. Seated in the bed, we find Mollino's face reflected in the mirror. For a close reading of this project, that

merely exists as representations, see Gerlinde Verhaeghe, 'Self-Portrait in Bed. A Case Study of Carlo Mollino's 'Bedroom for a Farmhouse in the Rice Fields', *MDPI* 894, 1 (2017), www.mdpi.com/2504-3900/1/9/894/pdf.  
10 For another interpretation of Casa Miller in a cultural context, see Federica Rovati, 'La camera incantata. Carlo Mollino e la cultura artistica torinese 1935-41,' 65-78. Rovati points out the references to surrealism, such as the link to Cocteau's surrealist film and Max Ernst's collages and sketches Mollino's connections to the Turinese art scene.  
11 Mollino made photographic reproductions of in total 14 plates from *Une Semaine de Bonté*, two of which he chose to display in Casa Miller (Max Ernst, *Une Semaine de Bonté*, 166 and 199). *Une Semaine de Bonté* also includes *three visible poems*, of which Mollino materialises the third: two shaking hands (Ernst, *Une Semaine de Bonté*, 195) in plaster. The plaster handshake, cast from two real hands, may indicate Mollino's collaboration with artist-friend Italo Cremona within Casa Miller.  
The press photograph of Dietrich is rather iconic. Considering how Dietrich, a master of film lighting, strongly controlled her representation in the media, it is a fitting reference for Casa Miller.  
12 Aneta Jałocha, 'Cinematic Self-Portrait of an Artist - Jean Cocteau's *Le Testament d'Orphée* (1960),' *Romanica Cracoviensia* 14 (2014), 265-75, www.ejournals.eu/pliki/art/3839/.  
13 Most of the plaster casts are classic drawing casts for the artist studio, obtained from the 'gipsoteca' in Via Principe Amadeo 25 in Turin. Following plaster casts can be identified: female head after a sculpture by Gaetano Cellini; the nose and eye of David by Michelangelo; the hand holding a breast after the Charity sculpture by Giacomo Serpotta.  
14 Bernard Tschumi, 'Architecture and its double,' in *Questions of Space* (London: Architectural Association, 1990), 60-77.  
15 Richard Becherer, 'Chancing it in the Architecture of Surrealist 'Mise-En-

- Scène', in *Modulus 18* (1987), 82.
- 16 Jałocha, 'Cinematic Self-Portrait of an Artist.'
- 17 For a analysis of the implementation of textiles in the boudoir, see Paul B. Preciado, 'Gender, Sexuality, and the Biopolitics of Architecture: From the Secret Museum to Playboy' (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2013).
- 18 Fulvio Ferrari, 'Mollino's Apartment in Via Napione,' in Giovanni Brino (ed.), *Carlo Mollino: Architecture as Autobiography* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005), 32–3 and Napoleone Ferrari, 'Carlo Mollino: due interni,' *Abitare* 449 (2005).
- 19 Enrico Moncalvo, 'Carlo Mollino – Interno in via Napione, Torino, 1959–1966,' *Domus* 703 (1989), 70.
- 20 English translation of citation in: Lisa Zeiger, 'Midnight lace,' in *Nest 3* (1998), 131.
- 21 These plaster casts are meticulously indicated on a plan made after Mollino's death by the engineer who took office in the apartment. This drawing is held by the Museo Casa Mollino Archives.

## Architectures of Nothing: Aldo Rossi and Raymond Roussel

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### Abstract

By the mid-1960s the modernist design ideology of the new, by which I mean the search for novel and expressive forms of a future better world, had begun to seem somewhat tired, at least to the late avant-garde architects who are the theme of this conference session. These architects were suspicious of the modernist commitment to the new. because, for them, having witnessed the devastation of World War II and the subsequent rebuilding, justification of formal invention as a kind of message radiating backward from the future no longer seemed credible. Remaining committed to the architect's desire to formulate projects, yet in search of alternative strategies upon which to base their projections, some of these architects looked back to the early twentieth century and to the work of artists who had been associated with the surrealist movement. One architect who is known to have looked back to surrealism in this way was Aldo Rossi, already well noted in this respect was Rossi's interest in the painter Giorgio de Chirico. Rossi's contemporary, the architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri, claimed that Rossi sourced the imagery for his projects from the mute, enigmatic sign language of de Chirico's metaphysical paintings, where space appears frozen and abandoned by time.<sup>1</sup> However, there is another connection to surrealism via Raymond Roussel, which has received very little attention.<sup>2</sup> It is this connection which I will explore in this paper, focusing on how Rossi made memory an active ingredient in the architectural imagination and hence the reference to surrealism as a part within the formulation of architectural projects after modernism.

### Keywords

Memory, theatre, autobiography, *locus*, imagination, project.

Although Raymond Roussel was not a surrealist, many artists and intellectuals aligned with the group greatly admired his work and had even, on occasions, approached him with suggestions for collaboration, which Roussel always politely declined. A good example is Marcel Duchamp, who, in a 1966 interview, spoke of his debt to Roussel and specifically to his *Impressions d' Afrique* (1910), which Duchamp first saw as a stage performance and then read in novel form: 'it was tremendous,' said Duchamp, going on to explain 'that man had done something which really

had Rimbaud's revolutionary aspect to it, a secession. ... And then this amazing person, living shut off in his caravan, the curtains drawn.<sup>3</sup> This notion of introversion, we will see, is important as a connector between Rossi and Roussel. *Impressions d'Afrique*<sup>4</sup> is built out of numerous scenes and events, described in meticulous and sometimes tedious detail, in which everyday objects are involved in seemingly exotic and mysterious rituals that are elaborately described. Perhaps, had he joined with the surrealists, Roussel would have been better known in the 1960s; but without his relative obscurity Roussel would have been unavailable as a cultural resource for Rossi.

In linking Roussel's poetic means and methods of creative practice to his own, Rossi was able to challenge modernist attitudes towards formal invention and to overturn modernism's basic cultural premise that advocates the future at the expense of the past. It was not that Rossi wanted to abandon modernism's commitment to solving real problems of the built environment, but Rossi was doubtful if modernist attitudes were capable of identifying what those real problems might be. Another way to put this would be to say that Rossi was looking for a new form of the new, and so to this end he turned his back on the future and looked instead, not to the past, but to the temporal notion of memory. One problem Rossi was faced with in performing his cultural innovation was the question of how to identify and critically represent memory in architectural projects, because in order to value memory it has to be recognisable as an active ingredient in the architectural work.

The earliest mentioning of Roussel in Rossi's published writings is in his essay "Architettura per i musei" ("Architecture for Museums", 1966). The essay is based on a seminar Rossi gave at the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia in the academic year 1965–6,<sup>5</sup> around the time when *L'architettura della città* (1966) was published. At that stage in his career Rossi was not well known outside Italy and had yet to produce the projects for which he is famous today. In his museum essay Rossi momentarily sets aside the main discursive theme to announce his intention that one day, in the not so distant future, he would 'dirci' (tell us) 'come ho fatto alcune mie architetture' ('how I made certain of my projects'). Here Rossi was making a direct reference to Roussel's posthumous publication *Comment j'ai écrit certain de mes livres* (1935). It is my understanding of Rossi's *A Scientific Autobiography* (1981) as his fulfilment of that promise.

In *Comment j'ai écrit certain de mes livres*<sup>6</sup> Roussel explains how he invented a whole variety of techniques of punning that enabled him to break apart readymade language structures, taken arbitrarily from the culture of the third republic that he lived in, and weave the fragments together into texts of amazing descriptive richness, ones that are lifelike in their details yet refer to nothing real. The surrealists too are well-known for their techniques of formal invention, such as *frottage*, *coulage*, the game of *Illot Mollo* and

the infamous *cadavre exquis*. On the surface Roussel's texts seem like extraordinarily inventive feats of the imagination and it comes as something of a surprise to find they are no more than mechanical constructs, riddled with accidents and arbitrary procedures. Reading a text by Roussel is like wandering around inside an ancient memory machine, rather like the classical mnemonic described in 'The Three Latin Sources for the Classical Art of Memory' in Francis Yates' book *The Art of Memory* (1966).<sup>7</sup> Imagine if one were to become trapped inside such a machine. One would be a captive, entirely immersed in a world of embodied mnemonic devices, where the *loci* and the *imagines argentes* are not figures of the mind but actual bodies in space! The trapped subject would never get to hear the assembled speeches those places and images structure and represent. For the captive it would be a matter of wandering around aimlessly and endlessly, inside the artificial memory domain! Tafuri, who was perhaps Rossi's most attentive critic, theorised an entire history of modern architecture, from the Renaissance to the present, in terms of just such a trapped subject.<sup>8</sup> And in this respect it is important to note, Roussel was never interested in recalling actual memories and although he was very well travelled, he never took anything from his travels for his books, stressing the importance of this aspect of his creative practice, 'since it clearly shows just how much imagination accounts for everything in my work.'<sup>9</sup>

In *Comment j'ai écrit certain de mes livres* Roussel tells of his frustration that his work was so often ignored or, where it had attracted attention, been misunderstood. He was a great admirer of Jules Verne and Napoleon Bonaparte and he wanted to be popular and glorious in the same way he believed they had been.<sup>10</sup> It never seems to have occurred to him that the price paid for finely crafted wordplay and exquisite precision in detailed descriptions is a lack of vivacity in the plot and lack of depth in the characters. In fact it isn't quite true to say Roussel was unaware of the consequences of his methods, because he devoted large amounts of his quite considerable wealth to adapting and performing his texts as theatre, apparently he believed they would be more accessible to mass audiences in theatrical form. He was wrong about this, however the stage versions did attract the attention of burgeoning surrealists, such as Francis Picabia, Guillaume Apollinaire, Robert Desnos and, as we have seen, Marcel Duchamp.

Rossi's *Scientific Autobiography* reads as a montage of notes rather than a sparse and precisely crafted text like *Comment j'ai écrit ...*, but what is common to both is the curious desire they induce in the reader, who feels obliged to read on and unlock the mysterious secrets inside. In the opening paragraph Rossi explains that the notes date back as far as 1971, the same year he began work on the competition to design a major addition to the cemetery of San Cataldo in Modena (Figures 1–2). In winning the competition Rossi began to attract international attention to his work. By alluding to the cemetery project Rossi was able to introduce



Figure 1 (left). Aldo Rossi, San Cataldo Cemetery, Modena, Italy, Ossuary and Perimetral building. Photo by the author.

Figure 2 (right). Aldo Rossi, San Cataldo Cemetery, Modena, Italy, junction of Perimetral and Entrance building showing raw block work prior to render. Photo by the author.

the theme of death into the text, which in turn allowed him to insinuate his own resurrection, or rebirth into his autobiography. In so doing Rossi was parodying Roussel's posthumous relationship to *Comment j'ai écrit ....* Another theme shared with Roussel was that of being critically misunderstood. In one note Rossi observes 'how this project provoked ferocious attacks on me,'<sup>11</sup> and he complained that critics and commentators were reading the cemetery project as 'a sort of neo-enlightenment experiment.'<sup>12</sup> This particular misunderstanding stems from Rossi's association with a movement known as the Italian Tendenza. Architects deemed to belong to the Tendenza were promoted, in the then rapidly expanding magazine and journal culture, as adopting a rational approach to design. They tended to work with clear, understated forms and to adopt a design methodology supposedly based on the theory of typology, as stated by Quatremère de Quincy and reintroduced into Italian architecture culture by Giulio Carlo Argan in the 1950s.<sup>13</sup> By the 1980s neo-rationalism of this kind had become tremendously popular in international architecture culture and attracted adherents across Europe and Northern America. In a special

issue of the London-based journal *Architectural Design*, entitled *Classicism is Not a Style*, Rossi's cemetery project was published alongside articles and projects by Léon Krier and Dimitri Porphyrios that promoted their own brand of rationalism, wherein architecture is understood as a timeless reflection on the tectonics of building.<sup>14</sup> These architects advocated classicism as a mode of craft building that could be held up as exemplary in the face of blatantly commercial development projects and property speculation.

Events of the 1980s notwithstanding, at the time of winning the cemetery competition Rossi should not have been entirely surprised by the neo-Enlightenment readings of his work.<sup>15</sup> *L'architettura della città* was filled with references to rationalist ideas, even going so far as to explain the classical distinction between the 'type' and 'model,' and, it is quite understandable that critics would have read the cemetery design as framed by such ideas. At Modena, the buildings were modelled as sparse, reductive forms and grouped together to form a collection, but Rossi quite consciously kept the spatial relationships between them undeveloped and understated, it was as if the collection of buildings had been laid out rather like the pieces on a game board or cutlery and crockery on a table. This places Rossi's project in an entirely different realm of speculation to those of the Tendenza, or indeed the tectonic rationalists, who tended to articulate the spaces in-between buildings through models derived from traditional urban spaces, well known from Western canons of architectural history. At Modena, thanks to the muted expression and uninflected matter of fact disposition, it is possible to experience the environment of the cemetery as if the buildings were visitors from some other world of incorporeal ideas, where they appear to shimmer on the threshold of mundane reality. The effect can be especially poignant in the often hazy atmosphere of the Val Padana.

As well as the thematic references to *Comment j'ai écrit...*, the *Scientific Autobiography* quotes Roussel directly, which, given Rossi's stated intention of writing without quotations, is resonant. The quote is from the first chapter of *Impressions d'Afrique*, where Roussel deploys the literary device of the narrator to introduce the reader to a place called Trophies Square. It is a vast open space at the centre of Ejur, the capital city of the fictive 'Ponukelian Empire,' located on the West coast of Africa. Rossi selects a particular moment from the description, where Roussel's attentive narrator is drawn toward a specific building:

On my right, in front of the trees, at a point in the middle of the row, stood a kind of red theatre, like a gigantic Punch and Judy show, whose facade bore the words 'The Incomparables Club' arranged in three lines of silver lettering in a glittering surround of broad golden rays, spreading in every direction like those around a sun.

On the stage at present a table and a chair were to be seen, apparently intended for a lecturer. Several unframed portraits were pinned to the backcloth and underneath was an explanatory label worded thus: 'Electors of Brandenburg.'<sup>16</sup>

Notice how the description is structured like a memory machine, referencing a place that is the *locus* of a group of images, but leaving the reader guessing as to the code that deciphers them (in the second part of *Impressions d'Afrique* Roussel does actually reveal the code, but for the first ten or so chapters the reader is left in the dark).

So, when Rossi, reflecting on the description, writes, 'Here is a true architectural project'<sup>17</sup> the attentive reader, desiring to unlock Rossi's secrets, feels a poetic resonance reverberating in this moment and suspects and indeed hopes that here is the key to his museum promise to 'tell'. The reader therefore pauses to look a little more carefully at Trophies Square, the *locus* of the theatre and headquarters of the Incomparables Club.

Trophies Square is a space of representation, formally combining geometry and nature in the perfect figure of a square, outlined by trees on all four sides. Beyond the outline of trees lies the major part of Ejur City, a capital city, but one that is made entirely out of huts. Trophies Square includes buildings and other objects laid out upon its surface, these are additional items that have been put there recently in order to stage a gala performance coinciding with the coronation of 'Talu VII, Emperor of Ponukele and King of Drelshkaf'.<sup>18</sup> The person responsible for laying out the buildings and other items upon Trophies Square is a character called Chênevillot, a notable and gifted constructor and a 'great architect'.<sup>19</sup> In terms of the literary devices Roussel deploys to describe the square, the architect is something of a novelty, the narrator on the other hand is a traditional figure used to describe situations and scenes, and generally keep the reader up to speed with the plot. Like the narrator, the device of the architect plays an intermediary role, however he is a constructor, not a storyteller and his acts of building have already transformed the square and prepared it for the narrative that is about to unfold. Chênevillot is without personality himself, but he brings character to the square through the cunning contrivances he has devised to equip it for the forthcoming celebrations.

Chênevillot belongs to a group of Europeans of the *Belle Époque*, most of them French nationals. While travelling to Argentina, the Europeans have been shipwrecked on the shores of Africa and are currently hostages of Talu. In order to alleviate the tedium of their days, the hostages have decided to test and entertain themselves by devising a gala performance to be staged on the day of their release and, as it turns out, Talu's succeeding to the kingship of Drelshkaf. Chênevillot's role is to conceive and construct the necessary structures that will function as props and centres of organisation

for the performance. These include four buildings: the red theatre, a miniature bourse, a tiny laboratory and a prison. There is also an altar, a large pedestal to which a man will be tied, a tombstone and a mechanism for supporting a statue as it glides along on rails. Roussel describes in some detail how Chênevillot has conceived and made the structures in Trophies Square. By focusing on the one that seems to have attracted Rossi the most, the red theatre, we can see Roussel's mind and imagination actually at work on an appropriated object, notice how inventive he is at devising techniques for transforming it. We can also see how the novel device of the architect, at work on the conception and construction of the structures, has the effect of concretising the space of representation, making the edifice of Trophies Square and the gala seem more tangible, more vivid and real.

Roussel's account of the way Chênevillot made the red theatre has nothing rational nor tectonic about it. The process is empirical, the architect worked with what he could find ready to hand, cutting down trees to form planks that were then assembled to make a timber carcass, which was then coated with paint. The finished structure appearing as a 'magnificent' red form (in treatises about ancient memory machines red colouring is given as a good example of how to make the active images more lively and hence more memorable).<sup>20</sup> At this point it is perhaps worth pausing to reflect on the way colour is used in Rossi's projects, where it has the effect of making the architecture seem reductive and cartoon-like, not only in the coloured drawings Rossi made of his projects, but also in the actual realised buildings. There is a scale factor involved in Roussel's appropriation of the theatre, based on enlargement. Unlike the miniature bourse, which is modelled on the actual Paris bourse, the theatre is modelled on a kind of toy building, but the process of appropriation and transformation turns the toy into an enormous Punch and Judy booth. Again it is worth pausing to reflect on the use of scale in Rossi's projects and the child-like and toy-like quality that scale-play can sometimes bring to his architecture.

Furnished with these details from *Impressions d'Afrique* and returning to the *Scientific Autobiography* and to the *locus* of Rossi's quotation. Rossi frames his quote with musings on the difference between 'teatro' and 'teatrino', including a reference to his own project for a kind of miniature theatre he calls the *Teatrino Scientifico*. The project was made public in 1978, just a few years before the *Scientific Autobiography* was published, the mutual term 'scientific' bridging between text and *teatrino*. It is worth pausing here to consider Rossi's use of the bridging term 'scientific'. Because the way Rossi uses it in the *Scientific Autobiography* should not be mistaken as standing in for 'reason' as in architecture's rationalist sense of the word. Right at the start of the *Scientific Autobiography* Rossi makes it clear that the title of his text alludes to a book of the same name by the scientist Max Planck. The doubling of the title would seem to indicate Rossi's desire to link his pursuit of architecture to Planck's pursuits in the field of modern

science, which, albeit travelling through numerous set-backs, paved the way to the establishment of quantum physics in the first half of the twentieth century. Although Rossi did not say so, it seems likely he would have identified with Planck's quietly frustrated explanation about the role of time in the establishing of scientific truths. According to Planck, scientific truths prevail in the long term because their opponents eventually die and a new generation grows up and is familiar with them. It was this Planckian sense of a patient, unforgiving, yet highly compelling searching for truth that Rossi meant by 'scientific' in his autobiography. Certainly he did not mean science to imply reason in the sense of a rational pursuit of knowledge. And, Rossi evokes a feeling for the scientist in the *teatrino* too, only now it is the scientist at work, he writes:

The theatre is thus inseparable from its stage sets, its models, the experience of every combination; and the stage is reduced to the artisan's or scientist's work-table. It is experimental as science is experimental, but it casts its peculiar spell on every experiment. Inside the theatre nothing can be accidental, yet nothing can be permanently resolved either.<sup>21</sup>

Rossi's *Teatrino Scientifico* was not an over-scaled Punch and Judy booth like Rousset's and neither was it painted red, however, it did play on the idea of the Punch and Judy show, only Rossi's show had no puppets. Instead the stage was inhabited by miniature buildings, each one referring to a character from Rossi's own preferred repertoire of architectural forms, with the backdrops reading as over-scaled versions of his coloured drawings. Again, we find the structure of a memory machine, only now it is the *teatrino* serving as *locus*, and Rossi's architectural models and drawings play the part of active images.

In his *History of Italian Architecture*, Tafuri wrote of the *Teatrino Scientifico* that it is 'a thoughtful and humorous work':

A small temple in the shape of a 'little house,' the only one appropriate to hold Rossi's architectural works, which are arranged there as permanent and movable sets. The space of representation coincides with the representation of space. Rossi wished to convince himself of this with his metaphysical theatre.<sup>22</sup>

What comes out of the coincidence Tafuri remarks on here is, he claims: nothing. And, of course, nothing is to be expected from a projective methodology whose structuring paradigm is that of an artificial memory machine. Because, for a memory machine to 'speak' would require it to have been programmed with something to say. Rossi acknowledges this

mute aspect of his architecture when he insists, again and again, that he has nothing to say. Yet, through his writings, projects and buildings Rossi did say something, because he was able to communicate a new strategy for producing projects, one that, according to Tafuri, affected 'the very concept of architecture'.<sup>23</sup> Through his theory and practice Rossi came to realise that fragments, ruins and broken toys, precisely because their unified sense is lost, can serve as mechanisms to induce partial memories. He learned from Rousset how such memories could, through artificial means, falling 'somewhere between logic and biography'<sup>24</sup>, trigger the imagination, ultimately leading to the systematic formulation of architectural propositions. Of course, and as Tafuri kept pointing out, Rossi's performance of architecture as memory did not mean real places in lived space and time actually became memories.<sup>25</sup> Rather it meant that Rossi's methods of architectural projection acquired significance as tools, or instruments for valorising real places in lived space and time as memories.

### Notes

- 1 Manfredo Tafuri, 'L' Architecture dans Le Boudoir,' in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, trans. Pellegrino d'Acierno and Robert Connolly (Cambridge, MA; London: The MIT Press, 1987), 267-90; Manfredo Tafuri, 'The Case of Aldo Rossi,' in *History of Italian Architecture, 1944-1985*, trans. Jessica Levine (Cambridge, MA; London: The MIT Press, 1989), 135-9.
- 2 Colin St John Wilson mentions Rossi's 'expressed sympathy' with the working methods of Rousset in his *Architectural Reflections: Studies in the philosophy and practice of architecture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 195, note 9. Patrizia Lombardo mentions Rossi's interest in Rousset's *Théâtre des incomparables* in her *Cities, Words and Images: From Poe to Scorsese* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 107.
- 3 Marcel Duchamp, cited in Pierre Cabanne, 'A Window onto Something Else,' in *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), 33-4.
- 4 All references here are to: Raymond Rousset, *Impressions of Africa* (Richmond: Alma Classics, 2011).
- 5 The essay is published in Aldo Rossi, *Scritti scelti sull'architettura e la città, 1956-1972*, ed. Rosaldo Bonicalzi (Milan: clup, 1975), 323-39. For an English translation, see Aldo Rossi, 'Architecture for Museums,' in John O'Regan et al., *Aldo Rossi: Selected Writings and Projects* (Dublin: Gandon Editions, 1983), 14-25.
- 6 All references here are to Raymond Rousset, *How I Wrote Certain of My Books and Other Writings*, ed. Trevor Winkfield (Boston: Exact Change, 1995).
- 7 Francis Yates, 'Three Latin Sources for the Classical Art of Memory,' in *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 1-26.
- 8 See especially 'Introduction: The Historical Project,' and 'The Wicked Architect: G. B. Piranesi, Heterotopia and the Voyage,' in Tafuri, *Sphere and the Labyrinth*, 1-21, respectively 25-64.
- 9 Rousset, *How I Wrote Certain of My Books and Other Writings*, 20.
- 10 For a good account of Rousset's life and work, see Mark Ford, *Raymond Rousset and the Republic of Dreams* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000).
- 11 Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography* (Cambridge, MA; London: The MIT Press, 1981), 15.
- 12 Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 15.
- 13 For an account of the Italian Tendenza, see Frédéric Migayrou (ed.), *La*

- Tendenza. Italian Architectures / Architectures italiennes: 1965–1985* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2012).
- 14 Dimitri Porphyrios (ed.), *Classicism is not a Style* (London: Architectural Design, 1982), special issue for *AD* 5–6 (1982).
- 15 He was upset by the controversy around Joseph Rykwert's article published in *Domus* in 1974; see Joseph Rykwert, 'XV Triennale,' *Domus* 530 (1974), 1–15.
- 16 Quoted in Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 29.
- 17 Rossi, 29.
- 18 Roussel, *Impressions*, 6–7.
- 19 Roussel, 116.
- 20 See the quotation from Ad Herennium in Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 9–10.
- 21 Aldo Rossi, cited in 'Little Scientific Theatre,' in Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford (eds.), *Aldo Rossi, Buildings and Projects* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), 185. The same wording appears in Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 33.
- 22 Tafuri, *Italian Architecture*, 137–8.
- 23 Tafuri, 135.
- 24 Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 8.
- 25 See, for example, the pair of articles 'The Analogous City' and 'Ceci n'est pas une ville' by Rossi and Tafuri respectively, in *Lotus* 13 (December 1976), 5–8; 10–13.

# SPACES FOR CHILDREN AS 'CITIZENS OF THE FUTURE' IN THE SERVICE OF TWENTIETH CENTURY POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

Session chairs:

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The recognition of childhood and the autonomy of children since the eighteenth century resulted in the provision of distinctive spaces specifically designed for them. Schools, medical facilities, playgrounds, orphanages, cultural spaces, sports facilities, among other typologies, were created during the twentieth century, envisaged by Ellen Key as the *century of the child*. In the last decades, both architectural historians and museums (MoMA, Vitra Museum, RIBA) focused on the theme of material culture of children from an architectural perspective, leading to the attention of this theme from a wider audience.

The condition of children as a significant means to transforming human condition was understood by pedagogues and also realized by different political regimes and ideologies along the last centuries. Regarded as the 'citizens of the future', children were one of the main focuses of political, social, and health/sanitary campaigns: as active agents in the execution of political and ideological values of distinctive regimes and communities. Children's spaces were meant to play an active role in the pursuit of those aims.

This session intends to discuss the relationship between the architecture of children's spaces and the ideal of childhood of different political ideologies that looked at children as active agents in the shaping of new citizens and society. Different children's spaces from the twentieth century were considered as means of social change, serving at the same time as symbols of propaganda and as images of strong political and social ideology (dictatorial regime, totalitarian regime, democracy, social democracy, communal societies, etc.). The session aims at gathering case studies from different geographical areas, providing a basis for reflecting on the historical significance of children's spaces within an international framework.

The design of children's spaces in the twentieth century poses a particular challenge for the history of architecture by invoking visions of the future, and points to a number of research questions:

How did political visions for ideal society reflect themselves in children's spaces in different, often competing, international contexts?

How have ideological societies experimented on visions of the ideal future via children's spaces?

How did the architecture of children's spaces attempt to educate and shape future citizens, using the architectural means of typology, materiality, etc.?

In retrospect, what is the meaning of these 'spaces for the future' today for the identity, values and visions of society?

What was the impact of these spaces on their societies for different generations, and how have 'future citizens' historicized them?

## From Social Spaces to Training Fields: Changes in Design Theory of the Children's Public Sphere in Hungary in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

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Maria Klagyivik, Independent researcher

### Abstract

The first half of the twentieth century brought turbulent changes in the political and social scene of Hungary. From being a partner of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the country's status changed first to Hungarian Soviet Republic, then to Kingdom of Hungary, to Republic of Hungary, and finally to People's Republic of Hungary within a few decades. These political changes strongly impacted the main ideologies of all fields of life in the country, including architectural and educational theory. This paper will examine how the various schools of thoughts affected ideas about designing special places for children, including playgrounds in public areas and schools.

In 1919, during the period of the short-lived 'Hungarian Soviet Republic', prominent architect Bela Rerrich (1881-1932) published his pamphlet entitled 'Play areas as social duty in town planning and garden design'. Rerrich had been working on a plan to create a number of play areas in Budapest for several years by then, but the political change acted as the trigger for socially inclusive, healthy places for children. Between 1919 and 1935, nearly sixty children's playgrounds were created throughout the city. However, the change in political ideas from the Soviet Republic to the Kingdom of Hungary and the rise in revisionist political thoughts (with the ever-increasing possibility of another war) altered the main aim of creating playgrounds. It was widely accepted that these places were instruments in the disciplined training of future soldiers of the country.

This paper will discuss the relationship between the design theory of children's playgrounds and the socio-political changes in Hungary during the period between 1914 and 1945. We will contextualize this reflecting on the international development of design theory, and will analyse how mid-war guidelines laid the foundation of design theories on children's spaces in the twentieth and even twenty-first centuries.

# Constructing Childhood: The Development of the Summer Camp in the Fascist Era

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## Abstract

During the Fascist rule in Italy (1922–43), the regime sponsored and encouraged the construction of thousands of children's summer camps or *colonie* (singular *colonia*) as part of a mission to shape the physical bodies and minds of the youngest citizens of the nation. Although the *colonia* building type originated in the nineteenth century, the regime adapted the type to their aims and constructed new camps throughout the peninsula. Between 1929 and 1933 alone the number of *colonie* nearly quadrupled from 571 to 2022. By the end of the Fascist era, some 3800 projects dotted the Italian landscape, from the Alps, to the plains, to the shorelines of rivers, lakes, and seas. Some were tiny, no more than basic shelters; others resembled small cities. Many are known for their simple lines, profound conceptual gestures, and for fostering majestic and memorable childhood experiences.

This paper analyses three *colonie*, in Cesenatico, Cattolica, and Legnano, to understand how the regime's desire to create the Fascists of the future was translated into built form by an array of young architects. Drawings and documents related to the design and construction of these projects shed light on the intentions of the architects and political leaders who sponsored their construction. Representations of the projects in the press, medical journals, government publications, and promotional materials illustrate how the projects were presented to the public and connected to health concerns, especially tuberculosis. Together the projects and documents illustrate how the Fascist regime operationalised understanding of medicine and public health through the design and function of the *colonia*. This agenda is most evident in the relationship between the building and nature, materials, and the arrangement of spaces. The public and private spaces of these complexes and buildings reflect different understandings of the relationships between the individual child and the collective body of the nation under Fascism.

## Keywords

Summer camps, Fascist architecture, rationalism, childhood, *colonia*.

## Introduction

A 1938 newsreel entitled 'La Colonia Marina della FIAT' opens with a view of a white cylindrical tower on the Tyrrhenian coast. Next, we see children – the young campers – in matching white uniforms parading down the spiralling ramps of the *colonia* tower's interior. Later, on the beach, the children perform synchronised calisthenics, concluding by spelling out the word 'DUCE' with their bodies. The brief two-minute film summarises the interrelationships among architecture, landscape, body, health, discipline, and dogmatic value so beloved to the Fascist ethos. Although the Fascist government in Italy constructed hundreds of *coloniae*, the building type dates to the late nineteenth century in Switzerland. Pastor Wilhelm Bion founded the first *colonia des vacances* with the noble aim to provide needy city children a summer escape to the countryside where they would be exposed to fresh air and plenty of sunlight.<sup>1</sup> Bion's concept eventually became a model for similar programs throughout Europe. The various types of *coloniae* shared the aim of enabling children to benefit from the fresh air, sun and natural environment of Italy's mountains, forests, and coasts.

While the program for the *coloniae* developed out of a complex set of concerns and goals, by the 1930s one motivating factor superseded all others when it came to the architectural form of these projects – a concern for hygiene, which developed in large part as a response to the spread of tuberculosis throughout Italy.<sup>2</sup> Tuberculosis (TB) was responsible for a tragic number of deaths among Italian children: in 1925, for example, the mortality rate for children age five to ten was 37.9 per 1000.<sup>3</sup> Because so many people tested positive for the bacillus without developing the disease, the line between prevention and treatment was blurred, and what was beneficial for treatment was believed to be good for prevention and healthy development. At the time, TB was understood to have spatial and environmental causes and remedies.<sup>4</sup> Doctors believed that sunlight and fresh air could help prevent and treat the disease.<sup>5</sup> The development of ideas about how to create a healthier environment ultimately affected buildings outside the medical profession including housing and especially the *coloniae*. Both sanatoria and *coloniae* designs emphasised providing plentiful access to fresh air and sunlight. Lifting buildings up off the ground was believed to help provide better access to sun and airflow. As a consequence of this belief, virtually all *coloniae* were multi-story buildings.

This paper examines the ways in which *coloniae* of the Fascist era reflected health concerns associated with tuberculosis through their designs, the rituals of time in the summer camps, and the staging of children's activities. We argue that the Fascist regime's public health agenda was manifest in the designs of the *coloniae*, and is most evident in the relationship between building and natural landscape and the ways in which the medical practices of separation and isolation were translated into architectural principles. A close look at three projects illustrates the ways in

which designers sought to address these complex programmatic, functional, and ideological requirements and provide spaces for children to develop into healthy Fascist citizens of the future.

### Italian Colonie of the 1930s

Italian *colonie* projects were funded and developed by a number of different sources, including religious institutions, municipal governments, political organisations and private individuals. While their mission varied with each sponsor, the common goal throughout the projects was that of providing relief from the city for the children of the poor in order to improve their health and, at times, also their manners or morals. 'Many of [the children] come from slums, modest social housing, or uneasy family experience and will feel disposed for the first time, in a calm and comfortable atmosphere,'<sup>6</sup> wrote Mario Labò, architect and architectural critic of the time, of the *colonie*'s young tenants. At the time of the rise of Fascism in 1922, over 100,000 Italian children were spending time at *colonie* of various types each year.<sup>7</sup> Seven years later, the number had increased to 250,000,<sup>8</sup> highlighting the commitment of the Fascist government to the program.

By the 1930s, the *colonie* were largely under the control of the Fascist government,<sup>9</sup> specifically under the directives of Fascist youth organisations, the Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB) at first, and then, from 1937, under the Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (GIL) with which the ONB had merged. The ONB took up the programs as an opportunity to indoctrinate Italy's youth into Fascism: they built, directed, or oversaw the construction of countless new *colonie*.<sup>10</sup> The ONB was charged with instilling the ethics of military education and discipline in young people by providing for pre-military education, physical education, spiritual and cultural education, vocational and technical education, and assistance to religious education.<sup>11</sup> The *colonie* became a key vehicle through which to accomplish these aims. The architects selected to design the projects tended to be young, many of them associated with the Italian rationalist movement. While it is not clear if there was a policy that required these projects should be designed by the younger generation of architects, the leading architects of the older generations never received commissions for the *colonie*.<sup>12</sup>

Every child entering a *colonia* would be medically examined and directed either to the changing rooms where he or she would be stripped of their humble civilian clothing, bathed, and given the *colonia*'s uniforms, or into isolation if found contagiously sick.<sup>13</sup> Despite the fact that article nine of the GIL's *Regolamento delle Colonie Climatiche* required that each *colonia* be provided with spaces for medical visitation, treatment, first aid, an infirmary, and separate spaces for those children bearing infectious illnesses,<sup>14</sup> treatment for diseases was excluded from the Fascist *colonia* programs, as they specified that only disease prevention would be addressed, while treatment would be dealt with in hospitals or sanatoria.<sup>15</sup> The Italian journal,

*Lotta contro la tubercolosi*, for example, praised the ONB for its mission to 'protect the health of the next generation of Italians' and suggested that the best way for the ONB to help in the struggle against tuberculosis was through the *colonia*, as well as by monitoring sanitation conditions in the schools.<sup>16</sup> With these prevention measures undertaken by the ONB, 'tuberculosis would soon enough be no more than a memory.'<sup>17</sup> Included in reports on the *colonia* in this journal were statistics documenting the decline of tuberculosis and the increase in the numbers of *colonia*.<sup>18</sup>

As a consequence of this emphasis on health and hygiene, foremost in *colonia* designs was the idea of isolation – isolation of the *colonia* from the city, and isolation of functions from one another in separate wings. Site isolation, however, was a constraint that fostered architectural ingenuity. Many of the Fascist *colonia* were built in sparsely populated areas and necessitated, for instance, the construction of water tanks. On the one hand, the water tanks 'often took on a strongly symbolic role,'<sup>19</sup> such as in the case of the water towers of the Colonia Rosa Maltoni Mussolini in Calambrone, or of the Colonia Montecatini in Cervia, on the other hand, these vertical structures were designed to support and augment the required daily physical activities of the children. In the Colonia Montecatini, architect Eugenio Faludi dramatised the required architectural program with a striking 55-meter high ramped tower,<sup>20</sup> which children could ascend during the programmed outdoor activities.

The Fascists slightly modified the activities of the *colonia* to suit political aims, but kept the focus on the health needs of city children. Per GIL directives, a typical day at the *colonia* had to observe a highly synchronised order that throughout the day intertwined outdoor physical activity, playtime, patriotic tales, Fascist culture, religious awareness, rest, and a healthy diet.

To support these activities, the GIL outlined a general architectural program for the *colonia* emphasising the need for ample, well-lit, and well-ventilated spaces, especially in the common areas such as the cafeteria and dormitory, and listed a series of auxiliary and support spaces to accommodate ancillary, administrative, and medical functions. Thus the interiors of typical *colonia* were marked by the emphasis on fresh air and sunlight as illustrated in the cafeteria pavilion in Legnano.

The GIL did not dictate a preconceived architectural style. Mussolini had, however, been sympathetic and even supportive of a modern architecture language in the early years of the regime. Architects, therefore, responded to the design challenge by delivering a great variety of volumetric compositions, forms and aesthetics, which tended to follow rationalist principles, but not exclusively. While the architecture of the *colonia* clearly articulated the design philosophy of their creators, the projects often shared a common site organisation: a courtyard for outdoor exercise and flag-raising ceremony, a multi-storey structure housing the dormitory, and one- or two-storey

structures accommodating the support functions of the *colonia* and its administrative offices. Great deals of carefully conceived details are found in the multi-storey dormitories. These can be attributed to different causes, such as sustainably responding to climate and environment, or to the fact that these edifices, being vacant of the chattering children for most of the year, still had to portray a dignified presence when silent and unoccupied. Moreover, the buildings had to reflect the wishes of the Duce who had called for a great importance to be given to these works, 'to mark them out, to make them noticeable even from a glance at the landscape.'<sup>21</sup> The GIL directives on heliotherapy and thalassotherapy encouraged interconnectivity between the *colonie* and their natural contexts. The principles of isolation and separation of people and functions, drawn from emerging understandings of tuberculosis, were translated into physical form through site designs that spread facilities across the site, wall sections that fostered ventilation, and details that pulled building elements apart from one another in order to allow for the free flow of air.

The *colonie* were established to expose working-class children, whose awareness of buildings and nature was formed in modest neighbourhoods, to the power of carefully constructed environments.<sup>22</sup> For a month each summer in the *colonie*, the children experienced unusual spatial relationships formulated by the shape and the extraordinariness of the buildings; dimensions, 'they moved in places unknown to them and unusual, exceptional sometimes for the architectural forms characterised by either soft and sinuous forms, or marked by rigid lines, but never banal.'<sup>23</sup>

An analysis of three projects highlights the ways in which architects interpreted the GIL agenda and public health concerns into built form.

#### Cesenatico, Cattolicà, and Legnano

The importance of the time children spent outdoors is evident in Giuseppe Vaccaro's design for the Colonia Sandro Mussolini in Cesenatico built in 1938 (Figure 1). The four buildings that comprise the compound are spread so far apart across the site that the space formed by them is a vast one, a sort of exploded courtyard. Rather than creating a sense of enclosure or protection, the area formed by the collection of buildings is unbounded, space seeps out of the area throughout the site. On the seashore side, the unbounded sense of space is increased first by the ocean view and secondly by the form of the cafeteria pavilion, which protrudes out from the rest of the mass of the central building and is thereby open on three sides, an object almost entirely engulfed in the space of the seaside.

The sense of unbounded space is furthered by the design of the central structure on the site, a five-story block, which houses the dormitories. It is in the dormitory block that Vaccaro expresses the most ingenuity in blurring the line between inside and outside. For the first two floors of the building, Vaccaro chooses to reveal the structure: concrete columns are slightly



Figure 1. Colonia AGIP in Cesenatico, designed by Giuseppe Vaccaro.  
Source: Stephanie Pilat.

recessed from the line of the floor slabs, which, in turn, cantilever out above them. For the remaining height of the block, the concrete columns are pulled inside the elaborated enclosure system disappearing from view. As a result, the building seems to be floating in the air, an appearance further reinforced by a design strategy that nearly emptied the first two floors of programs needing to be sealed off from the natural environment. It is then difficult to distinguish where the exterior ends and the interior begins. Approaching the building from the *piazzale della bandiera*, on the opposite side of the beach, the line between inside and out is nearly indistinguishable. One would first step onto the paved outdoor area, then next pass under the roof overhang, then through the structural system of columns and only lastly through the glass enclosure positioned as a fragile veil forming the last *obstacle* before reaching the ultimate destination: the golden sandy beach and the healing saltwater of the Adriatic. In essence, the system of enclosure has been pulled apart, with each portion, ground plane, roof plane, structure and walls marking a separate point in the journey from outside to inside. Consequently, the visitor's sense of interior and exterior space would be distorted, as exterior space flows over the ground, under the roof, between the structure and perceptually through the glass. But Vaccaro's blurring tactic is not solely horizontal. By contrasting a light structure with a much heavier top, one is drawn to look up. The horizontal mullions of the storefront systems enclosing the dormitory above the second floor are colour treated to blend with the glass, leaving their vertical counterpart strongly expressed. The eye

is pulled up, but then pulled across by the horizontality of the shading system placed just above the mid-height of each floor and extending across the entire length of the building, without, however, covering the floor slab delineating the end of one floor and the beginning of the other. The sky is then met both above the structure and at its periphery, giving those approaching the building a surreal experience in which the building belongs both to the earth and to the sky.

Clemente Busiri Vici's *colonia* at Cattolica built in 1932 (Figure 2) illustrates another method of incorporating health concerns and therapeutic directives into design.<sup>24</sup> The project was to serve Italians abroad who were invited to send their children back home to Italy in the summers for *colonie* programs. Busiri Vici used a design strategy, which he called an *architettura parlante* to make a visual connection between the project and the ocean liners that had carried so many Italians away and now carried their children back. In the centre of the site was a large building containing the kitchen, store, showers and administration. Flanking it were four long narrow dormitory buildings and three smaller staff buildings. As at Cesenatico, the buildings were spread across the site and were thereby positive elements in an open space. Like Vaccaro, Busiri Vici started with the premise that separation of parts and the resultant expansion of the project across the site were beneficial. At Cattolica, however, some of the physical divisions present at Cesenatico are exhibited metaphorically instead. The buildings seem to leave the ground plane, for example, because they resemble ocean liners, not because they are actually lifted up on pilotis. The illusion substitutes for the real departure. The dormitories themselves are also in part a reversal of Vaccaro's strategy. Where Vaccaro made the buildings as thin as possible to get each space close to the outdoors, Busiri Vici has pulled apart the dormitories to allow the outdoors to come inside, in the form of an atrium space running through the centre of each dormitory. The dormitories rise directly from the beach, and in their original setting, were without a sidewalk leading to their entrances. Barefooted children would then bring sand into their sleeping quarters, connecting the inside with the outside in a physical, but highly poetic, manner.

Although the seashores of the Adriatic and the Tyrrhenian, and the slopes of the Alps and the Apennines were regarded as the most favourable environments to improve the health of children, *colonie* were also built within city boundaries and as daytime camps. Such is the case of the *colonia* in Legnano, near Milan. Designed by the Milanese firm BBPR (Banfi, Belgioioso, Peressutti, Rogers) and completed in 1938, the *colonia* is characterised by a collection of five mostly open-air structures: a cloakroom pavilion with administration and medication facilities, a kitchen and cafeteria building with solarium, a siesta pavilion, and two shower buildings. As a daytime facility, the project did not have the dormitories structures found elsewhere. If the *colonie* of Cesenatico and Cattolica, albeit using different strategies,



Figure 2. Colonia in Cattolica, designed by Clemente Busiri Vici.  
Source: Stephanie Pilat.

mediate between two infinities, the flatness of the Romagna countryside on one side and horizontalness of the sea on the other side the *colonia* in Legnano is confined by visible urban boundaries and a site far from being regular. By pulling the buildings as close as possible to the edges of the site, BBPR emphasises that the role of any built structure is solely transitory, and that the *physical* engagement is with the natural environment beyond. The site design approach is further accentuated by a deliberate architectural strategy: the five pavilions are porous to the forces of nature, welcoming it into the enclosed spaces. In the cloakroom pavilion, the first structure the children encounter on the site, there are no doors. Instead, there are four walls that do not touch each other, but have gaps between the walls serving as the entry and exit points into the space. Further breaking down the enclosure is the fact that two of the four walls are perforated. As if this does not suffice to establish an initial dialogue with the surrounding nature, BBPR enacts another strategy. Children must leave their modest belonging not in cubbies, but rather in pouches hung randomly on an open-frame wall, resembling fruits on a row of trees. Nature is now abstracted.

The large refectory building, a two-story high space capable of accommodating 800 children, has ribbon windows running east and west at a child's eye level. These windows connect the interior spaces with the surrounding landscape and ventilate the space, bringing the fresh air inside. The south wall of the refectory is fully glazed, and its lower section can be entirely opened, further blurring the line between inside and outside.

The solarium, located near the south façade of the refectory, is a wood-framed structure raised from the ground on wooden posts. The upper floor is protected from the harsh summer sun by canvas awnings. The solarium structure has multiple functions. At a pragmatic level, it simply provides children with a space above the ground plane; on a more poetic level it allows the children the sense of floating high in the air, with the fluttering sound of the canvas awnings reminiscent of birds flapping their wings. Its placement, a meter or so from the south façade of the refectory, lets it act as a shading device for the glazed wall of the dining hall and as a transitional space between the walled space of the interior and the unbounded space outside. The narrow gap creates tension between the two structures while allowing a sliver of sky to be visible. It is almost as if the solarium is carved out of the ephemeral mass of the sky instead of growing out from the ground. Children are simultaneously pulled horizontally towards the green field and vertically towards the heavens. It is pure poetry.

At the southeast corner of the site, BBPR places the two open-air service kiosks. Circular in plan to harmonise with the bend in the boundary of the site, the pavilions accommodate bathroom and shower facilities. At the centre, a large circular opening defines the shower area. Water cascades from a circular pipe suspended in the opening of the ceiling. The cleansing ritual is not private, but rather communal and playful. The objectives of the *colonia* movement of providing open-air life to children is most evident in these shower pavilions where rain is the metaphor, and a joyful and unforgettable experience the result.

### Conclusions

The designs of the 1930s Italian *colonie* illustrate some of the ways in which Italian architects translated the political agenda of the Fascist regime and emerging understandings of public health into summer camps for children and into spaces to cultivate young fascists, future citizens. These designs highlight how medical concerns influenced ideas regarding the creation of environments that would promote healthy development and help prevent disease. The medical community was echoed by Fascist rhetoric, which suggested that the problems brought on by industrialisation could be solved by returning Italians to the land. Freed from a historical context, many of the architects of the *colonie* found the best answer to this challenge in modern architecture.. Their design ingenuity, the attention to details, and their intrinsic relationship with their environments, prompted Mario Labò to describe them as 'formidable in terms of technical elegance.'<sup>25</sup> 'Everything in them,' he continued, 'from the abstract lines and forms to the development of the plan ...; from the width and type of the windows to the design of the balustrades; from the plaster to the paving, colours and material; from the refectory to the rooms for washing, dormitories and gymnasia, comes together to produce an image which is realized and never forgotten in the

minds of children: the memory of their stay in the *colonie*.<sup>26</sup> Undeniably, the modern aesthetic of these projects must have awed those children coming from humble backgrounds, and modest social housing. They would not only be removed from the familiar routine of family life to embrace communal living, but also to 'accept the influence of taste, to be stimulated for the first time, even if passively, by the experience of architectural form not only from the outside but adapted for living within.'<sup>27</sup> For the children, it was not an ordinary day at the beach.

### Notes

- 1 On the early history of *colonie* see Gabriella Gallerani and Vincenza Maugeri (eds.), *Colonie a mare: Il patrimonio delle colonie sulla costa romagnola quale risorsa urbana e ambientale* (Bologna: Grafis, 1986). A good history of French *colonie* is Laura Lee Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land: Working-Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880–1960* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002).
- 2 For a history of tuberculosis see Francis Barrymore Smith, *The Retreat of Tuberculosis 1850–1950* (London, New York: Croom Helm, 1988). For a history of tuberculosis in Italy around the turn of the century see Tommaso Detti, 'La questione della tubercolosi nell'Italia giolittiana,' *Passato e presente* 2 (1982), 27–60.
- 3 'Lo sviluppo delle costruzioni sanatoriali in Italia,' *Lotta contro la tubercolosi* (March 1932), 350–1.
- 4 For the history of TB treatment at Saranac lake see David L. Ellison, *Healing Tuberculosis in the Woods: Medicine and Science at the end of the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994).
- 5 'Lo sviluppo delle costruzioni sanatoriali in Italia,' 350–1.
- 6 Mario Labò, 'Colonie Marine-Montane-Elioterapiche,' in Stefano de Martino and Alex Wall (eds.), *Cities of Childhood: Italian Colonie of the 1930s* (London: Architectural Association, 1988), 78.
- 7 Giorgio Frisoni et al., 'Origins and History of the Colonie,' in *Cities of Childhood*, 7.
- 8 Arcangelo Ilvento, 'Colonie Estive,' Treccani, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/colonie-estive\\_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/colonie-estive_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/).
- 9 The best source in English on youth programs in Fascist Italy is Tracy H. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight: Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922–1943* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985).
- 10 For an exhaustive listing of the 1930s *colonie* see Richard A. Sucré, 'The Architecture of Socialization: The Italian Colonie of the Fascist Era' (Masters Thesis, University of Virginia, 2002), Appendix A.
- 11 Elena Mucelli, *Colonie di vacanza italiane degli anni '30. Architetture per l'educazione del corpo e dello spirito* (Florence: Alinea Editrice, 2009), 8.
- 12 Interview with architect Agnoldomenico Pica in *Cities of Childhood*, 75.
- 13 Mucelli, *Colonie di vacanza italiane degli anni '30*, 53.
- 14 Mucelli, 25.
- 15 Frisoni et al., 'Origins and History of the Colonie,' 7.
- 16 'O.N.B. nei confronti della prevenzione e della profilassi infantile contro la tubercolosi,' *Lotta contro la tubercolosi* (November 1932), 1227.
- 17 'O.N.B. nei confronti della prevenzione e della profilassi infantile contro la tubercolosi,' 1227.
- 18 'Lo sviluppo delle costruzioni sanatoriali in Italia,' 350–1.
- 19 Frisoni et al., 'Origins and History of the Colonie,' 9.
- 20 de Martino and Wall, *Cities of Childhood*, 34.
- 21 de Martino and Wall, 8.
- 22 Giovanna Mulazzani, 'Architettura e percezione nelle colonie,' in Francesca

Franchini, *Colonie per l'infanzia tra le due guerre* (Santarcangelo di Romagna: Maggioli Editore, 2009), 72.

23 Mulazzani, 72.

24 On Cattolica see de Martino and Wall, *Cities of Childhood*, 17–9.

25 de Martino and Wall, 17–9.

26 de Martino and Wall, 17–9.

27 Labó, 'Colonie Marine-Montane-Elioterapiche,' 78.

## Building Soviet Childhood

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### Abstract

Published in Moscow for distribution at the New York World's Fair in 1939, the pamphlet *Children in the Land of Socialism* proudly declared that 'even in the most remote regions of the Soviet Union, the population sees from its own experience that care for the children is the prime concern of the Socialist state of workers and peasants.' In the annals of Soviet propaganda, this concern was usually described in relation to the unprecedented program of reconstruction in the first two Soviet decades, and particularly those spaces intended explicitly for children, for example in schools or communal housing projects. The discourse of architectural history has likewise concentrated on intentional and sometimes experimental spaces for childcare, as in the Narkomfin Building designed and built in Moscow by Moisei Ginzburg and Ignaty Milinis (1928–1930).

Soviet spaces designed for children reveal concerted and ongoing efforts regarding the care of children as well as the Soviet reinvention of childhood more generally. But the imagery of Soviet architecture and design also suggests a story of makeshift arrangements and long-term temporary fixes reflecting not only economic constraints but also a notion of play inflected by Soviet values of productivity and labor. Children both benefitted from and helped create the new Soviet world, they playacted as architects and engineers and often proved useful in delivering the ideological messages of architectural photography. Whether as toddlers enjoying building blocks, adolescent builders of model ships, or small-scale figures playing near massive new buildings, they often played at construction within extant pre-Revolutionary buildings repurposed to accommodate new models of Soviet everyday life. In doing so, they became model citizens: small-scale versions of their future selves and idealized creatures in the ongoing construction of a better world.

## Spaces of Empowerment: Architecture of Israeli Youth Villages, 1930–1960

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### Abstract

During the first decades of the twentieth century, a framework of youth villages was established in Israel and became the typical model for residential education. The sole purpose of these institutions was to rehabilitate Jewish orphans who immigrated to Israel, by using a 'powerful environment' to mold their characters so they could fulfil Zionist ideals. This transformative strategy was based on segregating the students and exposing them to new models of behaviour through community life and agricultural education. These institutions, which are absent from architectural discourse, expressed a distinct perception of the modern movement and the new pedagogy.

This research focuses on the cultural landscape of two such youth villages, Ayanot (1930) and Hakfar Hayarok (1950), both spaces of empowerment whose transformative ideals were incorporated into their physical environments. The research examines how different architectural models were used as tools for implementing a social-educational ideology, and locates their application in relation to Zionist perceptual shifts. This historiography analyses architecture through body practices, activity arenas, and institutional layout.

Ayanot, originally established as a women's training farm during Israel's pre-state period, was transformed into a youth village expressing the assimilation of rational and social ideals. This powerful environment and its dialogue with rural architectural design assisted in the creation of an integrated space. This space is defined by continuity and by interactions among different activity arenas as part of resocialization processes.

Hakfar Hayarok reflected the adaptation to the state's ideals of life and the institutionalized designs used in the public housing environment. These spatial qualities were expressed by rigid functionality and standardization, both aimed at integrating the users into the state. These modern design practices also reflected a tension between scientific functionality and pastoral ideals.

## Educating a 'Creative Class': Anti-Disciplinary School Architecture in the Early 1970s

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### Abstract

During the counterculture revolts of the late 1960s and early 1970s, especially in Western Europe and North America, a new generation of architects began to take aim against what they considered to be the repressive ideological apparatus of the classroom, with its rigid seating arrangements, furnishings, lesson plans, and hourly divisions – in short, the whole pedagogical apparatus of what Michel Foucault referred to as the 'disciplinary society'. Thus, radical pedagogy joined together with radical architecture to construct what reformers hoped would be a new species of 'free' citizen – creative, autonomous and spontaneously cooperative. In 1970, Sim Van der Ryn, professor of architecture at the University of California in Berkeley, together with a group of collaborators, who included the schoolchildren themselves, embarked on a series of experiments in alternative school designs. Hierarchies between designers and clients, as well as between teachers and students, were abolished. Children were asked to design and construct their own classrooms, often using found materials. The emphasis was on breaking down the institutional spatial order into smaller, *ad hoc*, personalised spaces, or else spaces for unexpected encounters. The collaborative design, folded into the learning process itself, was never thought to be complete or final. Failure and experimentation were encouraged. While this and similar experiments, I argue, had limited effect on subsequent school buildings, most of which remained institutionally conventional, they had an enormous effect on the work spaces of new companies in Silicon Valley and elsewhere that promoted creativity and collaboration among elite employees. Far from the egalitarian political vision of the counterculture, these environments formed the architectural template for a new class division under late capitalism.

### Keywords

School architecture, classroom space, radical design, institutional critique, counterculture.

During the counterculture revolts of the late 1960s and early 1970s, especially in Western Europe and North America, a new generation of architects began to take aim against what they considered to be the repressive ideological apparatus of the classroom, with its rigid seating

arrangements, furnishings, lesson plans, and hourly divisions – in short, the whole pedagogical apparatus of what Michel Foucault referred to as the 'disciplinary society'. In 1971, a group of radical architects and educators, led by Sim Van der Ryn, professor of architecture at the University of California in Berkeley, published an eccentric, square-format book entitled *Farallones Scrapbook: A Memento & Manual of Our Apprenticeship in Making Places, Changing Spaces in Schools, at Home, and Within Ourselves*. Inspired by the grassroots collectivism of various underground publications, especially the *Whole Earth Catalog*, that flourished during the height of the California counterculture, the book combined, in a collage-like fashion, manifestos on education, pragmatic do-it-yourself guides, architectural plans, photographs of school experiments, poetry, and satirical cartoons.<sup>1</sup> The critical target of this treatise was what its authors called the 'classroom box' – a rectangular space, with a grid-like array of desks facing the larger desk of the teacher. The classroom box, they asserted, was everything that the schoolroom space should not be: hierarchical; uniformly organised; subjecting each seat to the gaze of the instructor; and limiting the motion of each student. A cartoon of a sad-looking child under a chair bore the caption: 'We are dominated by furniture.'<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1.) To break the repressive spatial order of the classroom box, and by implication also its repressive modes of pedagogy, the collaborators of the *Farallones Scrapbook* conducted a series of architectural experiments in California public schools into which they had been invited by progressive educators. Hierarchies between designers and clients, as well as between teachers and students, were abolished. Children were asked to design and construct their own classrooms, often using found materials. The emphasis was on breaking down the institutional spatial order into smaller, *ad hoc*, personalised spaces, or else spaces for unexpected encounters. The collaborative design, folded into the learning process itself, was never thought to be complete or final. Failure and experimentation were encouraged.

The theory of education presupposed by the authors of the *Farallones Scrapbook* was that children were infinitely and autonomously creative, but that their creativity and innate intelligence had been repressed or constricted by an artificial apparatus for the rote learning of discrete subjects, like English language, mathematics or science. Thus, radical pedagogy joined together with radical architecture to construct what reformers hoped would be a new species of 'free' citizen – creative, autonomous and spontaneously cooperative. Un-repressing children's learning processes entailed both freeing up the internal space of the classroom and personalising each learning experience, such that learning would be directed not externally by the instruments of a lesson plan or textbook, but rather internally from the self-directed initiative and drive of each child. Echoing the language of the wider counterculture discourse of personal self-discovery, Farallones experiment leader Jim Campe wrote:

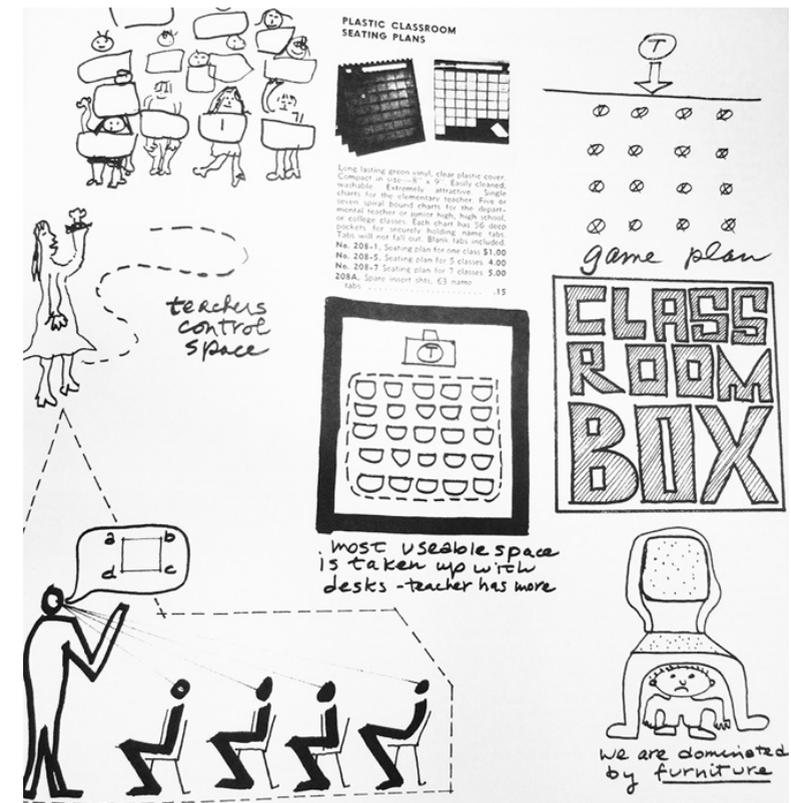


Figure 1. 'Classroom box'. Source: Sim Van der Ryn et al., *Farallones Scrapbook: A Memento & Manual of Our Apprenticeship in Making Places, Changing Spaces in Schools, at Home, and Within Ourselves* (New York: Random House, 1972).

'In order for a school to be "free," it must include a feeling of personal control for EVERYONE.<sup>3</sup> By ceasing to control the spaces and movements of schoolchildren, or even whether or not they showed up for class, it was theorised, students would eventually learn to take control and responsibility for their own education, asking for teaching and spontaneously cooperating with other students as free individuals, rather than as captive, rebellious subjects of an alien and alienating educational apparatus. While this and similar experiments, I would argue, had limited effect on subsequent school buildings, most of which remained institutionally conventional, they had an enormous effect on the ethos and work spaces for the so-called creative professionals whose value lay in their ability to continually innovate and collaborate in new ways.

The alternative theory of education expressed in the *Farallones Scrapbook*, followed from the anarchist ethos of the counterculture communes, but it also drew on the multiple discourses of progressive

psychology and education, ranging from Abraham Maslow's idea of self-actualisation to John Dewey's concept of education through experience, all of which were meant to foreground the creative autonomy of each individual student.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the Farallones experiments were only slightly more exaggerated examples of architectural and pedagogical experiments that had been taking place in American schools since the early 1960s, under such names as 'open plan schools,' 'free schools' and 'open education'. Although each of these phrases denoted distinctive and competing reform concepts, they nevertheless all converged on the idea that students and subjects of instruction should no longer be constrained by the spatio-temporal order of graded classrooms and separate subject instruction. Advocates of open-plan schools, for their part, emphasised the physical reform of school buildings, primarily by eliminating interior walls and partitions, thus allowing students and furniture to float around in expansive, sometimes amorphous interiors. The pedagogical justification for such open-plan schools, dating as early as 1957, focused on educational flexibility and individualisation.<sup>5</sup> Groups of children and teachers could be shifted into multiple configurations over the course of the school day, but also become freer to move from one part of the space to another, according to individual need. A prominent 1965 report, entitled 'Schools Without Walls' cited the Dilworth Elementary School in San Jose, California as a primary example of such open plan design. The report emphasised that the open space of what it called the 'big room' corresponded to flexible education curriculum in which students would no longer be grouped by grades, but rather by abilities and skill levels in particular subjects, designated by color-coded chairs: 'Because the space permits great freedom in deploying teachers and pupils, it lends itself readily to whatever innovations in program or schedule the staff thinks appropriate.'<sup>6</sup> Accompanying illustrations showed students, sitting as much in circles on the floor as on chairs, with teachers alone or in groups as the lessons and grouping constantly shifted at irregular intervals throughout the school day. Some architects began proposing the elimination of classrooms altogether. A 1968 article in the American journal, *Progressive Architecture* declared the classroom to be obsolete, citing new ideas for lounge-like learning areas in which 'the student checks out his packet of learning equipment and pursues knowledge at his own pace.'<sup>7</sup> Emphasis increasingly was on flexibility, mutability and mobility, under the assumption that students and learning processes were mutually dynamic, unpredictable systems in which both the contents and the contexts of instruction were subject to continual revision.

'Free schools,' by contrast with open plan schools, were less directly concerned with the architectural forms of the schools than they were with liberating the subjective autonomy of each child. Children, it was thought, should be given full freedom to explore subject and skills of their own choosing and at their own independent pace.<sup>8</sup> The idea of 'open education',

similarly, advocated a loosening of traditional classroom disciplines in order to individualise student learning.<sup>9</sup> Under the banner of open education, teachers were encouraged to be 'learning facilitators' rather than transmitters of knowledge. As psychologist and open learning expert Carl Rogers wrote in 1967, autonomous self-learning would become increasingly important as knowledge itself became subject to a faster pace of revision. In an era of ceaseless cultural and scientific change, any textbook subject matter taught today would become quickly obsolete. Therefore: 'The only man who is educated is the man who has learned to learn; the man who has realised that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives security.'<sup>10</sup> Whereas the rote learning of existing knowledge shut down creativity and resulted, at best in the passive acquisition of questionably useful knowledge, facilitating the process of self-directed learning would produce adaptable, agile and independent future citizens. The older disciplines of mechanised routine and bureaucratic order were seen as becoming less and less relevant to the future world into which these students would emerge as productive adults. Likewise, among the radical, counterculture left, 'open learning' and 'open space' became increasingly the educational rallying cries against establishment authoritarianism.

Many radical teachers in Berkeley in the late 1960s, widely read and quoted from a 1960 book by British educator, Alexander S. Neill, entitled *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing*. In the book, Neill described three decades of his experience managing a small alternative school in the Southeast of England, called Summerhill, in which students were given wide reign to follow their own creative interests with minimal discipline. True creativity, Neill believed had to arise from the inner curiosity of each child rather than from lesson plan or the imparting of skills thought to be important by teachers, administrators or the larger society. Thus, Neill declared: 'The function of the child is to live his own life – not the life that his anxious parents think he should live, nor a life according to the purpose of the educator who thinks he knows what is best.'<sup>11</sup> Such creative, inner-directed autonomy could only be achieved by abandoning a pre-determined pedagogical agenda and allowing the children themselves to begin to shape their own educational process. Desiring to transform ideas on open education into action, a group of progressive and leftist teachers openly rebelled against the Berkeley Unified School District, arguing that its mainstream schools had failed to serve various populations of students, critically racial and ethnic minorities, but also other children who would not or could not fit into the regular curriculum. Recognising that the classroom space itself was a prime impediment to open learning, they attempted to describe how an 'open' space might actually appear. In his 1969 book, *The Open Classroom: A Practical Guide to a New Way of Teaching*, Berkeley High School teacher Herbert Kohl suggested that it might be best not to organise the furniture of the classroom at all:

Perhaps it might be possible to make organisation of the class a collaborative venture between him and his students, and among the students themselves. Besides [the teacher] has come to realise that the things that work best in the class for him are the unplanned ones, the ones that arise spontaneously because of a student's suggestion or a sudden perception. He trusts his intuitions and isn't too upset to abandon plans that had consumed time and energy.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, intuition, spontaneity and creativity were attributed, not only to the individual, autonomous development of each child, but also to the collective enterprise of the classroom. Breaking the classroom box meant leaving the classroom space as a blank canvas for an unpredictable and new kind of classroom environment.

By 1969, a group of radical teachers, led by free schooler Herbert Kohl, had managed to found a series of experimental schools within the Berkeley Public School System, some based on building curricula around race or identity and others based on disassembling the last traces of authoritarianism within the classroom. Funded first by a Ford Foundation Grant and then by the Federal Department of Education under the Nixon administration, these experimental schools soon began to operate as an official alternative to mainstream education.<sup>13</sup> One of the most radical of these experimental schools was called *Odyssey*, its name referencing the fact that the school refused to be tied to any existing school building, but instead adapted itself to various found environments that could be temporarily borrowed and transformed. *Odyssey* also emphasised what is now called 'service learning' in which students were expected to volunteer in hospitals or assist a group of ecological activists. An official brochure described the genesis of the school in the following way: 'Staff at Willard Junior High School wanting to create a small cluster school for the sake of more personal contact and more creative use of the community as a learning place gathered together parents and youths of like mind off site.'<sup>14</sup> During the 1970–71 school year, the *Odyssey* school with its 80 seventh and eighth grade students found a temporary home in the basement of the Lawrence Hall of Science, a new research building on the University of California campus. It was this makeshift site which then became one of the first platforms for Sim Van der Ryn and the collaborators of the Farallones Institute, where they immediately began involving students in constructing geodesic domes, net-like structures and other objects that were simultaneously exercises in learning-by-doing and experiments in reconfiguring classroom space. The fact that none of the members of the Farallones Institute held any kind of teaching credential, or even had any previous experience teaching children, seemed not to matter at all.

What counted in this instance was their architectural training and their commitment to fulfilling the aims of open education.

The architects and architectural students who comprised the Farallones Institute had two interrelated missions. On one level, like the radical teachers who invited them into their schools, they saw themselves as 'learning facilitators', generating the conditions under which students would teach themselves, allowing students, in process, to freely express their creative desires. At the same time, however, the members of the Farallones Institute saw themselves as architectural researchers, investigators into alternative types of classroom space. The leader of the Farallones Institute, Sim Van der Ryn had already been using his architecture seminars and research grants in order to critique a variety of institutions, including prisons and dormitories. Schools became the next object for this institutional critique. Recounting his experience of being denied entry to his daughter's elementary school, Van der Ryn wrote: 'I was astonished. My Post-Occupancy Evaluation seminar had migrated from dorms to studying and observing prisons, and here I was at a neighborhood school that had less public access than San Quentin State Prison.'<sup>15</sup> Van der Ryn and his collaborators began asking students themselves what they wanted in a classroom or school building and then translated these often vague or conflicting desires into actual classroom furnishings, often taking on playful forms that were meant to break down the institutionalised form of the classroom box.

Examples of such invented classroom furnishings included the so-called 'envirom', consisting of a flexible ring of transparent, inflated plastic 'in which each person blows up his pillow-like section of the ring.'<sup>16</sup> Teachers and students would all sit in a tight circle on the floor, with their backs supported by the ring of inflated pillows. This oddly intimate space brought teachers literally down to the level of their students, into a quasi-tribal discussion circle that simultaneously resembled a giant toy. (Figure 2.) Another example of invented furnishing was what the Farallones Institute called the 'super-carrel', a kind of modular platform on two levels that could be extended indefinitely in different directions, with a myriad of compartments, variously opened or closed. Each compartment could then be decorated or modified according to the individual impulses of each student. Simultaneously individualised and collectivised, the super-carrel, as described by the *Farallones Scrapbook*, could be 'a functional replacement for the desk, providing an individual cubicle, 4' x 4' x 4–5' high, which is more a room than a desk – with visual and acoustical privacy.'<sup>17</sup> (Figure 3.) In tandem, the envirom and the super-carrel might provide a range of flexible environments, from the intimate intensity of group discussion to the individualised autonomy of study within personalised, child-scaled cubicles, away from the prying gaze of teachers or adult authority figures. Employing such furniture interventions as a ready-made kit-of-parts, members of the Farallones Institute would facilitate collective design interventions within



Figure 2. 'Envirom'. Source: Sim Van der Ryn, *Design for Life: The Architecture of Sim Van der Ryn* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2005).

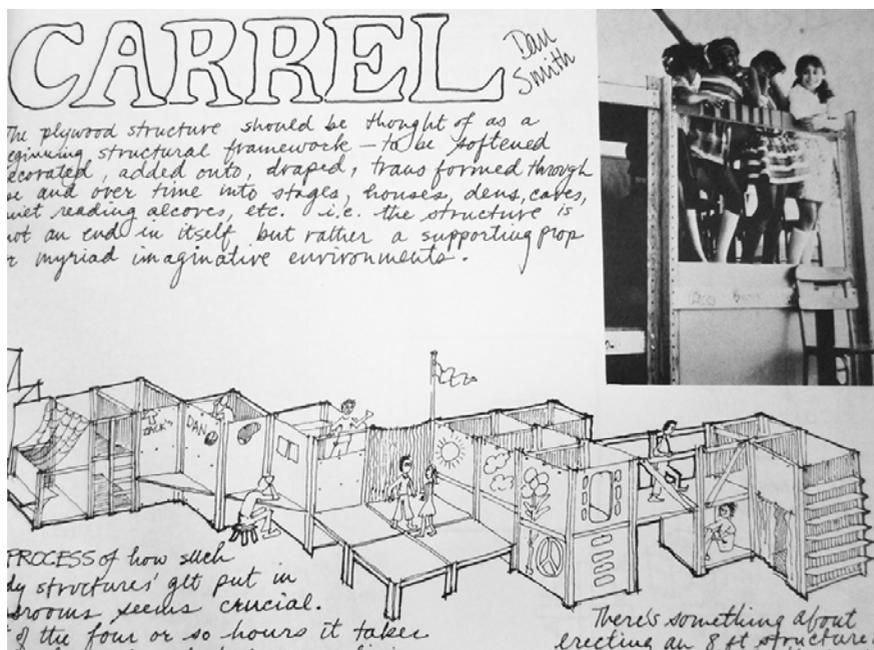


Figure 3. 'Super-Carrel', detail. Source: Sim Van der Ryn et al., *Farallones Scrapbook: A Momento & Manual of Our Apprenticeship in Making Places, Changing Spaces in Schools, at Home, and Within Ourselves* (New York: Random House, 1972).

various schools in which they were invited. Students would be taught to organise and construct these elements themselves as part of the design intervention. A set of before-and-after plans showed the results of one such intervention at a school in San Francisco. The teacher had initially attempted to modify the traditional classroom arrangement by shifting desks out of the grid alignment, creating a separate reading corner. After the Farallones intervention, the room was filled almost entirely with furniture that the children had constructed themselves, including a super-carrel and a large art table. The standard desks have all been pushed up against the wall to form a collective work surface for various projects, and a large rug appears near the centre of the room for collective lounging and discussions on the floor.

Using found objects, raw construction materials and colourful banners, assembled by the children themselves, the spaces resulting from the Farallones experiments more and more resembled playgrounds – more specifically what the British called 'adventure playgrounds'. This resemblance was not accidental. The *Farallones Scrapbook* dedicated an entire section to playgrounds, with the advice: 'We hope you've got backyards and vacant lots where kids have access to building materials and the freedom to construct their own play spaces.'<sup>18</sup> This type of open-ended or junk playground, filled with rubble, boards, rope and other cast-off building materials had first emerged during World War II in the suburbs of Copenhagen, Denmark as an experiment in landscape design for a housing project which aimed to engage children in an active form of play that would keep them out of the streets while also developing their social and cognitive skills. In post-war Britain, the junk playground, given the more polite name, 'adventure playground', had been widely promoted in turn by the landscape architect and child welfare advocate, Lady Allen of Hurtwood as a means of assisting children, especially those who had been traumatised by war, by providing them with meaningful constructive experience while simultaneously also making creative re-use of urban bomb sites.<sup>19</sup> By the mid-1960s radical educators and landscape architects in the United States, many with anarchist leanings, had adopted the idea of the adventure playground as a means of democratising and disseminating creativity as a common human potential, beyond just the specialised classes of artists, designers, scientists and intellectuals for whom creativity had long been part of professional expertise. These reformers declared access to creativity as a universal human right. In Berkeley's College of Environmental Design, faculty published and researched the topic of adventure playgrounds as a platform for developing autonomous play and community participation in landscape design.<sup>20</sup> This research reached a fever pitch of intensity in the wake of the spontaneous occupation of vacant university land in order to construct what came to be known as People's Park. In 1971, British sculptor Simon Nicholson, who had arrived in Berkeley in 1964 to take up a teaching post, published a manifesto entitled 'The Theory of Loose Parts', which asserted that the prerequisite

for creativity was an environment that was not fixed, or tightly designed, but rather open to manipulation by its users: 'In any environment, both the degree of inventiveness and creativity, and the possibility of discovery, are directly proportional to the number and kind of variables in it.'<sup>21</sup> This was, in fact, the theory of the adventure playground, generalised and extended to the built environment as a whole, including museums, schools, parks, etc. The utopian possibility of universal creative citizenship was as much a product of the counterculture rebellion against the disciplinary society as it was of the New Left and civil rights movements of the 1960s that sought to undo the inequalities of race, class and poverty.

It is perhaps somewhat ironic then, that in subsequent decades, this type of open-ended creativity has come to signify the spaces and subjects of newly-intensified forms of social stratification. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to trace this later history in detail, I would like to touch on two points by way of epilogue. First, a number of studies carried out in the mid-to-late 1970s, asking what had become of the experimental schools in Berkeley and elsewhere concluded that, for the most part, they had failed. Open plans and experimental furniture arrangements had been replaced by buildings and classrooms very similar to the kinds of conventional spaces that the experimental schools had attempted to abolish.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, their failure had often fractured along lines of race and class, with parents from poor and minority neighbourhoods complaining that the experimental schools had failed to teach their children the kinds of basic skills that they needed for economic survival. The report on the Berkeley Experimental Schools noted that even during their operation the various experimental schools seemed to have tracked students, even if inadvertently, into free, counterculture schools and minority schools emphasising remedial or residual education: 'White "hippy" students were disaffected and cynical, but still did well academically; the disaffected students from ethnic minorities, on the other hand, had low levels of academic achievement. These two groups of disaffected students appeared to be "tracked" into different types of [experimental] schools, the "hippy" schools and the "residual" schools.'<sup>23</sup> Across the United States in the late 1970s schools in poor, inner city neighbourhoods increasingly turned to standardised testing, traditional discipline, and even armed guards in hallways. Meanwhile, the design ethos of transforming disciplined, Taylorised office environments into the appearance of spontaneously open playgrounds reappeared in the architecture for what management consultant Peter F. Drucker famously dubbed the 'knowledge worker'.<sup>24</sup> Beginning in the early 1980s, some companies began to commission office environments qualitatively similar to the radical school experiments of the early 1970s, generating enclaves of highly paid creative workers. It was exactly the type of creative autonomy praised by the open educators that came increasingly to be valued in a variety of professions, ranging from advertising executives to software

engineers, and prized among employers of what Richard Florida would famously call 'the creative class'<sup>25</sup>. Thus, creativity has again become a highly valued characteristic of citizenship, not however as a universally accessible right, but rather as a jealously developed and cultivated quality of 'human capital'. Far from the egalitarian political vision of the counterculture, the open-ended environments designed for the elite knowledge workers now form the architectural template for a new class division under late capitalism.

### Notes

- 1 For more on the influence of the *Whole Earth Catalog* on design and pedagogy for children, see David Senior, 'Deschooling Society,' in Juliet Kinchin and Aidan O'Connor (eds.), *Century of the Child: Growing by Design 1900–2000* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2012), 216–9.
- 2 Sim Van der Ryn et al., *Farallones Scrapbook: A Momento & Manual of Our Apprenticeship in Making Places, Changing Spaces in Schools, at Home, and Within Ourselves* (New York: Random House, 1972), 27.
- 3 Sim Van der Ryn et al., *Farallones Scrapbook*, 27.
- 4 See, for example, Marta Gutman and Ning de Coninck-Smith (eds.), *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008).
- 5 Robert F. Eberle, 'The Open Space School,' *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 1 (1969), 23–8.
- 6 Margaret Farmer and Ruth Weinstock, *Schools Without Walls* (New York: Educational Facilities Laboratories, 1965), 7.
- 7 'Assault on the Schoolhouse: Overthrowing Tradition,' *Progressive Architecture* 157 (1968), 496–8.
- 8 Bruce S. Cooper, *Free and Freedom Schools: A National Survey of Alternative Programs* (Washington: President's Commission on School Finance, 1971), 7–12.
- 9 The idea of 'Open Schools' had first been introduced into the United States via a series of articles by journalist Joseph Featherstone in *The New Republic*. The series was based on the British Government's 1967 Plowden Report, entitled 'Children and Their Primary Schools,' which emphasised self-directed autonomy and individualised courses of instruction.
- 10 Carl R. Rogers, 'The Interpersonal Relationship in the Facilitation of Learning,' (1967) reprinted in Melvin L. Silberman, Jerome S. Allender and Jay M. Yanoff (eds.), *The Psychology of Open Teaching and Learning* (Boston: Little Brown, 1972), 58.
- 11 Alexander S. Neill, *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing* (New York: Hart Publishing, 1960), 12.
- 12 Herbert R. Kohl, *The Open Classroom: A Practical Guide to a New Way of Teaching* (New York: Random House, 1969), 40–1.
- 13 K. C. Cole Janssen, *Matters of Choice: A Ford Foundation Report on Alternative Schools* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1974).
- 14 Bancroft Library Special Collections (Pamphlets), 'Experimental Schools in Berkeley' (Berkeley Unified School District, 1971), 16.
- 15 Sim Van der Ryn, *Design for Life: The Architecture of Sim Van der Ryn* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2005), 34.
- 16 Sim Van der Ryn et al., *Farallones Scrapbook*, 27.
- 17 Sim Van der Ryn et al., 72.
- 18 Sim Van der Ryn et al., 102.
- 19 For more on both the Danish junk playgrounds and the British adventure playgrounds see Roy Kozlovsky, 'Adventure Playgrounds,' (Ch. 2) in *The Architectures of Childhood: Children, Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Postwar England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 47–91; and Roy Kozlovsky, 'Adventure Playground

- and Reconstruction,' in *Designing Modern Childhoods*, 171–90.
- 20 Clare Cooper Marcus, *Adventure Playground: Creative Play in an Urban Setting and a Potential Focus for Community Involvement* (Berkeley: Institute of Urban & Regional Development, University of California, 1970). Marcus was a close colleague and collaborator with Sim Van der Ryn in the 1960s and 1970s.
- 21 Simon Nicholson, 'The Theory of Loose Parts, An important principle for design methodology,' *Studies in Design Education Craft & Technology* 2 (1972), 6.
- 22 See, for example, Leanne Rivlin and Maxine Wolfe, *Institutional Settings in Children's Lives* (New York: Wiley, 1985).
- 23 Scientific Analysis Corp., *Educational R&D and the Case of Berkeley's Experimental Schools. Volume I: A Summative Evaluation of the Berkeley Experimental Schools Project* (San Francisco, 1976), 12.
- 24 Peter F. Drucker, *The Age of Discontinuity: Guidelines to Our Changing Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).
- 25 Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday life* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

# A WOMAN'S SITUATION: TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY AND GENDERED PRACTICE

Session chairs:

**Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi**, Harvard University

**Rachel Lee**, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich

As a factor of globalization that accompanied the modern colonial and postcolonial period, transnationalism and an emerging landscape of cosmopolitan sites offered women new proving ground outside established social, cultural, and commercial spheres of architecture and planning. In this session, we investigate the significance of transnational mobility, over an open time period, for women as architects, planners, patrons, builders, curators, historians, or other users of the built environment. Whether their movement was based on privileged access to international networks or resulted from forced migration, we find repeated instances of an engagement in debates on regionalism, the vernacular, the everyday, the folkloric, and the anonymous, as expressions in architecture and planning. Seeing these debates as deeply contingent on the subject's position, this session seeks precision on a problem that has inhabited the fringes of architectural and planning history: the gendered connections between an extreme mobility (understood as conditioned by specific historical contexts) and a theory of the situated.

Thinking with Donna Haraway – in particular, her concern with 'situated knowledge' as that which is informed by the subject's position and does not attempt the abstraction of universalism – this session attempts to map mobility and gender onto one another within a set of practices and visions that focused on

structuring, building, historicizing, or thinking the undesigned, the unplanned. We see this in part as stemming from the vision of a stranger, a function of vision from a periphery or a territorially interior margin. As Hilde Heynen has discussed in relation to Sybil Moholy-Nagy, the turn to architecture without architects also shifted claims upon expertise, opening the position of expert to a wider pool.

This session takes the epistemological question of what knowledge is produced by transnational mobility, and attempts to move beyond the frequent challenges of the archive and historiography, to suggest certain sites of resistance to a 'canon' from which many women have been excluded, as well as to the various borders which define architectural expression, authors, and publics. Bringing the work of women architects and non-architects alike into conversation, we invite papers that consider understudied professional figures such as Sybil Moholy-Nagy, Jaqueline Tyrwhitt, Charlotte Perriand, Erica Mann, Jane Drew, Lina Bo Bardi, Minnette de Silva, Hannah Schreckenbach, Dorothy Hughes, Gillian Hopwood, Ursula Olsner, and Denise Scott Brown, or a variety of named and unnamed groups of women – clients, laborers, refugees – whose transnational travels affected the built environment or its history.

## Enclosed Bodies: Circulation and its Discontents

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### Abstract

This paper attends to relations between gender, mobility and marginality by re-reading the nineteenth century theories of Ildefonso Cerdá against recent work of Silvia Federici.

In her book *Caliban and the Witch* (2004), Federici expands Marx's notion of 'primitive accumulation' to signify a process of accumulation of differences within the working class, whereby hierarchies built upon gender and race became constitutive of the modern proletariat. Federici reveals that the contemporaneous processes of land enclosures, colonization and witch-hunts were parts of the same broader process whereby gendered and radicalized bodies were 'enclosed' in new power relations just as was the land, separating for the first time productive and reproductive labor from one another.

Federici's analysis has compelling spatial implications, and it is in this regard that Cerdá's work may shed light on how her notion of 'enclosure' had hardened into relations made legible as a universalist spatial project associated with nineteenth century globalist imaginaries.

Predicated on unlimited circulation of bodies and capital across the planet, the 'urbe', as Cerdá called it, proposed to overcome all spatio-political divisions. Yet, in doing so, it would construct a space constituted instead by a single distinction, one on which the entire system depended: that between circulation and domesticity. Revealing Federici's argument in remarkable clarity, Cerdá's urbe divulges how the enclosure of women's bodies in modern power relations is made spatial in the reduction of life to two gendered states: economic production and biological reproduction, or waged consumption of productive, male labor power and unwaged, female reproduction. Three centuries after the witch-hunts had forced a transformation of the human condition, Cerdá's urbe suggests an isolation of these two states, on which capitalism's conditions of possibility still rest today.

## The Gendered User and the Generic City: Simone de Beauvoir's *America Day by Day* (1947/1954)

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### Abstract

This paper takes up the challenge put forth at the 2008 conference on Simone de Beauvoir at the Free University Berlin, to assess her vast literary output using frameworks beyond the discourses of Philosophy and Feminism. Accordingly, this paper argues that Beauvoir's 1947/1954 book, *America Day by Day*, an account of her post-war sojourn through the United States, produces an argument about everyday urbanism and the transient, gendered user.

In de Beauvoir's view, architecture in combination with urban design was integral to the modern project. She was informed about recent developments, and made a point of visiting newly constructed projects, from the Waldsiedlung in Berlin to Brasilia, the new capital of Brazil. Although at this time male European intellectuals were becoming fascinated with the United States and its cities and were publishing impressions about their American sojourns, de Beauvoir was well aware that (explicit) writing about architecture and urbanism was masculine territory. Perhaps for this reason she did not state that the city *per se* was one focus of her book.

*America Day by Day* presents *her* experiences in the American city. For de Beauvoir, the post-war American metropolis ('the dimensions of these cities are discouraging') is both antithetical to its European counterpart and alienating. Because she is transient, she finds herself drawn to sites that enable her to 'enter' a city – typically spaces which mediate between individual needs and the desire to be part of a shared space, such as parks and museums, but also hair salons and bars. Whereas her perspective is gendered and subjective – she is female and foreign, single and childless, middle aged and intellectual, as well as bisexual – the places she chooses as points of entry are depicted as generic and interchangeable. These places take on special importance because they allow her to 'enter' into the life of a given city, or feel connected to instead of alienated from its goings-on.

It is not known if *America Day by Day* was ever embraced as a directive for urban planning. But upon publication it identified the single, transient woman not only as a user of urban space, but also as having specific needs, which the design of post-war cities would now have to accommodate.

## 'Dear Ms. Comrade' or A Transnational Agent in the Communist World: Architecture, Urbanism, and Feminism in Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky's Post-War Work, ca. 1945–1960

Sophie Hochhäusl,  
University of Pennsylvania

### Abstract

In 1945, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky returned to Vienna, after being imprisoned for more than four years for her participation in the communist resistance against the Nazi regime. In the following months, she sought to resume architectural work as an expert on housing, educational institutions, and kindergartens, which she had designed in the interwar period. In conservative post-war Austria, however, picking up work proved to be no small task. Many colleagues and building officials in the Viennese municipality remained wary of a female communist, particularly against the backdrop of growing Cold War divides. Disappointed by the lack of opportunities to realize built projects and already in her early fifties, Schütte-Lihotzky had to find alternative career paths, as a writer, curator, organizer, and activist. Her work as the newly elected head of the Austrian Federation of Democratic Women allowed her to travel, and, in time, brought her architectural work as a consultant, predominantly in the communist and socialist world.

In this paper, I elucidate these trips from the GDR and Bulgaria to Mexico and Cuba, and, in particular, those to China in the late 1950s. In her role as consultant, I argue, Schütte-Lihotzky remained committed to the modernist – and sometimes universalizing – tenets that had characterized her interwar architectural work. But her writing and travel observations, interspersed with photography, and later published as books, reveal a different effort of imbricating objects, buildings, and debates about lively urbanism with local histories. In addition, Schütte-Lihotzky's letters, many written to other female professionals, illuminate a network of transnational exchange about modernization that was attentive to customs and traditions, in particular when it came to studying women's and children's lives in cities.

I argue that these texts expose a dilemma of a transnational agent operating in the communist world: how could modernization, rapid development, and internationalism be reconciled with customs, culture, and a rich and greatly diverse history? How could one negotiate a commitment to modern architecture with sensitive urbanism? And how could an outsider express something meaningful about a country only known through travel? As the paper will show, this endeavor was as much about consulting as it was about developing a methodology for studying building and cities in a communist environment.

## Georgia Louise Harris Brown and the Myth of Brazilian Racial Democracy

Anat Falbel, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro  
Roberta Washington, Roberta Washington Architects

### Abstract

In the study of gendered practice and transnational mobility, the career trajectory of Georgia Louise Harris Brown (1912-1999), the second African-American architect licensed in the United States, presents a special case. Georgia Louise Brown graduated from the University of Kansas and the recently reorganized Illinois Institute of Technology, directed by Mies van der Rohe, beginning her practice during the 1940s. Seduced by an ambiance that seemed comparatively free of racial boundaries, she landed in Brazil in the first years of the 1950s. Although she may have been naive about the restrictions imposed on foreign professionals in those times, she arrived in the country at an opportune moment, during great industrial development, and was almost immediately engaged in the establishment and design of industrial plants.

Georgia Louise Brown's career path will be analyzed as part of a dialogue between architectural history and gender studies, considering a threefold approach: the complex dynamics of cultural transferences after World War II between the United States and Brazil, and the architect's place within it; Georgia Louise Brown's particular insertion in the professional milieu of architectural practice in the city of São Paulo, where international capital strongly stimulated the engineering and construction industry; the issues of alterity and self-imposed exile in Georgia Louise Brown's life and career during decades of Brazilian nationalistic fervor.

## Horizons of Exclusion: Lina Bo Bardi's Exile from Exile

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Agentur für Architektur

### Abstract

Open plans in residential and institutional architectures, a transatlantic biography, and the rhetoric of a 'bright blue horizon' combine to produce a narrative that emphasizes the overcoming of limitations in the life and work of Lina Bo, later Lina Bo Bardi. Her early drawings transmuted the poverty of war into strokes of colour; the later ones, the poverty in the periphery of Northern Brazil into masks, chairs, and museums.

Embodying the cultural paradigms of both the establishment and of dissidents, Lina Bo Bardi belonged to an international, well-connected elite of political emigrants. Despite the international resonance of her work, it remained largely ignored by the Brazilian-born, male architects of the Paulista school. Her exile in Brazil, from 1946 onwards, was followed by relocating (repeatedly, temporarily) from the industrialized metropolis of São Paulo to the remote Bahia region. There she found an authenticity as aspired to by 1960s counter-culture, blurring lay craftsmanship and regional expertise into a somewhat romantic moment, one that by necessity requires a more critical reading today.

To what extent was the vernacular simply a fancy for bourgeoisie tastes, and in what way can 'Doña Lina', as her students called her, serve as model of the female architect overcoming boundaries? The tacit class and gender assumptions that emanate from recent reflections on her oeuvre prompt further questions relating to the role of the architect as elite, expert, and agent. Moreover, the question remains of why she has commonly been portrayed as a singular figure rather than as belonging to a generation of counter-cultural architects. Such contradictions were both accentuated and blurred by Lina Bo Bardi as part of her transnational identity. Possibly, her synthesis of the modern and the vernacular, of international design and the everyday, was formed from self-constructed ambiguities.

# REFORM: ARCHITECTURE AS PROCESS, 1870–1920

Session chair:

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The period 1870 to 1920 was marked by both rapid change and a deep ambivalence towards that change. Large-scale urbanisation, mass migration, mass movements in politics, shifting gender and class identity, expansion of empire and national consolidation and aspiration – all these phenomena of the years around 1900 were confronted, embraced and reformulated by architectural culture.

Pevsner's argument in *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* (1936), was that the period was important for a handful of figures who foreshadowed interwar modernism. This reading was challenged beginning in the 1990s, resulting in three main shifts: Art Nouveau, Jugendstil and Secessionism were recast as rich conceptual seams worth exploring in their own terms; the modernism of Pevsner's pioneers was understood to be much more complicated than had previously been acknowledged; and architecture was shown to have played an innovating role in the nationalist movements of the period. But since these scholarly advances were made, the study of the period has slowed.

This session aims to revitalise the study of this period by refocusing on two key concepts.

Reform, a term used across the applied arts in this period, signals a rethinking and reinvigoration that is more open-ended and less anachronistic than 'modernism'. It also transcends restrictive stylistic categories such as Art

Nouveau or National Romanticism. It was a term used in a wide international context. It meant an opening up to new audiences and new forms of producer, a reconnection with 'life' and 'reality', a desire both for order and for emancipation, and the impulse towards a heightening of meaning. It indicated both a desire for change and a critique of modernisation.

The linking of architecture to reform points to architecture's mutability in this period and highlights the importance of process. The sense that each new design – built or unbuilt – was an intervention into a developing and mutating world was unavoidable. Even when an architect sought to provide rootedness and stability, he/she was driven by an acute sensitivity to change. Process puts the emphasis on debate, disagreement, connection and contention.

Art historical periodisation defines 1890–1914 as a distinct period. Rethinking the period's parameters as 1870 to 1920 brings phenomena sharing the qualities above into the frame from outside the period as it has traditionally been conceived, opening up new connections and destabilising fixed assumptions.

## Exhibitions, Audiences and the Contradictions of Architectural Reform

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### Abstract

Nikolaus Pevsner never would have included Ludwig Hoffmann in his group of Modern Movement pioneers. Although Hoffmann made a significant contribution to the modernization of Berlin's built landscape as the city's longest serving Director of Architecture and Urban Planning, his work was never recognized as being 'modern' either during his career or, until the 1970s, in the historical literature. He was regularly criticized for his eclecticism, especially in comparison to Alfred Messel, his closest friend and colleague, whose work was consistently hailed as the best example of the new architecture.

But while Hoffmann maintained a conservative approach to form, he let his practice be shaped by the public, recognizing more clearly than his contemporaries a new constituency for architecture. Not only did he put a lot of energy into cultivating his relationship with journalists to ensure his successful communication with the public, he also put the public at the center of his architecture, using experience, in particular the ways people would see and use his buildings, to guide his design process.

Hoffmann's engagement of the public was at the heart of his enormous 1901 exhibition of his vision for the city of Berlin. Since the 1870s, architects had held architecture exhibitions responsible for improving their public status. Hoffmann's exhibition answered that call by using huge plaster models and mockups to emphasize the experience of his buildings. The critics responded accordingly, calling the exhibition's resonance with the public a triumph even as they criticized Hoffmann's designs for their formal anachronisms. Thought not a watershed in the history of architecture, the exhibition, particularly its contradictions, presented an important moment in the process of incremental change that would ultimately produce the exhibitions and the general attention to the public that shaped the new architecture, in all its complexity, during the 1920s.

## Urban Reform and Mobilities of Knowledge: The Villa Medici and Ernest Hébrard's Work in Greece

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### Abstract

In the early twentieth century, a group of French Beaux-Arts graduates 'took over' the Villa Medici and pushed for a turn from the study of ancient columns to the study of the urban scale. Tony Garnier, Henri Prost, Ernest Hébrard, and other recipients of the prestigious *Prix-de-Rome* carried out a soft revolution against the academy by looking at ancient sites for answers to contemporary urban problems. This group was also involved in the reformist Musée Social (1895) and the Société Française des Urbanistes (1913). Soon, they started implementing their ideas in colonial and non-colonial foreign contexts – like Greece and Turkey – with the ultimate dream of also implementing them at home.

The most successful international project of French urbanism outside the colonies was arguably the redesign of Thessaloniki, Greece, which burnt to the ground in 1917. The reformist Venizelos government set up a committee led by Ernest Hébrard that included English and Greek architects, with the aim of creating a modern city. However, these different stakeholders (professionals and politicians) had diverging agendas for the meaning and content of 'reform'. How did different schools of thought (English and French) compete during the design process, while also accommodating Greek national aspirations?

Based on original research in the French and Greek archives and moving between Paris and Thessaloniki, this paper will show that the period 1870–1920 was neither a mere preparatory period for what was to follow in the discipline of urbanism, nor a period in which a reformist spirit had been fully established across architectural institutions. Rather, it was shaped by a group of architects who shared a strong vision, developed new tools, and tried them out abroad and at home, triggering a mobility of knowledge between metropolis and 'periphery' while establishing French urbanism along the way.

## Shaping the World: The Document and the Architecture of Mondialité

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### Abstract

Between 1870 – when the French verb *documenter* ('to document') came into use to designate systematic techniques for furnishing documents – and the end of World War I – when these same techniques were adopted as the infrastructure for new institutions such as the League of Nations – European internationalists and intellectuals deployed reform as a global knowledge project. Thinkers such as the Belgian founder of documentation science Paul Otlet believed that a world blemished by the disintegration of the concert of Europe, the scramble for Africa, and unchecked industrial development could be reshaped only through new, 'neutral' channels of international intellectual cooperation. They advanced classification tables, halls filled with filing cabinets, and other modern spatial instruments to proliferate the idea that, in an era of '*mondialité*,' there was such a thing as global space, and that it was a continuum which could effectively be managed from a centralized position.

This paper examines how an architecture of paperwork was married to the bio-sociological approach to the human sciences which dominated turn-of-the-century Brussels to produce a conception of global civilization as a 'networked organism.' In the problematic context of King Leopold II's Belgium, projects such as Otlet's Institut International de Bibliographie and Constant Bosmans's and Henri Vandeveld's design for the Solvay Institute of Sociology – which blended classical notions of order, art nouveau flourishes, and bureaucratic modernism *avant la lettre* – were developed as laboratories where standardized techniques of intellectual labor would be used to mitigate the prevailing confusion about the shape the international community was taking. I argue that this architecture adopted as its basic unit not the biological 'cell' or the positivist 'fact', but rather the standardized 'document', an instrument whose claims to universality were founded on the notion that to organize information was to organize the world.

## From 'Reform' to 'Revolutionary' Thinking in Ottoman Palestine's Settlements, 1870–1920

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### Abstract

The settlements created in Palestine in the nineteenth to the early twentieth century were subjected to the forces of modernisation: the Industrial Revolution's impact, political and cultural developments under Ottoman rule, and social transformations wrought by World War I. Like many other settlements around the globe, they were influenced by war damage, massive immigration, and the concepts of the Garden City and social utopias.

The history of modernity in Palestine can be plotted on an axis between two poles, defined as 'reform' and 'revolution'. At one end was the *moshava*, the Jewish colony, founded in 1878 through the philanthropy of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, which exemplified reform thought regarding the traditional village. At the other end were the collective 'Zionist settlements' known as the *kibbutz*, first established in 1910, and the cooperative *moshav*, dating from 1921, which both realised radical revolutionary concepts.

One fundamental way to interpret these two different types of modernity is to regard them as the product of a dialectical process, an exchange between 'reform' and 'revolution' thinking. These terms represent opposing ethical positions. 'Reform' is based on tradition, with its cultural relativism, regionalism, and passion. 'Revolution' is an ideology of the Enlightenment, of universalism and rationalism. This reform/revolution dichotomy may have been manifest also in an array of other dichotomies or conflicts: East/West, religious/secular, ethnic vs national.

This paper will re-evaluate the history of architectural modernity as an ethical dialectic, embodied in fifty years of Ottoman Palestine's Jewish settlements, and examine how it was reflected in local architecture through case studies of the *moshava*, *kibbutz* and *moshav*.

### Keywords

Reform, revolutionary, modernity, settlements, Ottoman Palestine.

## Introduction

Within the time frame of this article, between the years 1870–1920, Ottoman Palestine saw the creation of new settlements, which were impacted by the forces of modernisation: the Industrial Revolution, political and cultural developments under Ottoman rule, and social transformations wrought by World War I. Like contemporaneous settlements around the globe, they were also influenced by war damage, massive immigration, and concepts of social utopias such as the Garden City.

This article attempts to sketch a new conceptual model: an axis that goes from ‘reform’ thinking, at one end, to ‘revolutionary’ thinking at the other, and that extends into the spatial order as well. We will examine a fifty-year period in the land of Israel under Ottoman rule, from the late nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century, which was characterised by the proliferation of rural settlements. We will begin by presenting three types of new settlements – *moshava*, *moshav* and *kibbutz* – which appeared on the landscape during this period. We will define the concepts ‘reform’ thinking and ‘revolutionary’ thinking. And finally, we will situate these types of settlements on the conceptual axis and discuss how their architecture represented the range of thinking from reform to revolutionary.

## Architecture during 50 Years of Rural Settlement

In the mid-nineteenth century, towards the end of the Ottoman period, the land of Israel saw an upsurge in the development of settlements. The Turkish Capitulations, trade grants made to Christian nations, were followed in 1858 by the Ottoman Land Law, which made it possible to register lands in the name of foreign nationals.<sup>1</sup> The map depicting contemporary settlement in the land of Israel towards the end of the nineteenth century included major cities, such as Jerusalem, Gaza, Jaffa, Haifa and Acre, and secondary cities such as Bethlehem, Nazareth, Safed, Tiberias, Hebron and Nablus (Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> These cities served as anchors for the Arab agricultural villages in their vicinity.<sup>3</sup> In 1866, a Christian group from the United States established a colony in Jaffa, the ‘American Colony’, which disintegrated within two years. The first Templer colony was founded in Haifa by German immigrants in 1868,<sup>4</sup> and a year later another Templer colony was established in Jaffa.<sup>5</sup> Both settlements were located within the boundaries of the coastal cities. In their planning, architecture, and construction, the Templer colonies amalgamated known, familiar elements from the motherland, Germany, with local elements that were considered appropriate and preferable.<sup>6</sup> At the turn of the century, German colonies were also established in the periphery, and at the start of the World War I, three further Templer agricultural colonies appeared on the map.<sup>7</sup>

Between 1870 and 1920, Jewish newcomers founded three new kinds of rural settlements in the land of Israel: the *moshava* (Jewish colony); the *moshav* (village that combines privately-held farms with cooperative marketing and land ownership), and the *kibbutz* (commune-village).

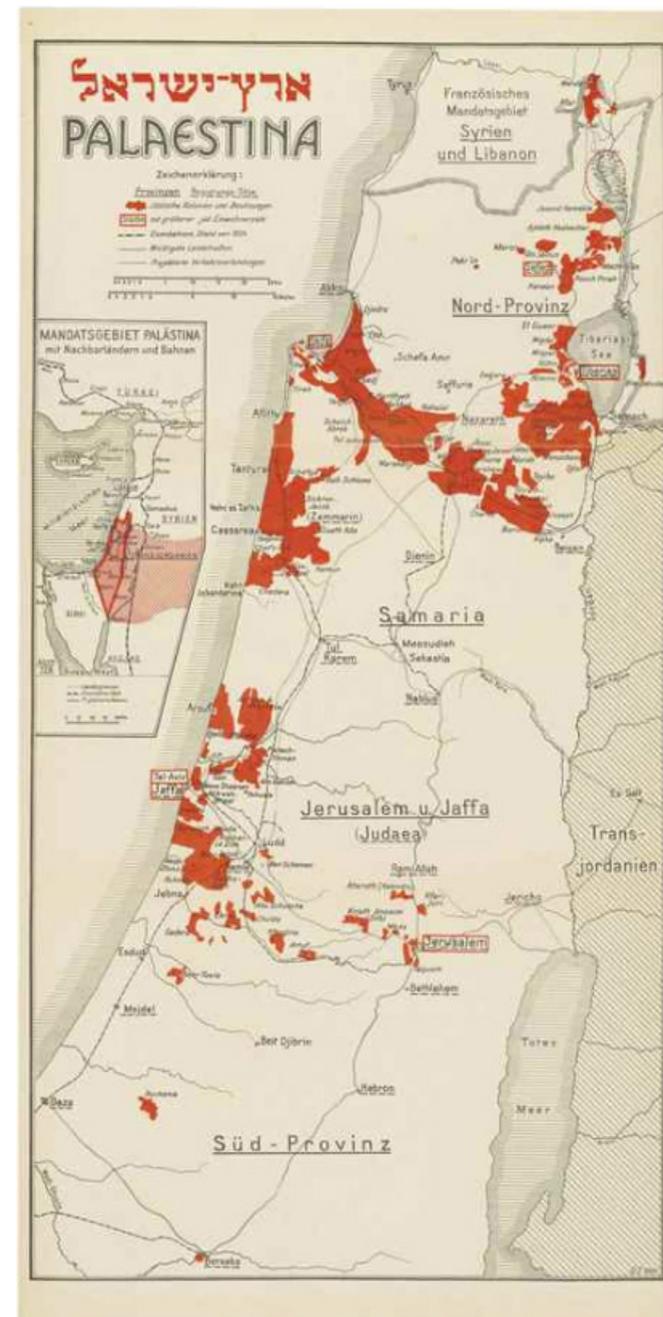


Figure 1. Jewish land ownership in Palestine in the 1920s. Source: Davis Trietsch, Palästina-Wirtschafts-Atlas, 1926.

The first Jewish colony (*moshava*), Petach Tikva, established in 1878, was an ideological agricultural settlement that aimed to create a high quality of life close to nature. Its founders, some immigrants – largely from eastern Europe – and some from the veteran Jewish community in Jerusalem, made the connection between aesthetic values and the social and ethical character of the environment. The colony was constructed according to ‘reform’ thought and new concepts of urban design. Its architectural language was essentially historicistic or eclectic, adapted to the local landscape and materials, while making use of recent advances in technology. Baron Edmond de Rothschild, the renowned French, Jewish philanthropist, who played a central role in the creation and maintenance of many of the Jewish colonies, worked with consultants and professionals in a variety of fields in order to achieve a high-quality environment for each community.<sup>8</sup> The planners and architects he hired, most of them educated in Europe, designed settlements sophisticated for their time, taking into consideration aesthetic and communal values, as well as improved water supplies and sanitation. With the Baron’s financial support, public parks, and institutions, both religious and civil, were erected in the centre of the villages. Their design integrated local influences with the spirit of the time. By the beginning of World War I, 33 of these Jewish colonies had been established, all of them with a discernibly ‘European’ look (Figure 2).

Unlike these colonies, the collective Jewish settlements – the *moshav* and the *kibbutz* – were the realisation of radical revolutionary concepts. The ‘workers’ village’ (*moshav*) emanated from the desire to create a worker who ‘answered to his own authority’.<sup>9</sup> That is, the productivity of farmers and agriculturalists was meant to be based on their own labour, not that of hired help. These villages were built around the concepts of farmers’ mutual responsibility and cooperation regarding labour and economy.<sup>10</sup> The acknowledgment of shared social and economic needs underscored the value of having facilities and services in common. The *moshav* space comprised public institutions for health and education, and a ‘shared storehouse’ where agricultural products were kept.<sup>11</sup> The concept of communal sharing that crystallised in the workers’ villages after World War I was powerfully expressed in the circular design created in 1921 for the *moshav* Nahalal by the German-born architect Richard Kauffmann (Figure 3).<sup>12</sup> His concentric circles encompassed a large community centre, which was encircled by a ring of homes based on the model of a cooperative village. Years later, Le Corbusier would develop a similar plan, which he named ‘The Radiant Village’.<sup>13</sup>

Degania, the first *kibbutz*, was founded in 1910, based on a philosophy of socialism and collectively owned property.<sup>14</sup> The *kibbutz* made work and the welfare of the group its primary value, rather than the welfare of the individual. Its absolute dedication to work emptied the traditional family framework of its former significance. In practice, these settlements housed



Figure 2. *Moshava* (Jewish colony) postcard, drawn by Ana Palm, 1898.  
Source: Zichron Ya'akov's archive.



Figure 3. Perspective for *Moshav* Nahalal, architect Richard Kauffmann, 1922.  
Source: The Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, KL5M/6669.

children outside their parents' homes from birth, to free the women for work outside the home. The ideological premise behind the *kibbutz* was total, radical, and all-encompassing.<sup>15</sup> The *kibbutz* space was organised around work and communal life; private life was shunted to its margins, and the traditional nuclear family was, in effect, dismantled.

The ‘courtyard’ of the *kibbutz*, an open expanse of grass where most public life was concentrated, was the centre of the settlement in every

sense. The central lawn had a commanding presence in the *kibbutz* space (Figure 4).<sup>16</sup> Near it were public buildings, such as the dining room and classrooms, as well as agricultural and service buildings: the laundry, carpentry shop, cowsheds, chicken coops, etc. Landscaping of the public areas was considered a separate professional branch of the *kibbutz*; it ranked high among the priorities of the *kibbutz*.

### 'Reform' and 'Revolutionary' Thinking

Modernity in Palestine can be plotted on an axis between two poles, defined as 'reform' and 'revolution'. At one end was the Jewish colony, the *moshava*, which exemplified reform thought *vis-à-vis* the traditional village. At the other end were the *moshav*, the collective workers' settlement, and the commune-village, known as the *kibbutz*, both of which realised radical revolutionary concepts.

One fundamental way to interpret these two types of modernity is to regard them as the product of a dialectical process, an exchange between 'reform' and 'revolution' thinking. These terms represent opposing ethical positions. 'Reform' is based on tradition, with its cultural relativism, regionalism, and passion. 'Revolution' originated in the ideology of the Enlightenment, of universalism and rationalism; it can be realised only by overthrowing previous concepts. This reform/revolution dichotomy may have been manifest also in an array of other dichotomies or conflicts: East/West, religious/secular, ethnic/national, or Jewish/Arab.

Modernity, we suggest, is fundamentally an ethical stance with political, national, social, and religious implications, but ultimately it finds a spatial expression as well. The architecture and urban scene are an archive that documents society's response to the challenges of modernity. The stance of various parties regarding modernity is, in a sense, the 'knowledge' that is encoded in architecture and urban landscapes. Let us now interpret this code as it was manifested in the fabric of various Jewish settlements.<sup>17</sup>

### Between 'Reform' Modernity and 'Revolutionary' Modernity

Modernity in architecture, as it came to be expressed at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, produced a broad tonal range that differed markedly from existing perceptions.<sup>18</sup> 'Reform' modernity called for changes in forms and formats that already existed. 'Revolutionary' modernity, on the other hand, demanded the creation of altogether new forms on a clean, empty platform. The evolution of architecture and the urban fabric was a response to this demand and represents a balance between reform thinking and revolutionary thinking.

The Jewish colonies in Ottoman Palestine were essentially reformist in their approach, reflecting nineteenth-century Romanticism and positivism. Everyday life in the *moshava* (the Jewish colony) was essentially traditional. Its modernity, which can be termed 'reform' modernity, was social,



Figure 4. *Kibbutz* Dgania, a gathering in front of the communal education house in the 1930s. Source: Archive of Jewish Education, Pikiwiki site.

functional, and spatial, and was linked to tradition, either Jewish or local. It embraced technological progress and new spatial ideas. The structures in the *moshava*'s public space, e.g. the synagogue, gardens, and fountains, merged tradition with contemporary technological progress.<sup>19</sup> The new technology was incorporated into the streets of the colony, utilising elements that best suited the spirit of the place. Thus, public water installations and fountains (*sebilis*), typical of local architecture, were connected to innovative, steam-driven water pumps, thereby melding both the Jewish and local tradition of offering water not only to residents, but also to those passing through the community.

The first workers' village (*moshav*), established in 1909, was a combination of the private farms and the cooperative.<sup>20</sup> The layout of Nahalal, the communal workers' village, planned by Richard Kauffmann in 1921, expressed his belief that the new cooperative residences called for a new type of design, i.e., that there had to be an inherent link between the new life-style and the physical layout of the settlement. The personal, familial foundation of the village's social system, linked it to Jewish tradition while its ideological principles connected it to the new nationalism and the revival of the Jewish people in its ancient homeland.<sup>21</sup>

The communal life of the *kibbutz* differed in every respect from that of the *moshava* and *moshav*. Communal life was almost exclusively a group experience; it took place in a public space. The built centre of the *kibbutz*, and its dominant central lawn, were an expression of censorship and the powerful control that the community had over the individual. The radicalism that ran deep in the foundations of the *kibbutz* touched every aspect of life. Living quarters were minimal in size, encouraging *kibbutz* members to gravitate to communal spaces. Key locations in the *kibbutz*

were occupied by prominent public buildings, such as the dining room or cultural hall, or more symbolic buildings, such as the water tower, the silo, or the dairy. Most *kibbutz* settlements, and many *moshav* settlements, were categorically secular, and pointedly had no synagogue whatsoever. Like the architecture that was enlisted to serve these settlements, art and crafts were prominently displayed, generally in the communal dining rooms and work areas, as a form of propaganda attesting to the success of the *kibbutz* way of life.<sup>22</sup>

The period from 1870 to 1920, represents the developmental process of Jewish settlement in the land of Israel. The dozens of villages created during these years were often altered, and improved versions, of the original, experimental models. Thus, the Jewish colonies founded at the start of the twentieth century were less traditional and more revolutionary than those established in the 1870s. In the colonies established by the Jewish Colonisation Association, which in 1900 was appointed to run the settlements under the auspices of Baron de Rothschild, schoolhouses were constructed at prominent points in the villages instead of synagogues, which had received priority in the earlier colonies.<sup>23</sup> These transformations, which were articulated in planning, architecture, and urban design, represented practical necessities as well as ideological changes.

The incarnations of Merchavia, founded as a cooperation in 1910, bear witness to the process of development from a workers' farm to a *kibbutz*. Merchavia was planned by the architect Alexander Baerwald in 1911–12. Baerwald's design for Merchavia's houses was similar to those of the *moshava* (Jewish colony). Arranged around a central courtyard, the buildings created a double aesthetic. The primary building, used for storage and work supplies, had two stories and a flat roof. The residential quarters, on the contrary, resembled those of the Jewish colonies, with red tiled roofs (Figure 5). These roofs, a graphic reflection of rural Europe, appeared in the first buildings of the *kibbutz* Degania, as well as at Merchavia, but as the concept of the *kibbutz* became better established, these tiled roofs slowly disappeared and were ultimately replaced by modernist, concrete buildings with flat roofs.

After the end of World War I, the start of the British Mandate in Palestine marked a new era. Under British rule, the most revolutionary ideas of the time were developed in the Jewish settlements and implemented with vigour. This process was accompanied by an ongoing search for other appropriate forms of settlement that would suit the new-old land and the growing nationalism within it.

### Summary

The first step in the birth of revolutionary innovation is the creation of emptiness. Such 'emptiness' was generated in the 1870s when Friedrich Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God. Nietzsche's 'empty Heavens',

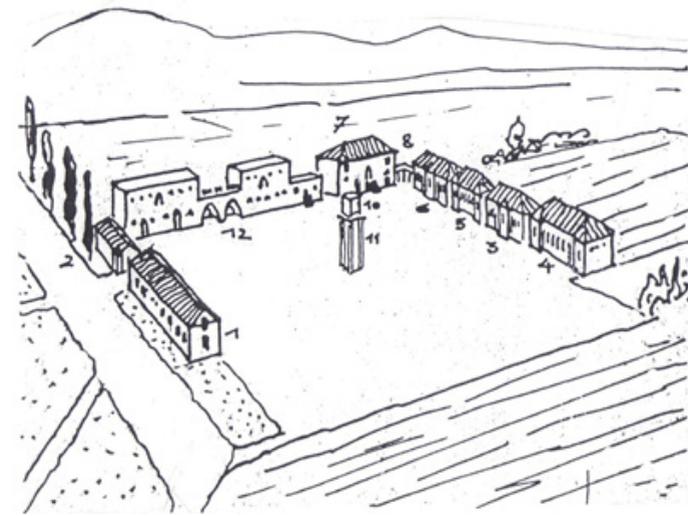


Figure 5. Perspective for the central courtyard for Merchavia, architect Alexander Baerwald, 1910s. Source: Merchavia's archive.

calling out to be refilled, were well suited to the sense of 'empty spaces' that pervaded the rural areas of Ottoman Palestine, offering a multitude of opportunities for planning and design from scratch.

The expansion of the historic borders of the *fin de siècle* period shook, to some degree, the canonical division of historiography regarding Jewish settlement. Today, it is still considered acceptable to divide the period between the start of settlement in the latter nineteenth century and the World War I into two different eras, related to two distinct waves of immigration: the First *Aliyah*, from 1882–1903, and the Second *Aliyah*, between 1904–14.<sup>24</sup> Looking at this period as a single unit, however, creates a continuity representing a wide range of settlement forms along one time-axis, based on the evolution of Jewish settlement in the land of Israel during its first 50 years. At one pole stands the modern colony, the *moshava*, and at the other are the radical agricultural cooperative settlements, the *moshav* and the *kibbutz*.

The Jewish *moshava* colonies that depended on the backing of Baron Edmond de Rothschild were built within a traditional framework. The changes in format that they wrought were largely a response to the *Zeitgeist* and to reforms in previous rural settlements. This approach, which accepts change and adapts itself to new realities, characterises the *moshava* today, too. Thus, when the British Mandate gave the Jewish colonies incentives to continue and expand their development, some of them, such as the colony of Petach Tikva, evolved into towns and cities.<sup>25</sup>

This capacity for change, however, was not possible in the *kibbutz* and *moshav* models. The plan of the *moshav*, grounded in practical principles

and shared ideology, limited its ability to develop and adjust to social and economic changes.<sup>26</sup> Today, the *moshav* is undergoing changes in its communal structure as a result of the re-zoning of land for non-agricultural use, and the consequent internal immigration of urban settlers to these rural and suburban areas. This has created a different settlement pattern, which is not yet definitively rural or urban.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, a century after the founding of the first *kibbutz*, the idea of cooperative settlement based on the commune in the land of Israel, is rapidly vanishing. The real estate owned by the *kibbutz*, which flourished with the full sharing of all its property, has been privatised. It can be said that the *kibbutz* in our day has become more 'reformed', starting in the 1970s and 1980s, when the nuclear family unit was restored with the abolition of communal sleeping arrangements for *kibbutz* children. The *kibbutz* today still boasts some of its original values, such as the return to nature and community, but it has gradually added traditional content, sometimes incorporating more Jewish observance into communal events and even building synagogues in the public space.

Though little may remain of the reform and revolutionary ideologies of the first 50 years of Jewish settlement in the land of Israel, their achievements are still embedded and honoured in contemporary Israel.

## Notes

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- 19 Talia Abramovich and Marina Epstein-Pliouchtch, 'Resilience of Public Spaces: A Case Study of the Colonies in Ottoman Palestine, 1878–1918,' in Carola Hein (ed.), *History-Urbanism-Resilience. International Planning Society Proceedings. 17<sup>th</sup> IPHS Conference* (Delft: Delft University of Technology, 2016), v. 01, 125–34.
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- 22 This use of art stands in contrast to the Jewish traditional art in the *Moshava's* synagogue. Talia Abramovich and Neomi Carmon, 'Religion, Design and Settlement: On the Unique Design of Zichron Ya'acov's Synagogue and its Implications,' *Et-mol* 218 (2011), 4–7.
- 23 Abramovich and Epstein-Pliouchtch, 'Resilience of Public Spaces,' 129.
- 24 *Aliyah* is Jewish immigration: Yehoshua Ben-Arieh and Israel Bartal (eds.), *The History of Eretz Israel: The Last Phase of Ottoman Rule (1799–1917)* (Jerusalem: Keter and Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1983), 257–8.
- 25 Talia Abramovich and Alona Nizan-Shifan, 'From Public Space to Urban Square: Urban Design as a Mediator for Social Change in 'Hameyasdim' Square in Petach Tikva,' *Horizons in Geography* 89 (2016), 133–49.
- 26 Michael Sofer and Levia Applebaum, 'The Rural Space in Israel in Search of Renewed Identity: The Case of the Moshav,' *Journal of Rural Studies* 22 (2006), 323–36; Applebaum and Margulies, 'The Moshav – Patterns of Organizational Change.'
- 27 Sofer and Applebaum, 'The Rural Space in Israel in Search of Renewed Identity,' 323.

## Processes of Reform Photography

Peter Sealy,  
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### Abstract

Nowhere was photography's capacity to furnish images in the service of reform agendas more forcefully deployed than between 1870 and 1920. Jacob Riis' flash-powered muck-raking photojournalism joined the photographs in John Spargo's *The Bitter Cry of Children* (1906) in exemplifying the camera's utility as an agent of (bourgeois) reform. Within the realms of architecture and urbanism, Charles Marville's earlier photographs in support of Haussmannization, Thomas Annan's depictions of Glasgow's slums, and James Burgoyne's views of central Birmingham use the built environment – as opposed to its downtrodden inhabitants – as a metonym for the general health of the polity.

I will present two readings of 'process' latent in 'reform' architectural and urban photography. The first is cumulative: the meaning of Marville, Annan and Burgoyne's serial images unfolds in time and space (an effect only magnified by 'before' and 'after' photographs.) From 1870, serial imagery became increasingly common as architectural representation sought to record spatial experience, dissolving the architectural or urban object into moments of heightened visual interest. Secondly, whether with disdain (Marville) or nostalgia (Annan), the 'reform' photograph inevitably records a condition, a 'this-has-been' in Roland Barthes' formulation, which cannot endure. While received as a frozen moment in space and time (what Robin Kelsey has termed images' 'click' and 'crop'), the catastrophe of an anterior future haunts every photograph. For the portrait, this spectre is death. In the architectural view, it is the inevitability of change. Against the Ruskinian view of the photograph as an agent for arresting change, the mere attempt to record an existing condition inevitably sets in motion its transformation, a power which reformers have productively, if dangerously, harnessed across time.

# THE ARCHITECTURES OF CREATIVITY

Session chairs:

Richard J. Williams, University of Edinburgh

Edward Hollis, University of Edinburgh

Since the early 2000s, the concept of 'creativity' has had immense political traction in the most developed parts of the world, and it has led to the production of new forms of architectural space: creative hubs, incubators, live/work spaces, 'labs', and office buildings that seem to be entirely devoted to play.

The forms of these spaces are perhaps best developed in the workspaces for the technology sector, whether it is for software and social media oriented corporations such as Google, or those more concerned with hardware, like Apple: all have invested publicly in 'creative' architecture. The news media, and increasingly, education are also major clients. But so far the architectures and interiors of creativity exist in a curious condition: widespread, and well-known, they have been produced in a largely unreflective way, with remarkably little sense of their own history.

This session tackles precisely the question of history. It asks when, and where, and how did 'creativity' become a concern in architecture? What architectural forms and typologies have been said to represent creativity over the years? What have been the lived experiences of these architectures of creativity? How have such architectures been represented in the arts, particularly in film and television? What have architects had to say about creativity? And how have anti-architectural discourses figured in the understanding of architecture and creativity? (for example, around MIT's Building 20, the legendary precursor to so much 'creative' space).

The architectures of creativity take many forms. Examples might include the cabinets, bottege and studioli that appear repeatedly in Renaissance painting; art school design from the nineteenth century to the present day; the Bauhaus and other modernist experiments in designing creative space; the re-use of industrial buildings for creative purposes; the new designs for creativity commissioned by Apple and other technology companies. We need to reference the place of interior design too, for example the manifestoes for the creative office produced by design agencies like Herman Miller. The session might also productively address the discourses of creativity in the international architectural journals.

While the session asks that presenters address as precisely as possible the concept of creativity, it leaves deliberately undefined the historical and geographical limits, in order to allow transhistorical and transcultural comparisons. It actively welcomes submissions that broaden our understanding of creativity and architecture's place within it. Above all, it aims to establish through the study of architecture and design, a sense of creativity's long history, largely missing from contemporary discourses on the subject.

## Ivory Towers as Creative Refuges for Writers: Architectural Models Since the Nineteenth Century

Jesús Ángel Sánchez-García,  
University of Santiago de Compostela

### Abstract

In August 1907, the Spanish writer Emilia Pardo Bazán took up residence at Torres de Meirás, even as the finishing touches were still being put on the new abode. Thirteen years on from laying the first stone, the famous author was anxious to install herself in the studio on the top floor of 'Torre de la Quimera', a room identifiable on the outside by the so-called Balcony of Muses. Designed by her own hand, the stone reliefs of the muses were accompanied by portraits of her favourite writers and the titles of their most treasured works. As someone who had either visited or was familiar with the houses of Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo, Edmond de Goncourt and Émile Zola, Pardo Bazán thus fulfilled her dream of having a refuge where she could hide away and find the inspiration to write.

In the nineteenth century, the distinction that came with living in a castle, in the style of Walter Scott's *Abbotsford*, was allied in the case of some writers with a predilection for towers as creative havens. Coined by the critic Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve to describe the lack of social engagement in the literary output of Alfred de Vigny at his *Château de Le Maine-Giraud* (*Pensées d'Août*, 1837), the 'ivory tower' and the image it created spawned numerous descendants, such as Alphonse de Lamartine's *Château de Saint-Point*, Alexandre Dumas' *Château de Monte-Cristo*, Émile Zola's *Château de Médan*, Jules Verne's *Maison à la Tour* in Amiens and Emilia Pardo Bazán's *Torres de Meirás*. In the spread of the phenomenon from Great Britain and, above all, France to Spain, isolation was not only expressed as a reaction to the overexposure to urban life, as denounced by Goncourt ('La vie menace de devenir publique,' *Journal des Goncourt*, Vol. I, 1891). The intense physical relationship with remote locations that enhanced the powers of concentration led to eminent writers becoming singularly involved in the design and decoration of their residences. The nineteenth-century's tried and tested models of spatial organisation would remain influential through to the twentieth century, even in the most hostile urban environments. In assessing the conditions in which an author could give free rein to their creative energy and embrace a number of artistic fields – literature, architecture, interior decoration, garden design – these ivory towers can be seen as ideal places for the creation of words and images that were designed to endure.

**Keywords**

Romanticism, writers, houses, refuges, towers, creativity.

The main objective of this study is to analyse various forms of architectures and interiors associated with creativity and with writing in particular. Writing has always been, and continues to be, a predominantly individual act of creativity. As a result, and in its capacity as one of the many different demands of this process, from cognitive to linguistic competence, the need for solitude has emerged as a constant throughout history. If regarded as refuges for literary creation,<sup>1</sup> writers' houses are a key area of interest in the study of the physical and metaphorical implications thrown up by individual creativity. From the very act of choosing and preparing a suitable place in which to write, the architectural and decorative features of these dwellings provide an insight into the characters of their owners, which makes a visit to writers' houses so appealing to anyone looking for clues as to how their works might be interpreted in greater depth. The spatial and aesthetic layout of places reserved for writing is, in fact, inseparable from the invention of the author's image, a process that reached its peak during the Romantic period, which played a decisive role in the triumph of 'auctorial scenography'.<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with the framework laid out by Harald Hendrix, this author/dwelling relationship would flow in two directions: as well as being shaped by the writers, the characteristics of the houses impact on the way in which the authors that inhabit them think and work,<sup>3</sup> which is especially relevant in terms of this analysis of spaces and creative processes. As Virginia Woolf suggested, the mechanical action of sitting down and taking a pen in one's hand before a sheet of paper is nothing more than a physical act that says little or nothing about what writers do and really are.<sup>4</sup> Nor do domestic interiors provide much in the way of meaning if regarded as mere empty spaces. The intellectual work engaged in by a writer involves having a place in which one can concentrate and yet also be distracted, a place where one can sit and yet also walk around a little, relax and even rest. Although writing implements, furniture and books are essential, apparently useless articles such as personal mementoes, *objets d'art*, decorative pieces, pets and even mechanical contraptions complement the arrangements made in aiding the ritual of writing in these private sanctuaries. Bearing in mind the varying degrees of intervention, the places conceived by writers who were most heavily involved in aspects of architectural and decorative design should cast some light on the ideal conditions for feeding their creativity.

Prior to the Romantic period, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the prevailing practice was for writers to reside in castles, a type of construction with its roots in the Middle Ages and which reflected their still largely aristocratic background. Aside from expressing social distinction, the aristocratic tradition led to the means of exhibiting family heraldry

being combined in the architecture of these castles with philosophical reminders or mottoes, invented by their owners and inscribed on exterior and interior surfaces as an initial step in personalising their abodes (e.g. Loys and Pierre Ronsard at La Possonnière, 1515, or Michel de Montaigne at Château de Montaigne, 1571). The second half of the eighteenth century saw the emergence of havens lacking all ostentation, in the form of cabins and *ermitages* (Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *ermitages* in the parks of the Château de La Chevrette, 1756, and Château d'Ermenonville, 1778),<sup>5</sup> and also a renewed interest in castles, which now took shape as neo-Gothic mansions inspired by the narrative fantasies of authors who had already begun to express an interest in their architectural design. These mansions started to display unique and whimsical features that can be seen as reflecting the writer's personality and tastes, although mysterious atmosphere or more conventional historical elements linked to the themes of their literary output would still remain prevalent (Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill, 1749–77, William Beckford at Fonthill Abbey, 1795–1807, and Walter Scott at Abbotsford Castle, 1821–4).

Following these precedents, it was at the height of the Romantic period that the trend of the writer's home as an aesthetic expression of their creative personality became established. Houses occupied for long periods, and in which the author could supervise, oversee and even devise elements of their architecture and internal decor, have more to tell us when it comes to exploring the conditions of their creativity than houses occupied on a temporary basis only. The building of genuine stone self-portraits marked the author out as the undisputed protagonist, a creator adopting a more prominent position on the stage than the references and nods from the backdrop of their literary output. While there has been a preference up to now to analyse them as settings for proud exhibitions of the trappings of the writer's success, as interfaces for projecting the image of and extolling an artistic figure,<sup>6</sup> it is also possible to combine this outward projection towards the public world with an internal reading of the spaces and elements set out to enable the writer to concentrate on their work or to provide distractions that would, at the same time, stimulate imagination.

We shall, however, let the spaces themselves speak to us and guide us, from the early years of the Romantic period. The first writer's interior I would like to show is a small circular bedroom situated on the highest floor of a tower. Shorn of all home comforts, it barely accommodates a writing table, a cupboard housing a few books, and a bunk bed or *couchette* (Figure 1). Accessed by a narrow spiral staircase, lit by a single small window, and separated from the living areas, this is clearly a space for reclusion. Above all, it is a place for cutting out all external interference, thanks to the walnut panelling and the thick stone walls that enclose it. This is the work space chosen by the poet Alfred de Vigny, in the highest, centrally positioned tower of his family chateau, Le Maine-Giraud, which was built in the fifteenth



Figure 1. Alfred de Vigny, Château de Le Maine-Giraud.  
Source: [www.encharente.com](http://www.encharente.com).

century and rebuilt under Vigny's orders.<sup>7</sup> And, it is this space that prompted his friend, the literary critic Charles-Augustine Sainte-Beuve, to refer to the writer's house as a *tour d'ivoire* ('ivory tower'),<sup>8</sup> adapting a biblical metaphor,<sup>9</sup> also associated with wisdom,<sup>10</sup> to sum up an author's actions in distancing themselves from the world and rejecting all engagement with society. It is not a radically new concept, given that the need to shut oneself away to nourish one's inner life and find God dates back to the early days of Christianity, leading to the specific use of castle towers as spaces where women would read in the late Middle Ages,<sup>11</sup> or as refuges where humanists could stimulate their thought processes, as was the case with Montaigne in his family chateau.<sup>12</sup> In Vigny's case, the term became so popular and widespread that, in addition to that specific definition of the intellectual's isolated existence, it also came to be associated with the philosophical and intimate style of his verse.

In the adapting of the ivory tower metaphor we thus find the harmonising of a secluded and secret space, a discreet personality that rejects social life and conditions for the acts of meditation and creation that are dependent upon retirement. Using the space as if it were a monastic cell or a dungeon even, Vigny represents a type of author who imposes a strict solitude upon themselves, complemented by his tendency to write only at night and wear a habit while working, specifically a hooded habit.<sup>13</sup> As regards the model of small quarters that nullify sensory stimulation in order to guarantee an

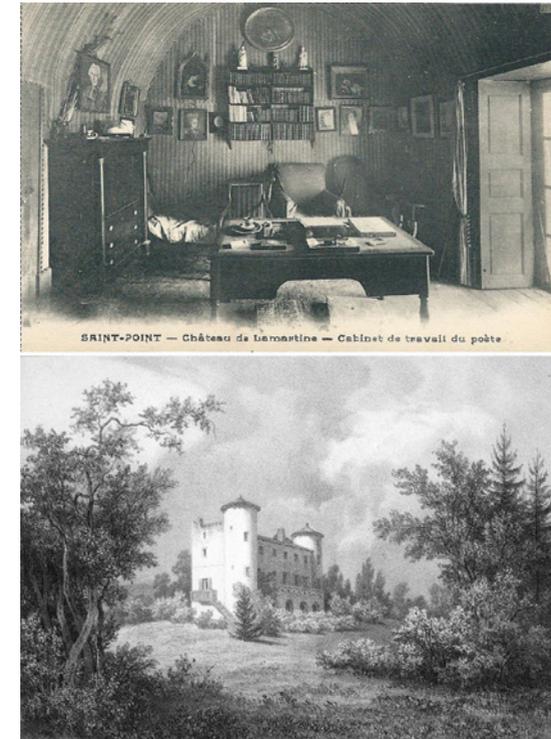


Figure 2. Alphonse de Lamartine, Château de Saint-Point. Source: postcard, author's collection; Michel Domange, *Le petit monde des Lamartine* (Coudray-Macouard: Cheminements, 2001).

environment for creation in solitude, this was also copied by other authors,<sup>14</sup> even in temporary residences such as Jules Michelet in the octagonal tower at Château de Vascoeuil, or in the form of parody, as was the case with the miniature castle or *châtelet* built by Alexandre Dumas père, the Château de Monte-Cristo which was designed by one of his artist friends and was encircled by a moat, ensuring that it could only be accessed by a drawbridge operated by the writer.<sup>15</sup>

While Vigny's tower/cell is regarded as the truest format when it comes to literary creation in solitude, alternatives to and reworkings of the ivory tower were noted during the Romantic period, albeit dominated by the option of opening up and engaging with the outside world, thus exploiting interaction with the most varied stimuli. These variations show that spaces for the construction of literary worlds are as unique as the writers who created them, they were also becoming an integral part of strategies for making artistic figures recognisable and for projecting the image of an author from the private to the public. This other room is a rather spacious study in which a generous amount of light floods in through a glazed door that opens out to the outside world (Figure 2). As we can gather, it is not

positioned at the top of a tower. When Alphonse de Lamartine, one of the leading poets of the nineteenth century, inherited the family château of Saint-Point, he embarked in 1821 on intensive reconstruction work, ordering that the thick walls be drilled.<sup>16</sup> As part of this process to open the house outwards, Lamartine positioned his work space behind one of the old towers, the 'Tour Jaune', providing it with a small balcony and a wooden staircase so that he could access the garden and walk around reading or playing with his dogs. Although Lamartine was accustomed to working in his study from five in the morning, his surroundings were far different to Vigny's environment of reclusion, and not just in terms of the location and spaciousness of the room. Lamartine kept caged birds in his office and allowed dogs in it. He also liked to hear the sounds of the countryside, which explains why his workplace was oriented towards the village church. His creativity as a poet was thus fed by sounds and echoes, which were perhaps enhanced by the room's distinctive vaulted ceiling.<sup>17</sup>

Lamartine's refusal to locate his place of literary creation in an ivory tower stands in stark contrast to his interest in completing Saint-Point by constructing new towers, built in front of the château's main entrance.<sup>18</sup> Therein lies the key to interpreting the fact that foremost in his plans was the desire to exhibit his status and success, through towers that gave his austere mansion a picturesque and fashionable look in troubadour style. Another tower that will later reflect, in architectural terms, the vain affectation of the successful author can be found, albeit in an urban context, at the Maison à la Tour in Amiens, where Jules Verne resided. Yet another existing construction, the tower that lends its name to the house and makes it stand out from neighbouring buildings was perhaps a factor that Verne bore in mind in renting it for his longest period of residence in Amiens, between 1882 and 1900.<sup>19</sup> The tower contained the house's main staircase, which prompted the writer to choose a corner of the second floor as the location for his study, in a chamfered section of the facade, a small space with a window that looked out not to the cathedral but to the railway station. This study comprises three key elements of the writer's room: a chair and writing desk, an austere iron bed for resting or reading on, and books, in this case on a consultation table and also in the library situated in a larger adjoining room (Figure 3).

In addition to these early versions of the ivory tower – from the tower as a cell to towers as a pretentious sign of refinement<sup>20</sup> –, other examples of writers' houses provided new interpretations of the creative spaces housed in this type of castle-style dwelling.<sup>21</sup> What is truly of interest is the ability of some authors to organise and decorate their workplaces, while also constructing stories more in keeping with their profession as men or women of letters. Given the custom among poets and novelists to use pictorial language in their descriptions, it is possible that the colourful nature of the words they employ provides one of the keys to explaining the proximity and



Figure 3. Jules Verne, Maison à la Tour, Amiens. Source: gallica.bnf.fr.

close relationship that some authors enjoyed with the visual arts, authors who also painted and dabbled in architectural design.<sup>22</sup>

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, as part of the development of bourgeois domestic interiors, the basic provisions for creating the writer's own room became clearly defined: a study and library were the most common pair of spaces in which the ritual of writing took place, in a location that was conveniently far removed from living areas. In ensuring isolation and access to books, writers such as Émile Zola and Emilia Pardo Bazán invested a surprising amount of effort when it came to designing the architecture that would surround and delimit their creative havens. Both authors took the responsibility of building houses that proclaimed their status as literary celebrities but which also provided them with refuges in which to rest and enjoy the ideal conditions for writing. In their respective mansions at Médan and Meirás, these two writers of the naturalist movement developed two apparently opposing versions from the same castle-based theme: the modernised image and home comforts of the middle-class Zola and the more traditional image that the aristocratic Pardo Bazán projected, one more in keeping with British stately models. That said, and aside from the evident formal differences and variations in style, the rooms created by these authors for themselves, which in both cases were situated at the top of the towers that dominated the appearance of their houses, require comparative analysis.

Zola's study in Médan was unusually large, measuring 5,5 metres high, 9 metres wide and 10 metres in length, while light flooded into it through a large window with stained glass, so much light in fact that it has been compared to a painter's studio (Figure 4).<sup>23</sup> Let there be no doubt, however; Zola was not so much interested in having views but in creating a controlled environment in which the home comforts at his disposal were rounded off by an elaborate aesthetic appearance. The space was intelligently organised, with an alcove and couch situated behind his writing desk, an



Figure 4. Émile Zola, Château de Médan. Source: Photo by author.

area of rest that also included a staircase that led to the mezzanine above the alcove, where Zola ordered that the shelves of his library be fitted, a library that opened over the main part of the study. The grille of the hot air vent positioned beneath the chair he used for writing<sup>24</sup> rendered the large, Renaissance-style stone fireplace redundant. It was above this fireplace that Zola had the motto 'Nulla dies sine linea' painted in order to inspire him with his constant and laborious daily workload. The external sobriety of Médan contrasts with the sheer number of decorative objects collected by the writer,<sup>25</sup> an indescribable collection of bric-a-brac that his friend Edmond de Goncourt termed as a 'bibeloterie infecte', and which comprised all manner of historical and exotic objects: suits of armour, old weapons, strange mechanical toys, tumblers, small glass bottles, oriental porcelain pieces such as cups and fantastic animals, two Solomonic columns in golden wood, a Louis XIII-style armchair, reproductions of medieval chairs, a Dutch inlaid desk, a Renaissance mirror frame, a wrought iron lectern, silver lamps, embroideries and tapestries, and much more besides. It is possible that the reason for this surprising decorative composition goes beyond Zola's aesthetic tastes, as the modern-day concerns and themes prevalent in his

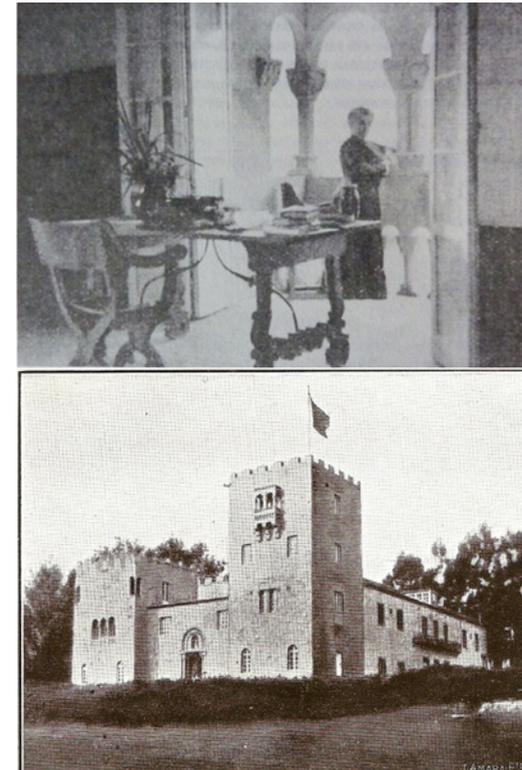


Figure 5. Emilia Pardo Bazán, Torres de Meirás, Sada.

Source: *América-Latina* 12 (1916); and Melchor de Almagro Sanmartín, "Por los caminos del mundo. Torres de Meirás," *La Esfera* 173 (1917), 11.

novels are entirely unconnected to these Romantic legacies, for which the author, a 'romantique malgré lui', accepts the blame. A clue may lie in Zola's frequent requests for visual documents. One such request was made to his friend the architect Frantz Jourdain, for the creation of plans of the department store in which *Au Bonheur des Dames* (*The Ladies' Delight*) is set, as well as plans of the Huberts' house for *Le Rêve* (*The Dream*). In this quest for visual inspirations, the act of surrounding oneself with *objets d'art* and *bibelots*, of decorating rooms in an anarchic manner, would reinforce the tower of Médan's status as a creative refuge, as the disorder and chaos would also stimulate the output of an author who prided himself on producing three pages of good literature a day.<sup>26</sup>

This other space for writing also occupied the upper floor of a tower, with a simple desk in the centre and library shelves around it. Although the Spanish writer Emilia Pardo Bazán called it her 'cell', it was in actual fact a large chamber of her manor house at Torres de Meirás (Figure 5) and offered finer views than any other room. The writer positioned her desk right

opposite the eastward-facing balcony, a reflection of her need to enjoy the landscape, light and smells of the countryside. There is, however, symbolic meaning here also. In this particular case it is not found in the soberly decorated interiors but in the decorative motifs of a stone balcony that she herself designed. She named it the 'Balcón de las Musas' (the Balcony of Muses) and conceived it as a space in which she could find inspiration, represented first and foremost by the attributes of the muses carved into the nine capitals of its external supports. Along with the inspirational divinities of the arts, the columns that close the balcony off feature portraits of the author's literary role models – writers such as Homer, Hesiod, Dante, Torquato Tasso and Saint Catherine of Alexandria. The invitation to enter a space offering a spiritual encounter with writers and muses was rounded off by the protective figure of a salamander carved into the stone, in this instance just above the balcony a mythological animal of great personal significance to the writer, the salamander reflected her ability to withstand the passions of life, although its presence can also be linked to a desire for inspiration: the overcoming of pain through inventiveness.<sup>27</sup>

Aside from formal details, the fundamental role played by Zola and Pardo Bazán's houses in their creative processes can be seen in the fact that both authors were writing two of their most important literary pieces at the same time as they were planning and supervising construction work. After buying a small stone house in May 1878, Zola sketched plans for the extension of the future Château de Médan in the months in which he was also writing his novel *Nana* (1880), compiling documentation and drafting the first chapters at the same time as he was watching scaffolding go up for the construction of his house.<sup>28</sup> At Torres de Meirás, however, construction work fell well behind schedule, even though Pardo Bazán had drawn up the first plans for her castle-style house as early as 1894, working in close conjunction with her mother, who, like her, was a keen painter. Making the most of the summer months she devoted her time to and overseeing the building work, Pardo Bazán came up with the designs of the reliefs on the facade, from blazons to capitals, in the early years of the twentieth century, while she was writing her novel *La Quimera* (*The Chimera*, 1905).<sup>29</sup> Proof of the connection between literary daydreaming and the building of their dreams in stone came when the owners of Médan and Meirás named their towers after these very works: 'Tour Nana' and 'Torre de La Quimera'.

To conclude this in-depth analysis of the architectural design and decoration that Zola and Pardo Bazán engaged in, the two authors provide outstanding examples of how the creative energy that went into the significant undertaking of writing literary works could coexist with and extend to other artistic fields: architecture, painting, interior decoration and garden design. In dedicating oneself to an alternative activity as a means of seeking enjoyment or merely breaking the daily routine,<sup>30</sup> one can possibly trigger simultaneous processes involving the creation of words and images.

In line with neuroscientific research, which regards creativity as a complex interplay between spontaneous and controlled thinking, consideration must be given to whether moments of apparent relaxation and enjoyment, particularly in solitude, could provide the key to the spontaneous emergence of associations and new ideas, which could potentially be of use in their writing.<sup>31</sup> In fact, one of the keys to the creativity of these writers lay in that very ability to approach or try their hand at other forms of art such as those required in building and decorating a house. Consequently, through the organisation and decoration of their writing spaces, they derived enjoyment from other artistic languages, alternative forms of expression that enriched their creative flow and also helped them to solve problems using resources other than those habitually employed in writing.<sup>32</sup>

Returning to the examples discussed in this analysis of ivory towers, other possible approaches could be provided by the personal relationships between writers who shared their views on their houses,<sup>33</sup> the connection between literary genres and the unique characteristics of creative spaces,<sup>34</sup> and the literary representations of these places that were so dear to authors.<sup>35</sup> The standards adopted in modern housing resulted in the ivory tower format becoming an anachronism that resurfaced only very rarely in the twentieth century: the fortified Thoor Ballylee, a sixteenth century tower bought by William B. Yeats in 1917, the urban tower above Ramón Gómez de la Serna's attic on Velázquez street in Madrid, which he began decorating in 1923, or the tower built by Carl Gustav Jung in Bollingen, Zurich, from 1923 to 1955 as a place of intellectual maturation and image of a maternal womb.

In one of his posthumously published notebooks Franz Kafka wrote that 'everyone carries a room about inside them'.<sup>36</sup> However, the ability to give shape to and actually build that inner room is a task only very few have achieved. An especially notable example is provided by writers who built their houses as an extension of their literary creativity, houses and towers 'written' by great writers. In doing so they underlined the poetic interpretation of the house put forward by Gaston Bachelard, who posited 'that the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind'.<sup>37</sup> In this respect the breadth of responses to this spatial mooring of creativity should in no way be seen as a subject that is closed.

### Notes

- 1 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 6–12 and 228–31; Harald Hendrix (ed.), *Writers Houses and the Making of Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 1–11.
- 2 José-Luis Diaz, *L'écrivain imaginaire. Scénographies auctoriales à l'époque romantique* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007), 24–9 and 38–44.
- 3 Hendrix, *Writers Houses*, 4.
- 4 The questioning of this mere bodily act is the starting point for an exploration of writers' houses that focuses on four noteworthy residences selected not so much for their unique architectural features as for the huge influence they had in shaping the lives and creativity of their famous owners – Emily Dickinson,

- Sigmund Freud, Helen Keller and Marcel Proust – as discussed by Diana Fuss, *The Sense of an Interior: Four Writers and the Rooms that Shaped Them* (New York, London: Routledge, 2004), 1–21.
- 5 Over time, cabins and pavilions for writing began to be regarded as a type of their own, and were used by the most radical proponents of isolation: Henry D. Thoreau and his cabin on Lake Walden in Concord; Virginia Woolf and her writing lodge at Monk's House in Rodmell; Alphonse Daudet and the hexagonal pavilion he reserved for himself on his Champrosay property; Arthur Conan Doyle and Tunbridge Wells; George B. Shaw and Shaw's Corner in Hertfordshire; August Strindberg and Kimmendö, Stockholm; or Dylan Thomas and Laugharne, Wales.
- 6 Marie-Clémence Régner, 'Le spectacle de l'homme de lettres au quotidien: De l'intérieur bourgeois à l'intérieur artiste (1840–1903),' *Romantisme* 2 (2015), 71–80.
- 7 Having inherited this property following the death of his aunt Sophie de Baraudin in 1827, Vigny rebuilt it and lived and wrote there until his death in 1863. As a means of marking and customising his favourite place, he ordered that a weathervane with the initials 'AV' be installed atop the tower.
- 8 '... et Vigny, plus secret./Comme en sa tour d'ivoire, avant midi, rentrait'. Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, 'À M. Villemain,' in *Poésies complètes de Sainte-Beuve* (Paris: Charpentier, 1840), 330–6.
- 9 The praise of the beloved woman included the simile 'turrus eburnea', *The Holy Bible*, Song of Songs. 7:4. A metaphor commented on, in its various meanings, by Elie Assis, *Flashes of Fire: A Literary Analysis of the Song of Songs* (New York, London: Clark, 2009), 241–8. It would later be applied by Bernard of Clairvaux to the Virgin Mary to express her strength and purity.
- 10 Castles and towers serving as inspiration for different allegories were identified by Christiania Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 201–29; and also Edward
- Hollis, *The Memory Palace: A Book of Lost Interiors* (Berkeley: Counterpoint Press, 2014), 71–3. These positive connotations, which were also noted by Jacques Le Goff in the Middle Ages in relation to the thinking of Thomas Aquinas and phenomena such as the foundation of universities, were joined in the nineteenth century by more negative ones, namely an escape from the obligations of the world and of the solitary intellectual seen as a snob and even an enemy of the people. Alberto Manguel, *The Traveller, the Tower, and the Worm: The Reader as Metaphor* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 64–6.
- 11 Paul Zumthor, *La Mesure du monde. Représentation de l'espace au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Seuil, 1993), 104–6; Mary C. Flannery, 'Privy Reading,' in Mary C. Flannery, Carrie Griffin (eds.), *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 149–64.
- 12 'Wretched the man (to my taste) who has nowhere in his house where he can be by himself, pay court to himself in private and hide away!', Michel de Montaigne, 'On Three Kinds of Social Intercourse,' in *The Complete Essays*, trans. Michael A. Screech (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 933.
- 13 Léon Séché, *Alfred de Vigny et son temps, 1797–1863* (Paris: Félix Juven, 1900), 305. The choice of this garment for the hours he dedicated to meditating and writing was not incidental; it ties in with the poetic and secular priestliness of other writers such as Honoré de Balzac, Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly and even the architect and theorist Eugène Viollet-le-Duc in his Parisian atelier.
- 14 The list of writers who dreamed of monastic cells, like secular hermits, includes Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Friedrich Holderlin, Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka and Ernst Jünger, among others.
- 15 Georges Poisson, *Les maisons d'écrivain* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 74–5; Jesús Ángel Sánchez-García, 'Performing Dumas. Architecture and Mise en Scène at the Château de Monte-Cristo,' *RIHA Journal* 0145 (15 January 2017), <http://www.riha-journal.org/articles/2017/0145-sanchez-garcia>.

- org/articles/2017/0145-sanchez-garcia.
- 16 'J'ai percé quelques portes et quelques fenêtres dans les murs de cinq pieds d'épaisseur du vieux manoir; j'ai attaché à la façade principale une galerie massive de pierres sculptées sur le modèle des vieilles balaustrades gothiques d'Oxford'. Alphonse de Lamartine, 'Le tailleur de pierres de Saint-Point,' in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1863), 394.
- 17 Henry Dérioux, *Lamartine raconté par ceux qui l'ont vu* (Paris: Stock, 1938), 124; Gérard Calmettes, *Lamartine: la vigne et la maison* (Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire: Christian Pirot, 2000), 101.
- 18 In a letter to Aymon de Virieu, on 15 May 1829, Lamartine expressed how satisfied he was with his new role as an architect and project supervisor: 'Tu serais ravi de mes oeuvres d'architecture. J'ai mes élèves de Cicero, qui commencent ma façade. J'ai une tour qui sort de terre'. Christian Croisille (ed.), *Correspondance d'Alphonse de Lamartine. Tome V: 1828–1829* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007), 338.
- 19 Situated at 2 rue Charles-Dubois, the house was built between 1854 and 1858 by the notary public Jean-Baptiste-Gustave Riquier. Another curious fact is that Verne first bought a house at 44 boulevard Longueville, in Amiens – the home city of his wife Honorine – in 1873, yet the couple decided, nine years later, to vacate it and rent the Maison à la Tour.
- 20 Refinement, or snobbery even, that ties in with Erwin Panofsky's analysis: the word 'ivory' adds a nuance of snobbery to egotistical self-isolation in the tower, while the combining of both, 'tower' and 'ivory' hints at the inefficiency, or rather the inactivity, of daydreamers. Erwin Panofsky, 'In Defense of the Ivory Tower,' in *Centennial Review of Arts and Science* (Harvard: Harvard Alumni Association, 1957), 1, 111–22.
- 21 It could also be mentioned here the inclusion of towers in gardens, as in Richard Ford's Heavitree House in Exeter, or the turret projecting from the facade designed by John Ruskin for Brantwood House at Coniston.
- 22 From mere enjoyment to the search for other emotional sensations or the overcoming of trauma, the motivations of several writers in creating visual works are revealed in Donald Friedman, *The Writer's Brush: Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture by Writers* (Minneapolis: Mid-List Press, 2007).
- 23 Evelyne Bloch-Dano, *Chez Zola à Médan* (Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire: Christian Pirot, 1999), 70. The presence of antique stained glass in some openings of the office, along with neo-Gothic furniture, lent a sacred tone to Zola's creative sanctuary.
- 24 Heating that was provided by a boiler in the basement, just one of several ingenious arrangements dreamed up by Zola for his house, such as the chimney in the dining room, containing a flue that was diverted in order to open out above a window, and the systems for opening the shutters from the inside, all of which are perhaps traits of the inventive spirit of an engineer's son.
- 25 A plethora of objects, as exaggerated and replete with images as his style of prose, in the opinion of his disciple and friend Maupassant: Guy de Maupassant, 'Émile Zola,' *Le Gaulois*, 14 January 1882.
- 26 Experiments that confirm the relationship between creativity and cluttered, untidy environments are provided in Eric Abrahamson and David H. Freedman, *A Perfect Mess: The Hidden Benefits of Disorder* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2007); and Kathleen D. Vohs, Joseph P. Redden and Ryan Rahinel, 'Physical Order Produces Healthy Choices, Generosity, and Conventionality, Whereas Disorder Produces Creativity,' *Psychological Science* 9 (2013), 1860–7.
- 27 Jesús Ángel Sánchez-García, 'Las Torres de Meirás. Un sueño de piedra para la quimera de Emilia Pardo Bazán,' *Goya* 332 (July–September 2010), 228–45.
- 28 For further information on the work he conducted in parallel in putting his novel together and creating the house of his dreams, and his notebooks, which included annotations and drawings, see Evelyne Bloch-Dano, *Chez Zola*, 25–6 and 78.
- 29 Sánchez-García, 'Las Torres de Meirás.'
- 30 As expressed by Zola in a letter to

Gustave Flaubert on 26 September 1878: 'Moi, je travaille beaucoup. Comme distraction, je vais faire bâtir. Je veux avoir un vaste cabinet de travail avec des lits partout et une terrasse sur la campagne'. Bloch-Dano, *Chez Zola*, 26; and Jean-Claude Le Blond-Zola, *Zola à Médan* (Villiers-sur-Morin: Société Littéraire des Amis d'Émile Zola, 1999), 31–2.

- 31 Among other hobbies, creating works of art was a form of divergent thinking that generated new ideas. Dennis Hocevar, 'Intelligence, divergent thinking, and creativity,' *Intelligence* 1 (March 1980), 25–40.
- 32 This possibility would tie in with the interpretation of the sensory systems as the generators of hypothesis in cognitive neuroscience. In fact, philosophers aside, it is revealing that it was a group of nineteenth-century writers – Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy – who were the first to consider, albeit intuitively, the mysteries of the human mind and creativity, according to Eric R. Kandel, *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of Mind* (New York: Norton & Company, 2006), 40 and 295–306.
- 33 As well as the friendship between Vigny and Sainte-Beuve, Lamartine also had dealings with both and hosted other leading Romantic authors such as Hugo and Dumas père at Château de Saint-Point. It was Dumas who, years later, would introduce Jules Verne to the literary circles of Paris. For her part, Emilia Pardo Bazán made frequent trips to Paris and probably visited Dumas' Château de Monte-Cristo. She also met Zola, at Edmond de Goncourt's *grenier*.
- 34 Developing a suggestion by Michelle Perrot as to which types of literature may have been more suited, for example, to writing in bed than in an office: Michelle Perrot, 'Écrire,' in *Histoire de chambres* (Paris: Seuil, 2009), 113–22.
- 35 Not only in their own works, as in the aforementioned case of Lamartine. Other authors could take inspiration from such spaces, such as Jules Verne, an admirer of Dumas, who paid tribute to the Château de Monte-Cristo by using it as the inspiration for the

house of the main character in the novel *Mathias Sandorf*, according to the illustration by Benett as noted by Pierre-André Touttain, 'Mathias Sandorf au château de Monte-Cristo,' *Cahiers de l'Herne* 25 (1974), 308–10.

- 36 Quoted by Manguel, *The Traveller*, 91.  
37 Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 6.

## How Modernist Architects' Studios Reflected and Supported Their Design Paradigms

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### Abstract

There has been much researched, written and published on the work of modernist architects, but there is one important aspect of their creative output that has been undervalued in the study of their work – their own workspaces. Books and images have concentrated on the famous buildings and products, whilst the study of the interior spaces, in which the work was created, has been neglected. What the culture of these offices was, and the importance of these environments, in supporting the creative visions of the architects who ran them, has not been investigated to any great extent. This paper will examine the offices of some of the lead players in the modernist architecture movement, and analyse how the physical environment of their offices reflected their architectural paradigm, through an exploration of photographs of the spaces. It will discuss the relationship of the interior to the creativity of the practice, and what lessons we might learn from this for architects' own working environments today.

### Keywords

Modernist architects, workplace, interiors, studios, design paradigm.

### Introduction

If we look at architects' offices today we could summarise a cliché of what the interior looks like – grey floor, white walls, banks of regimented deskings, models in Perspex boxes, a large meeting room with designer furniture and a small kitchen area where staff converge around the kettle. This is a recognised interior around the world. It is part of the branding and identity of contemporary architects – to present a working environment that impresses professionally, but does not veer too far away from the accepted norm. Today this 'architect's office' style is adopted by practitioners producing a very varied style of buildings, so there is often no direct correlation between the interior design of the office and the style of work produced there.

If we look back over the last century of office design there have been various evolving theories such Taylorism, open plan, Burolandschaft, action office, cubicle farm, agile and activity based working and the creative hub (K2).<sup>1</sup> All of these have played their part in the development of architects'

workspace design. However, there are some key players in modernist architecture whose offices did not follow a generic style, but were themselves generated from the design ethos of the architect they served. Looking into these in more detail, it is clear that the design of the office space influenced those that worked in it, and supported the production of work that is now so iconic.

This paper uses photographs as a primary investigation source, to analyse the offices of Alvar Aalto, Paul Rudolph, and Ray and Charles Eames. This type of source provides a snap shot into these now lost or inactive working environments. They chronicle the time when these spaces were in full use, giving us a glimpse into these past interiors. Analysis of them assists in our understanding of the identity of the architects. It will consider what these connections were in each case, to determine if there is a paradigm that could be used today. This type of source also raises questions about why the photographs were taken. Most images were set up as part of a marketing ideal, making a statement about the practice and its design ethos. The paper will discuss what the relationship is between the image and the perceived creativity of each architect. This will allow the following questions to be answered – how did they design their offices to make creativity happen? And how did they use the image of their office to project their image of architectural creativity?

### Alvar Aalto (1898–1976)

Finnish architect Alvar Aalto has been described as a ‘humaniser of coldly rational modernism’<sup>2</sup>. There is clear evidence in his work of the influence of Scandinavian culture. Not only is there also a strong relationship to nature in his work, in the use of timber, but also in the manipulation of light within his buildings. He considered building users to a more in-depth degree than many other modernist architects. His architecture stands out for its ‘integrations with place, in both its natural and cultural attributes, and in its integration with the daily life of the whole human being’<sup>3</sup>. This approach is clearly evident in the studio he built within his new house in 1935 in Munkkiniemi, Helsinki. His office was based there until 1955, after which it relocated to a purpose-built studio nearby, due to increasing staff numbers. This paper will look at the former of these two studios for further investigation.

It is interesting to consider how a domestically located office influenced the design paradigm of the architect. The studio in Munkkiniemi is fully integrated with the house, with it being divided from the main living space by a sliding plywood partition. The slight change in level between the two spaces, signified by a low brick wall, means that to enter the office you must go up one step, a simple device, which subconsciously signals a change of use.

The studio itself is double height with a mezzanine level above. In this upper level, there is a small door through which Aalto could access the



Figure 1. Alvar Aalto's studio in Munkkiniemi, Helsinki. *Source:* Aalto Museum, Jyväskylä.

Figure 2. Alvar Aalto at work. *Source:* MIT Archives and Special Collections.

upper floor of the building, said to be used when he wanted to avoid clients who had arrived at the house.<sup>4</sup> The majority of archival photographs of this space do not contain people. Rather like the images of his building interiors, the focus is on the space, light and materials. Figures 1–2, the left from the Aalto Museum and the right from the MIT Archives and Special Collections, show the office and Aalto at work. The one of the studio clearly shows concentration and engagement with the work, providing the viewer with a clear idea that this is a place of productivity. Looking further into the activity and the surrounding fixtures and fittings, there is a sense of order and functionality about the office. There are piles of books and drawings, but they are neatly located in zones, either on the desks or in the bookshelf area. There is a strong sense of order to the space, but it is subtly handled, with the main architectural elements and the secondary layer of fixtures and fittings sitting harmoniously together. Of course, this is not an impromptu snap, it has been taken for a purpose. However, this does not stop the viewer understanding that this is the usual working pattern and that this is a disciplined yet social place to be. It is a space that although focused on work, allowed the worker to feel part of the wider world outside, and on a more meta scale, the domestic environment that surrounds it. As Harry Charrington notes, in his architecture Aalto created at the heart of his projects spaces that might encourage socially beneficial forms of behaviour.<sup>5</sup> This is clearly evident in this office. Also noticeable is the link to nature. The location of the window at the ends draws your eye to the trees outside, making a strong connection to the natural world beyond. The double height volume of the space further emphasises his architectural concerns with natural light and the use of space to create functional yet calming spaces.

Whilst the image of Aalto is obviously posed, it does provide you a sense of the man. What is interesting about this, is that he has chosen to be placed not in front of this busy office, but quietly in the corner with the landscape behind clearly visible. Although he is wearing a tie, he is also dressed in what appears to be overalls, signifying his hands-on approach to his work and his emphasis on the quality of detailing and materials. He is clearly the boss, but you feel that this is not an ego driven architect, rather someone who cares deeply about his ideas and those that help produce them. Although Aalto was heavily involved in the work of the studio, he was not permanently sitting at a desk overseeing the work of his staff. In fact, he tended to move around the space, often determined by the season or the time of day. It was not uncommon for him to work from his bed in the morning and then come down to the studio to discuss the work with his assistants. In the afternoon, he liked to be working near the fireplace in the corner.<sup>6</sup> He worked closely with his first and second wives in the studio, and this close collaboration adds to the understanding of Aalto as an architect who readily collaborated with others.<sup>7</sup> His attitude to his staff was defined in his first office in Turku, where they called him by his first name, and employees were encouraged to take a note of their hours rather than adhere to a strict start and end time.<sup>8</sup> This resulted in a very bohemian atmosphere in which to work.<sup>9</sup> Like the other architects referred to in this paper, Aalto also designed more than just the buildings. His legacy of furniture, ironmongery and accessories are equally as famous. This resulted in buildings fully integrated not just with their surroundings, but with their interiors. This is an exact match to how the studio in his house operated. The context of this must not be forgotten to understand just how forward thinking and inspiring a place this must have been to work. There is a consideration of building users evident in the work of Aalto that is clearly defined in his working ethos and office environment. The staff worked at tables and sat on chairs that had been designed by him, in a space filled with light and connected to the Finnish landscape beyond. Aalto's office can be summarised as containing a well-planned and functional yet comfortable layout. Connected to nature, it allowed people to inhabit spaces for their own uses during the day, whilst maintaining a harmonious whole. There is a distinct Scandinavian quality to it that encompasses strong aspects of wellbeing.

### Paul Rudolph (1918–97)

Paul Rudolph set up his practice in 1952, moving it to New York in 1965. His work can be described as architecture that expressed the structural systems and articulated the functional activities of the spaces, unifying the interior with major and minor interactive spaces.<sup>10</sup> Rudolph was also responsible for the design of interior fittings in some projects, mainly in relation to chairs and lighting.<sup>11</sup> Whilst his furniture tended to be for private commissions, he set up the Modulighter company with Ernst Wagner to produce his light



Figures 3 and 4. Paul Rudolph's office. Source: The Library of Congress archive.

fittings. This brought his design ideas to a smaller interior scale. He was an architect who designed on a macro and micro scale, both of which are evident in his office. Looking at its design, it is evident it supported creative working by positioning the smaller studio spaces around a large central atrium space.

This allowed them to be in relatively low height zones, but with a clear connection to the large central space through which all the main circulation passed. The contrast supported the focus of the production of work in the side areas, whilst the central area represented the design style more visibly. With reference to Rudolph's architectural ethos, there are two key points that are worth considering in relation to his office interior.

The first is his love of the section. It has been noted that he felt 'the section was the generator of the space because by looking at it he was able to actively study the three-dimensional impact of the building'.<sup>12</sup> Photographs of his office (Figures 3–4) from the Library of Congress archive, show it to indeed embrace the section, and this was not just reserved for the main atrium space, it existed within the studios themselves. The photographs of the studios, with the double level of drawing boards, were clearly shot to emphasise the section and height of the space. The man walking at the high level, contrasts with the man crouching at the low level below. Working in this environment would make you very aware of the impact of section in a building. The section is further emphasised in the atrium shots that clearly define how this volume links the surrounding areas. The verticality of his design is given further significance by the plants that cascade down through the atrium, which not only soften this hard surfaced space, but provide a frame for the photograph.

The second is materials. As a brutalist, his understanding of concrete and its possibilities are clear in his buildings. The New York office has hard

vertical planes, whilst the horizontal areas, such as stairs and floors, are softened by either gaps between the treads, or the perforation of floor plates by the atrium. The atmosphere of the office is softened by the use of height, light and nature in the space, all of which were important in his designs. Many of his houses have a strong interior focus, carving out double height spaces and incorporating balconies and level changes in the space surrounding it.<sup>13</sup>

Norman Foster, who was an ex-student of Rudolph's, described him as shy.<sup>14</sup> You do get a sense of calm and tranquillity from the interior, which is an echo of the man himself. Working in an environment where views into other parts and an awareness of the overall mass of the building, clearly influenced the work of the practice. The interior represented the understanding of scale, space, materials and an engagement with nature that are evident in his work. Its interior could be summarised as focused, airy, energetic and inclusive.

### Ray and Charles Eames (1912–88 / 1907–78)

Whilst their famous Case Study House No. 8 of 1949<sup>15</sup> includes a studio in one of the two box-like structures that form it, the main office of Ray and Charles Eames for over 35 years was in an old bus garage at 901 Washington Boulevard, Venice Beach. The Eames produced more than buildings, being equally famous for textile designs, films and furniture. Their office layout supported these various tasks in a series of spaces, which expanded over time as they produced more, and entered different creative fields. It contained a reception area, graphics room, layout area, central work area, film building, archive, furniture development area, tool shop and separate offices for Ray and Charles.<sup>16</sup> Between 1943 and 1979 more than 400 people worked for the couple.<sup>17</sup> Internally the environment 'contained precisely the blend of intellectual and physical tools one would expect for the Eames office' with a culture that 'influenced or supported the way they maximised the number of iterations each idea went through'.<sup>18</sup>

In the photograph from the Eames archive (Figure 5), it is clear that the various functions had their defined spaces, but that there was a flow between them all, making the office one large zone supporting the various visions of the two bosses. The office appears busy and creative. The walls do not run full height, generating an emphasis on the metal roof truss structure above, and adding to the sense of flexibility and modularity. It is industrial and functional in design, with a feeling that it could be easily reassembled into another layout. The positioning of the anglepoise lamp, in the foreground of the photograph, draws the viewers eyes across the space, yet also hints at the adjustability of the design ethos. This is an intense and creative space.

A review of testimonials from ex-employees helps to give a better idea of what it was like to work there, and the types of people Ray and Charles were to work with. They were the driving forces behind all the ideas, as its



Figure 5. Ray and Charles Eames' office. Source: The Eames archive.

been noted 'many different hands touched the work, but only two pairs touched all the work and decided where it began and where it ended'.<sup>19</sup> They were both completely consumed by their work that they expected the same level of dedication from their employees, something difficult to be sustained indefinitely by the staff. To work in an environment for more than 10 hours a day, that environment must be supportive in terms of comfort and creative excitement. For this to be successful it is clear that communication between Ray and Charles and their employees was key, and the layout of the office supported that – allowing for easy access to everyone at any time. There are no hidden rooms or different levels in which to hide. The staff had different talents and tended to be specific to one of the areas supporting the variety of work produced. However, the layout meant that you were still part of a wider studio, even though your focus may be in one small bit. As their professional focus altered from furniture to film, so the office grew. Starting in the front of the garage in 1943, by 1958 they had taken over the whole building. This was later extended in the 1960s to accommodate space for filming and an archive.<sup>20</sup> It is testament to their design ethos that they were able to inhabit a space that would accommodate this extent of evolution.

To summarise the office, it was dynamic, functional, multipurpose and creative. Whilst it may appear on the surface to be to a certain degree chaotic, in fact like their finished work, it is deeply considered, functional and innovative, with a strong understanding of materials.

### Conclusion

Creatives have a vested interest in the environments in which they work. Whilst contemporary architects have evolved a rather generic office environment for themselves, it does, on a base level, provide a certain support to their work. That is not to say that there are some architects today

that do not personalise their environment to represent their design ethos in a physical interior. It is just that this is not as commonplace or in-depth as the three practices discussed in this paper. If we look back to the modernist age and the architectural creativity that Rudolph, Aalto and the Eames represented in their own office interiors, what can be taken from the three examples above in relation to the intertwining design ethos and the working environment?

These were all, to some extent, quite different places to work. However, even though they were divided in time and geographical locations, they were all bases for the production of significant architectural projects and iconic design pieces. They supported architects who in their day challenged the mainstream and evolved their own robust design paradigms. From the analysis of the photographs the following can be concluded.

In relation to creativity, the form of the spaces, have a strong physical relationship to the architectural paradigm of the principal. This allowed them all to create interior spaces that due to their mass, lighting level and materiality, supported specific types of working. In Aalto's we see manipulation of light through different heights of space and well considered window locations, to provide calm and focused areas to work. For the Eames' then the use of flexible and component driven interior insertions defines different activity zones. Whereas for Rudolph, it is the expression of section to concentrate activities in areas, whilst ensuring visual connections and a focus for activity.

The spaces also reflected the personalities of their principals and their methods of working. Rudolph's is quiet and intricate, the Eames' is collaborative and intense and Aalto's is calm and focused. Whilst the personality of the principal goes a long way to shaping the office dynamic, for the general employees it is the working environment that ultimately supports their productivity and engagement with their work, and in turn their understanding of the architectural aims of the practice.

Considering these findings in relation to our current and future creative office design, we should look at how our interior spaces reflect the personalities and design ethos of the practices, and not be afraid to make spaces to work in that represent and support our creative ideas.

## Notes

- 1 K2 Space, 'The History of Office Design,' <https://k2space.co.uk/knowledge/history-of-office-design/>.
- 2 Richard Weston, *Alvar Aalto* (London: Phaidon, 1997), 42.
- 3 Robert McCarter, *Aalto* (London: Phaidon, 2014), 7.
- 4 McCarter, 85.
- 5 Harry Charrington, 'Alvar Aalto (1898–1976),' *The Architectural Review* 1384 (June 2012), 110.
- 6 McCarter, *Aalto*, 81, 85.
- 7 Charrington, 'Alvar Aalto (1898–1976),' 110.
- 8 Göran Schildt, *Alvar Aalto: The Decisive Years* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), 40.
- 9 Harry Charrington, 'Coordinating Method and Art: Alvar Aalto at Play,' *Architectural History*, vol. 54 (2011), 315.
- 10 Tony Monk, *The Art and Architecture*

of Paul Rudolph (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 1999), 10.

- 11 Paul Rudolph Foundation News, 'Rare Rudolph Chair to be Auctioned,' <http://paulrudolph.blogspot.co.uk/2009/03/rare-rudolph-chair-to-be-auctioned.html>.
- 12 Monk, 9.
- 13 Mark Alden Branch, 'Rudolph Revisited: On the Road from Sarasota to New Haven, Paul Rudolph's Work Was More Evolutionary Than Revolutionary,' *Architecture*, vol. 92 (2003), 44.
- 14 Timothy M. Rohan, 'Paul Rudolph (1918–1997),' *The Architectural Review* 1413 (November 2014), 114.
- 15 Eames Foundation, 'Eames House,' <http://eamesfoundation.org/house/eames-house/>.
- 16 John Neuhart, Marilyn Neuhart and Ray Eames, *Eames Design: The Work of the Office of Charles and Ray Eames* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 6–8.
- 17 Eames Demetrios, *An Eames Primer* (New York: Universe, 2013), 191.
- 18 Demetrios, 160, 189.
- 19 Demetrios, 192.
- 20 Demetrios, 155.

## The Art of Work: Bürolandschaft and the Aesthetics of Bureaucracy

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### Abstract

The Bürolandschaft method of office design developed in the 1950s was rooted in German cyberneticists' belief that computers and automation would soon hasten humans from mechanical drudgery to more creative and collaborative forms of work. It was the brainchild of the Quickborner Team, the consulting business of Wolfgang and Eberhard Schnelle. Offices such as the Buch und Ton headquarters (1961) were based on radically open plans that presented the appearance of chaos but were actually derived from careful study of firms' decision-making structures. The Bürolandschaft went on to influence international office designers including Robert Propst, Francis Duffy, and Herman Hertzberger, who followed the Schnelle brothers in endeavoring to reshape spaces of intellectual labour around new patterns of communication and 'knowledge work'. Appropriately, Quickborner drove home the premise of its designs by founding its own press, which pumped out books on its architectural and social vision.

This paper focuses on the role of aesthetic research in the Schnelle brothers' design agenda. They argued that because knowledge work demanded creativity, office planning should itself be viewed as an artistic problem. Among Quickborner's publications, consequently, were a series of books on cybernetics and art. For instance, a 1962 volume by Kurd Alsleben, a Quickborner-affiliated theorist and later a pioneer of computer art, investigated techniques of formal 'dispersion' in works by Jackson Pollock and Victor Vasarely. By analysing these systems of visual and spatial organization, Alsleben's book helped construct a cultural argument for the distributed architectural fabric and hidden formal structures of Bürolandschaft offices. This paper traces how technical and social thinking were constantly in dialogue with aesthetics in the early work of the Quickborner Team. The aim is to show how Quickborner designers cultivated a particular ideal of creativity as both the end and the means of office design.

## Play Hard, Play Fair, Nobody Hurt – Corporate Spaces of Play

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### Abstract

This paper traces contemporary reverberations of the New Games movement's ideas and propositions, inaugurated at the 1973 New Games Tournament in the San Francisco Bay Area. The *play-in*, facilitated by an unlikely coalition of people with seemingly disparate backgrounds and agendas – countercultural figures such as Stewart Brand, educators, preservationists, as well as the US Army – provided a platform to propagate non-competitive games and creative play as a means of appropriating space, community building, belonging and self-awareness. Getting loose and becoming more expressive meant breaking with the rules and routine of a more conventional life and bodies were no longer a functional instrument of the military-industrial complex but a medium of insurrection against the predominant lifestyle and the compulsion to work and be functional.

I argue that, in turning away from the world of their parents, War Resisters and New Gamesters who followed them, in fact embraced their world view. They performed not just their mission to collectively save the world but also perpetuated their ancestors' authority to rule. Attention focuses on the body, which is manipulated and shaped, which obeys and becomes more skillful and forceful.<sup>1</sup> The docile body is the object and target of power, well trained and ranked within a system of gratification and inter-subjective control. More importantly, since self-identification with a certain norm is chaperoned by othering, this system built on mechanisms of exclusion. Hence, participation depended on initiation rituals and rites of passage, as did advancing within the hierarchy of the foundation. Building on Fred Turner's argument,<sup>2</sup> the paper concludes with the re-emergence of discussions that were the original catalyst for New Games as a soft toned political movement and their translation into what we now experience in physical education or, more importantly, as corporate culture's core values.

### Keywords

Play, New Games, start-up culture, counterculture, spatial appropriation.

On 13 May 1974, *CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite* – the United States’ dominating news broadcast at the time – aired a segment on a group of young people engaged in play. They try to throw each other off a log by hitting each other with straw filled bags, charge at each other with makeshift foam sabers, and flock around a six-foot diameter ball. A voice-over explains the scene to the television audience: ‘Spring time always brings out the crazy in Californians, so that’s about all the explanation there is for what’s going on here. They call it the New Games Tournament in some parkland outside San Francisco.’ The site in question is Gerbode Valley, a remote part of Marin Headlands National Park situated just north of the Golden Gate Bridge. It was named after Martha Alexander Gerbode, a philanthropist and environmentalist who played a major role in its establishment as a recreational zone for the San Francisco metropolitan area once it lost its status as strategic site for the US army’s Nike Defense Missile System. Reclaiming and providing spaces for public use and enjoyment was the common ground shared by land-use activists and New Gamesters. The narrator continues to describe the basic rules of these New Games: ‘What makes new games different from the old games, is that anybody can play – young or old, hippie or straight – and hardly any spectators, almost everybody is a participant; and hardly any rules, just play hard, play fair, and don’t hurt anybody’. The happening eventually spurred a movement propagating non-competitive games and creative play as a means of community building and spatial appropriation.

According to the most commonly reiterated genesis of the New Games movement, New Games were first played when the War Resisters League at San Francisco State College commissioned Stewart Brand to stage a public event in 1967. At a time when the United States were involved in a ground war in Vietnam and the league’s anti-war agenda gained nationwide traction, Brand claimed that World War III was already in full swing.<sup>3</sup> Hence, he named the happening ‘World War IV’ despite the war resisters’ defiance of warfare and their opposition to the logic of competitive games. To them, their bodies were no longer an instrument of the military-industrial complex, but a medium of insurrection against the compulsion to work, compete, and be functional. By engaging them in a playful World War IV, Brand’s intention was to let them understand war by appreciating and experiencing the source of it within themselves – instead of further entrenching people in their anti-war views and positions.<sup>4</sup>

Fast-forward six years to 1973: At Gerbode Valley, about eight miles from San Francisco, the first of four annual New Games Tournaments held on two consecutive weekends in October. Over the course of the tournament, some 6000 participants gathered to play *Slaughter* and *Earthball* – games which had made their first appearance at San Francisco State College and featured prominently in the 1974 CBS broadcast. What seemed to be yet another happening, a somewhat lagging reminiscence of the fading Bay Area



Figure 1. First New Games Tournament at Gerbode Valley, 1973.  
Source: New Games Foundation, *Whole Earth Ball* (San Francisco: 1975).

counterculture, would become the catalyst for a mitigated political campaign: The New Games movement. It advocated for happenings that would have no adverse effect on the participants or the land where these encounters are performed, picking up on countercultural dogmas.

Historian Theodore Roszak, who coined the term counterculture, traces the emergence of a generation who protested their parent’s ideals, whose leading mentors questioned the validity of the conventional scientific world view, who drew on a profoundly personalist sense of community rather than upon technical and industrial values, and who in doing so undermined the foundations of US technocracy.<sup>5</sup> To him, the counterculture call for participation as opposed to technocratic expertise, is why it comes closer to being a radical critique of the technocracy than any of the prevailing ideologies. In 2009, John Curl describes the survival networks and new social systems based on cooperation and sharing. He frames the mid-1960s to mid-1970s as an era when young people were searching for a better way to relate to the world and each other, which many of them found in collective and cooperative work and by rejecting a world based on hierarchy, power, and competition.<sup>6</sup> While the New Gamesters shared these ideals, I argue not only that most games in the New Games catalogue were inherently competitive, but also that some of the actors involved were in fact at odds with ideals such as non-hierarchical organisation or pacifism.

A closer look at the participants and organisers of the first New Games Tournaments reveals that it was indeed an unusual alliance, which facilitated the play-in at Gerbode Valley. It included countercultural icons such as Brand and the Hog Farm’s Wavy Gravy, George Leonard and Pat Farrington

who brought in their background in physical education and community organisation, tech companies such as Atari which installed some of the first video games at the event, and even the US Army, which provided water and access to the former missile site. New Gamesters were utilising many of the widely visible trappings of 1960s counterculture, like tipis, domes, as well as the Hog Farm's converted school buses. Wavy Gravy and the Hog Farm are possibly the least surprising participants, given that they had also participated in previous happenings marshalled by Brand, such as the trip to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm a year prior to the first New Games Tournament, as well as *Liferaft Earth*, a week-long crowded public fast dramatising overpopulation.<sup>7</sup> Wavy Gravy was widely accepted as a master of ceremonies for countercultural happenings after overseeing the 'Please Force,' an unorthodox security force deployed at Woodstock and other festivals. Their non-intrusive and playful approach and Pat Farrington's idea of *soft touch*, acted out as playful trust exercises, provided an important balance to Brand and Leonard's more martial conception of what New Games should effectuate.

The founding principles of new games were cooperation, empathy, and a new cultural logic which opposed the bureaucratic reasoning of the Cold War. In his text 'Why Study New Games,' Fred Turner examines how the fear of a nuclear holocaust during the Cold War era, lead to adults cutting themselves off from the whole range of their emotions and how they turned themselves into mechanical creatures who worked the system to survive. The young adults of the 1960s and 1970s, however, hoped to create a new set of rules and a new way to live, which – as described by Turner – was deeply rooted in the belief in cybernetic systems and foreshadows many of the propositions of the cyberculture of the 1990s, and, as I argue, also today's start-up culture. Defence planners' simulations, computed in office towers and bunkers, had turned people into information, and the games of the Cold War had presumed competition and enmity. The spaces where these games were played were divorced from the spaces inhabited by the people affected, whereas countercultural groups interacted with each other and transformed their surroundings by playing together. Creative play and collective happenings in public spaces fostered cooperation and empathy and were meant to return people to their bodies.<sup>8</sup> Following Turner's thoughts, even if the War Resisters and New Gamers claimed to turn away from the world of their parents, in fact, they embraced key elements of their world view. They were trained to enter their parents' professions and were expected to inherit their world. By pushing an Earthball around, they performed not just their mission to collectively save the world but also their ancestors' authority to rule. Turner points out that 'virtually all the back-to-the landers were white, most of them were under 30 years of age, well-educated, socially privileged, and financially stable.'<sup>9</sup> While his's critique is targeted towards counterculture in a broader sense, similar propositions can be made specifically for the New

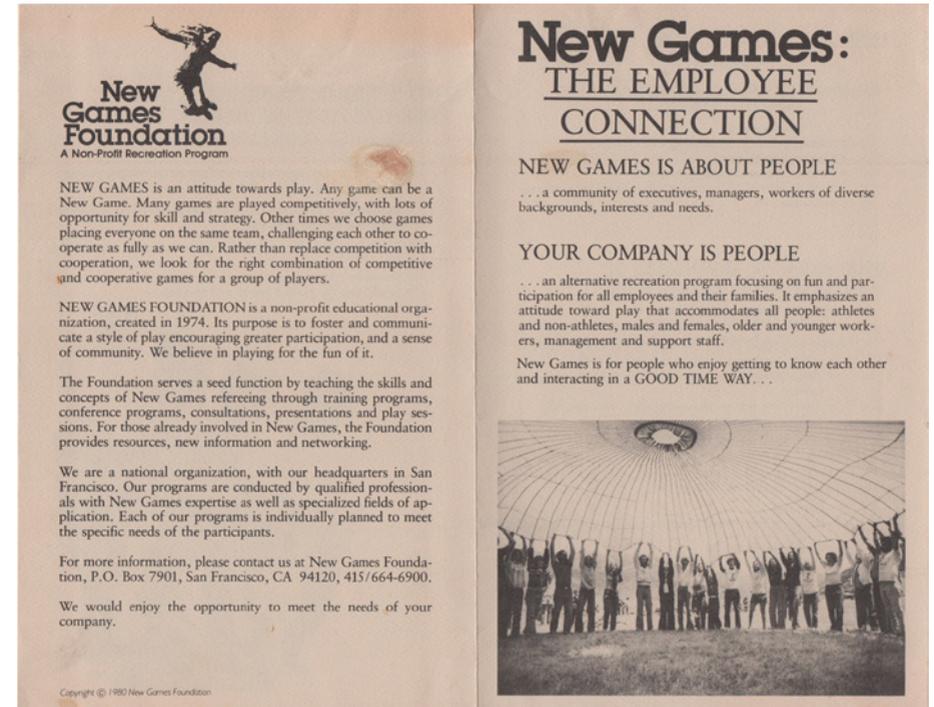


Figure 2. Flyer Targeting Corporations, 1980.

Source: New Games Foundation, *The Employee Connection* (San Francisco: 1980).

Games movement. After the cushioned combative exercises and activities of self-expression gained publicity due to nationwide media coverage of the first tournaments, the New Games Foundation was incorporated in 1974, and New Games events were thereupon performed throughout the United States. The smaller, more distributed New Games trainings still emphasised the power of play, facilitative leadership, empowerment, cooperation, healthy competition, player centeredness, creativity, community, flow, adaptation, process, joy and an eco-connection.<sup>10</sup> However, the audience and thus also the foundation's centre of attention shifted from the Bay Area countercultural community to Parks and Recreation departments, new age groups, and corporate team building events, as marketing material geared towards companies the likes of Lockheed and Hewlett-Packard shows.<sup>11</sup> Team building, in this context, equates to strengthening a corporation's employees, who compete against those of economic competitors, whereas one might argue that communities are less invested in competition, rather than the pursuit of a mutual goal.

Roszak defines the term counterculture as 'a culture so radically disaffiliated from the mainstream assumptions of our society that it scarcely looks to many as culture at all, but takes on the alarming appearance of

barbaric intrusion<sup>12</sup>. Yet, in the case of the early activities of the New Games movement, it was not an uncultivated invasion, but an extrapolation of ideals it ostensibly tried to destabilise. Rather than creating new games, spaces and tools for play, in most cases, the members of the New Games community adapted existing strategies and artefacts. One of the key arguments in Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*, is that play, for both animals and humans, constitutes a training for the serious work that life will demand.<sup>13</sup> Hence, play is a form of culture, passed on from one generation to the other. New Gamesters were using and converting archetypical toys – balls, kites, and demilitarised parachutes – to perform their ideas of conflict, competition, and community. This idea can also be found in Walter Benjamin's analyses of toys as imitations of the tools of adults, and therefore a site of conflict as the toys are given to children by adults. The oldest toys, balls, hoops, and kites, are imposed as cult implements which only become toys through the child's powers of imagination. Benjamin explicates that 'habit enters life as a game, and in habit, even in its most sclerotic forms, an element of play survives to the end. Habits are the forms of our first happiness and our first horror that have congealed and become deformed to the point of being unrecognizable'<sup>14</sup>. Most participants in New Games events may not have been aware of the habits and ideals they were emulating so mechanically. By declaring *war on war* while at the same time postulating that conflict, competition, and war are inherent to human behaviour, Brand normalises war at a time when most of his peers protested it. He is a skilled networker, a visionary organiser whose talent was to be in the right spot at the right time to utilise people, pick their brains, and to further develop these ideas. He is often opportunistic, and does not back away from staging usually short-lived large scale experiments to put his theories to the test. His 'Theory of Game Change' – 'you don't change a game by winning or losing it or observing it or refereeing it. You change it by leaving it and going somewhere else and starting another game from scratch'<sup>15</sup> – would later re-emerge in *The New Games Book*. New Games called for the overcoming of spectatorism and social boundaries to make for communal experience for as many players as possible. Yet, for Brand's biologism, cultural activities such as politics, art, conversation, and play certainly took on a deeper significance than being mere fun. For him, they all relate to one topic, which has and still occupies him: the evolution and survival of the human species<sup>16</sup> and therefore the creation of a certain type of subject.

A photo of a young woman, jumping with her arms extended, apparently floating mid-air: this photo, credited to Brand<sup>17</sup> and used as the New Games Foundation's logo for over a decade, is not only an iconic image implying creative play, fun, and leisure, but reveals a distinctive perception of the body. Bodies are seemingly detached from their surroundings, oblivious to environmental forces, at times integrated in a community, and always submerged in play. Flicking through the pages of *The New*

*Games Book*, published in 1976, close-ups illustrating New Games activities – predominantly taken amid the action, either capturing players' facial expressions or looking up to a hovering Earthball – stand out. However, while the implied effortlessness and rollicking good time may be in large part true to the New Games Tournaments, many of the activities as well as the New Games Foundation's own organisational structure build on a more competitive notion of playful and athletic activities.

The emblematic *Earthball*, for instance, is a new take on an old game which was originally employed in a much more competitive environment: Moses Crane, an engineer based in Newton, Massachusetts, devised *Pushball* in 1894 because he disliked watching his sons play football at Harvard and never seeing the ball from the bleachers. In lieu thereof, he built the first Pushball – a ball large enough so that players would not see each other at opposite sides of it – at his own expense. At \$175, it was a rather costly affair,<sup>18</sup> but the impressive object attracted much attention and the following year, the ball was first used at Harvard College. In 1902, the game was introduced in New York and London and became popular with army training programs soon after.<sup>19</sup> In 1976, when the game had been recontextualised from male dominated spaces such as colleges and army bases into public space, *The New Games Book* acknowledges that despite the more amenable setting, the crowd playing *Earthball* at the first New Games Tournament was not as heterogeneous as desired. The audience had included people of all ages, both sexes, and varied backgrounds, but the majority had been middle-class, white, long-haired males in their twenties and thirties who had probably been playing New Games for years.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the foundation's efforts to attract a diverse audience, it is important to read New Games as a phenomenon of the middle class. As Binkley points out, while economies of production had asked people to discipline themselves for the work regimes of a Fordist society, economies of consumption asked them to express themselves in the phantasmagorical consumer markets that define the post-Fordist order. This transition was deeply felt by the American middle class and enabled a new lifestyle culture in which the individual's relationship to her environment – both natural and human – was developed as an object of creative manipulation and supervised care. Getting loose and becoming more expressive meant breaking with the rules and routine of a more conventional life and the "squaring" of the body as both a functional instrument of the military-industrial complex ... was countered by the forcible and very mediated "grooving" of the body.<sup>21</sup> The often chemically assisted loosening and grooving was an insurrection against their parent's lifestyle and the compulsion to work and be functional. Again, following Binkley, it 'involved the de-instrumentalizing of all of its functions: in a variety of fields from sports to therapy' and 'goals and purposes were replaced by feelings and experiences.'<sup>22</sup> As work was strenuous and serious, to the New Gamesters, play provided a new sense of community

and freedom of expression. To the hippies of the 1960s, overcoming the censoring functions imposed by the intellect gave way to impulsiveness and a new awareness of the body as a platform of protest.

For writer and educator George Leonard, who facilitated Aikido workshops at the first New Games Tournament, it is only through a heresy in Western thought that we could consider any aspect of life as non-physical. He argues that the ultimate athlete within us is only waiting to be born, but needs a structure challenging yet open enough to strive,<sup>23</sup> a fundamental argument of the participatory sports movement of the 1960s and 1970s and institutions like the Esalen Sports Center, established in 1973.<sup>24</sup> Owing to Leonard's influence and contrary to the hippies' rejection of social norms and structures, the hierarchy of the New Games Foundation derives from martial arts. Lead trainers facilitate trainings and events and act as referees. They are supported by trainers, who can team up with other coequal trainers to substitute one lead trainer, while they themselves seek support from assistant trainers. Trainers and referees stand out in the crowd, since they wear distinct white T-shirts with the word 'Referee' printed on the front and the New Games Foundation's motto 'Play Hard, Play Fair, Nobody Hurt!' on the back. Further down the pecking order we find field representatives, responsible for public relations and outreach, as well as the *Friends of New Games* – the lowest level affiliation – who receive newsletters and updated as well as discounts on paraphernalia in exchange for an annual membership fee.

In addition to incorporating Leonard's ideas on the ultimate athlete, New Games carried on Stewart Brand's idea of *softwar*, first displayed publicly at San Francisco State. Brand defined *softwar* as a conflict, which is regionalised to prevent injury to the uninterested, refereed and therefore fair and certain to have a win-lose outcome, as well as cushioned, since weaponry is 'regulated for maximum contact and minimum permanent disability.'<sup>25</sup> Both Brand's designed conflict simulation *softwar* and Leonard's notion of 'creative play' sought a game involving intense physical interaction. Leonard asserts that because 'sports are so highly competitive, we may tend to believe that all human beings, especially males, are born competitors, driven by their genetic nature to the proposition that "winning is the only thing,"'<sup>26</sup> While he recognises that the games of many cultures have no competitive element at all, and that the highest survival value lies in cooperation, not competition, it becomes apparent that the target audience is male, able bodied, well-educated, interested in the advancement of not only the individual but also the species, as well as willing to be trained and acquire leadership skills according to the ideology of New Games. As it happens, the *People Pyramids* are a more adequate transformation of these ideas into bodily arrangements than the chaotic *Earthball* crowds or an indefinite number of people sitting on each other's laps, forming a circle during a session of the *Lap Game* – images which are favoured by the editors and designers of *The New Games Book* and other publications.

Essentially, as Michel Foucault claims, even though pyramidal organisation entails a 'head,' the whole structure must be analysed as an apparatus producing power. Attention centres on the body, which is manipulated and shaped; which responds, obeys, and becomes skilful, hence increasing its forces.<sup>27</sup> The docile body is object and target of power, well trained and ranked within a system of gratification and intersubjective control. More importantly, since self-identification with a certain norm is chaperoned by *othering*, this system builds on mechanisms of exclusion. Hence, participation depends on initiation rituals and rites of passage, as does advancing within the hierarchy of the foundation. As internal statistics reveal, the New Games Foundation was closely monitoring the composition of its audience. Attendance at festivals and open trainings is broken down by gender, race, primary motivation to attend, as well as means of funding participation. Even after some years of conscious attempts to target a more heterogeneous audience, the records show that people of colour were underrepresented.<sup>28</sup>

Albeit less visible in the early stages of the movement, there was however another line of thought which influenced New Games early on which later Brand and Leonard had – in their own words – 'enlisted' Pat Farrington, a well-versed community organiser and activist committed to get people working and playing together. Brand's personal take on her role becomes manifest in a 1982 court deposition.<sup>29</sup> Asked about his involvement with the foundation, Brand referred to himself as the 'figurehead and initiator' and to Pat Farrington as the 'nuts and bolts,' getting hold of people. In his diction, he was the 'officer' and she was the 'first sergeant.'<sup>30</sup> She contributed her idea of *soft touch* in the form of games that develop trust and cooperation and which targeted a broader audience. Farrington's approach and her network were crucial in bringing in an audience not just interested in a unique event but in a more sustainable collaboration. The ideas resonated well with community, park and recreation, youth, and mental health programs, juvenile correctional facilities, as well as programs and institutions working with people with disabilities,<sup>31</sup> which proved to be the main clientele of the open trainings in the late 1970s and until the foundation's termination in 1985. As a 1980 document shows, the foundation specifically targeted corporations early on, promising to 'expand and complement their employee services.'<sup>32</sup> *The New Games Book's* successor *More New Games*, published in 1981, clearly embraces Farrington's philosophy, as the games described embody more fully the New Games style of play and games more easily adaptable to a wide range of players with different abilities. They are richer in elements of fantasy and ritual and emphasise the creation of a stronger play community.<sup>33</sup>

Bay Area tech companies have incorporated countercultural games, *soft touch*, and *softwar* as part of their philosophy and start-up culture has made seemingly horizontal hierarchies a global phenomenon. The

simulations of the Cold War technocrats had turned people into pure data and for the young adults of the early 1970s, New Games were one way of getting back in touch with their bodies, each other, and their surroundings. Over time, however, the playful exercises in community building and spatial appropriation re-emerged as core values of the very companies whose simulations are now based on user data. The New Games movement's credo that players can change the rules if they don't like them, so long as all agree on what's fair<sup>34</sup>, is reminiscent of a more technical use of the word: *play* as space in or through which something can or does move. It is those spaces of action and potentiality that this paper calls attention to.

### Notes

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- 2 Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 77.
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- 22 Binkley, 208.
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- 24 William N. Wallace, 'New Esalen Center Spurs a Sports Revolution,' *New York Times*, 15 April 1973, New York edition.
  - 25 Fluegelman (ed.), *The New Games Book*, 9.
  - 26 Fluegelman (ed.), *The New Games Book*, 9.
  - 27 Foucault, 'Docile Bodies,' and 'The Means of Correct Training,' 135–69; 170–94.
  - 28 From spring 1977 to spring 1982, 321 trainings were held and a total of 14,291 people attended, 62,2% of which were women. Overall, 91,3% are categorised as 'Anglo,' 6,1% as 'Black,' 1,9% as 'Hispanic' and 0,7% as 'Asian,' whereas – based on census data from 1980 – 79,6% of US citizens identified as 'White,' 11,5% as 'Black,' 6,5% as 'Hispanic,' and 1,5 % as 'Asian.' New Games Foundation, 'Open Training Program Spring 77 – Spring 82' (1982), courtesy of Janet Knock, and Social Science Data Analysis Network, 'Population by race,' [http://www.census.gov/censuscope.org/us/chart\\_race.html](http://www.census.gov/censuscope.org/us/chart_race.html).
  - 29 A participant in a New Games Training, who sustained a back injury after an accident involving an Earthball rented out by the New Games Foundation, sued the organisation. Brand was cited to appear as witness.
  - 30 Stanford University, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, coll. M1237 (Stewart Brand Papers), box 9, folder 3: Court Deposition: DeAngelis vs. New Games Foundation (18 August 1982), 6.
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  - 33 Andrew Fluegelman (ed.), *More New Games and Playful Ideas from the New Games Foundation* (New York: Dolphin Books / Doubleday & Co, 1981), 10.
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# Transient Computational Designed Boundaries enhancing Creativity in Workplaces

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## Abstract

Until artificial intelligence surpasses human creativity, the creativity of a single human brain will be at the core of architectural innovation. That said, in a modern context where one needs to be connected to others (and other disciplines) to be up-to-date to work on complex multidisciplinary projects, the creative individual cannot remain isolated. Therefore, the individual needs a creative workplace to achieve the coexistence and/or succession of time and space required of group work, and the time and space for individual work. Both work environments need to be expanded through the possibilities of computers.

This article questions the architectural tools developed by computational design that enable the transformation from collective workplace to individual workplace in the same space. Two reasons underpin the fact that both alternate or coexist in the same space: price of working space; but mainly the fact that transformable architectural features directly affect the perception of the persons working, by evocating transformation, affecting the senses, and thus enhancing creativity.

Computational design technologies enable the shaping of complex transformative boundaries. There is a difference between pure transformation enabled by technique and a 'creative' architectural boundary which is, according to French philosopher Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, linked with the creation of affect and concept. Following his theory of affect, a transformable architectural boundary needs to keep gradients or intensities of space in order to create affect (in opposition to homogeneous space of continuous transformation). Also, evocating creativity through an architectural boundary would mean focusing on a system that follows theories of 'emergence', developed in similarity to creative emergences in natural environments. The way parameters and algorithms could be set to function in this model is theoretically feasible in the future according to theories of 'emergence'.

Analysis of Google workplaces will show the gap between their present realisations and the possibilities of computer technologies.

## Keywords

Computational, design, private place, collective place, creativity.

The article focuses on boundaries between individual and group office workplaces in order to enable collective creativity. When related to people, 'creativity' is understood in its usual definition: by the ability to produce original, imaginative and novel ideas. It means not following a predetermined solution, but opening oneself to doubt and any surprising juxtaposition of ideas, etc. In the context of this article, 'creativity' will be tinted by the sense of resistance towards the purely functional and playful in working places. The hypothesis is that the interior architecture of the workplace can influence the creativity of the persons working there through its flexibility in order to host individual or group work, and through its artistic quality. The artistic quality of the interior architecture enhances the creativity as being in a place that is the outcome of a creative process prompts creativity!

The contemporary technological tool that enables flexibility of the workplace, and especially in this article of boundaries between working areas, is computational design. 'Computational design' refers to the use of computers and a mathematical approach in the generation of geometries, objects and architecture. Computational design is comparable to 'parametric design' in that both focus on designed networks and processes instead of designed objects, however, there is a distinction that can be made between the two design approaches. 'Computational design' is more artistic. In 'parametric design', which is about using parameters to design things (if the parameters change, the results change), the process is more linear and thus can lack artistic potential. As the outcome is a tangible architectural feature, the question of artistic quality is legitimate (even if the outcome is transformable). Computational design technologies enable the shaping of complex transformative surfaces that enhance the fluid organisation of these reconfigurations. They also tend to blur the limits between places. The term 'place' is used in this article to describe the area that is used by one person or a group of persons at a certain time, defined by boundaries that are walls, partitions or big-scale objects. The term 'place' does not refer in this article to the centralised aspect of 'place' as a location or close surroundings of one person. The term 'space' refers to the abstract notion of infinite space, or to the whole level of an open-plan office. The term 'workplace' is a generic term whose sense focuses especially on its function.

This article questions the architectural tools developed by computational design that keep the coexistence of the collective and individual workplace: who controls the data input that enables good governance?

## Introduction: Creativity through Interactions

During the two-day conference *Next Generation Workplace* that took place in Sydney on the 12th and 13th of July 2017, the panel of participants from major international firms (Rabobank, Google, QBE, Coca-Cola Amatil, etc.) drew a contemporary portrait of their leading aspirations in terms of workplace environments. Going further away from the logic of hierarchical

setting and enclosed private offices, the main tendency is towards open plans that enable people to be in contact to share information and knowledge, in a collegial or community-like way. On the timeframe of the development of office environments, open plans are an old idea. Since their developments in the nineteenth century, open plans are more space efficient, and thus costs efficient. Matthew Harvey, Head of Facilities at Vodafone described how his firm has increased space utilisation whilst decreasing floor space and cost. In this context, the tendency is to organise the adequate flexibility on the open plan. Henry Lee, Property and Facilities Manager at AGL Energy reported that they worked on ‘effective technology and systems that enhance workplace productivity and efficiency’ for their ‘George Street’ building in Sydney. Frank Restuccia, Co-Founder of Finder.com and Chris Beale, Workplace Design Lead at Telstra also analysed the benefits of ‘an open plan flexible work structure with higher management hot desk (no assigned seats) to foster mobile and collaborative working’. Already in 2003, the Norwegian telecommunications company Telenor witnessed accelerated decision making when it incorporated ‘hot desking’ and places that could easily be reconfigured for different tasks and evolving teams.<sup>2</sup> Google has since been a leader in the development of hot desking in open plan offices, that are intended to heighten the likelihood of collisions and cross-pollination, and thus enhance creativity. Zappos in Las Vegas uses a new metric – ‘collisionable hours’ – to measure a space’s effectiveness.<sup>3</sup> (Figure 1)

In his 1977 book, *Managing the Flow of Technology: Technology Transfer and the Dissemination of Technological Information within the R&D Organization*, Thomas J. Allen was first to measure the strong negative correlation between physical distance and frequency of communication. According to Ben Waber from the MIT Media Lab, even with the expansion of online communication and distance-shrinking technologies, the Allen curve holds.<sup>4</sup> In fact, as distance-shrinking technology accelerates, proximity is apparently becoming more important. Waber shows that both face-to-face and digital communications follow the Allen curve: proximity enhances physical and virtual communication. This confirmation of the social efficiency of hot desking in open plan offices matches the economic efficiency already mentioned, and sustains the existing practices of the major firms that expressed their strategies during the 2017 *Next Generation Workplace* conference. These social and economic characteristics underpin the development of the business model of co-working spaces: ‘Co-working spaces benefit an increasingly mobile workforce, create diverse communities of workers and integrate exciting designs and technologies that allow for an exciting new work experience. [...] The corporate workspace is changing and the potential for larger companies to put their people in co-working spaces to allow them to leverage off agile and innovative thinkers.’<sup>5</sup> (Figure 2)

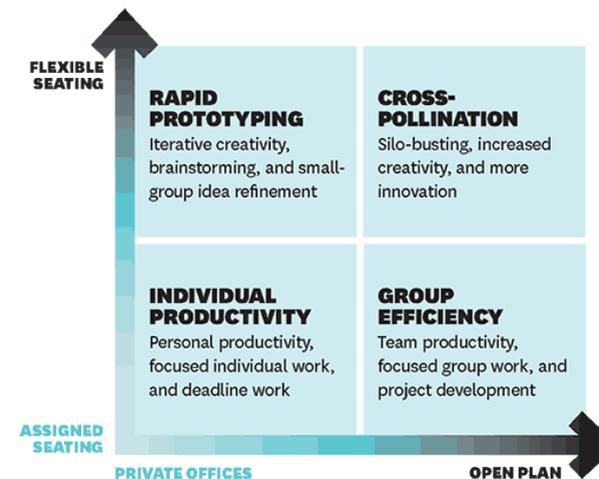


Figure 1. Source: Ben Waber, Jennifer Magnolfi and Greg Lindsay, “Workspaces That Move People,” *Harvard Business Review* (October 2014), <https://hbr.org/2014/10/workspaces-that-move-people>.

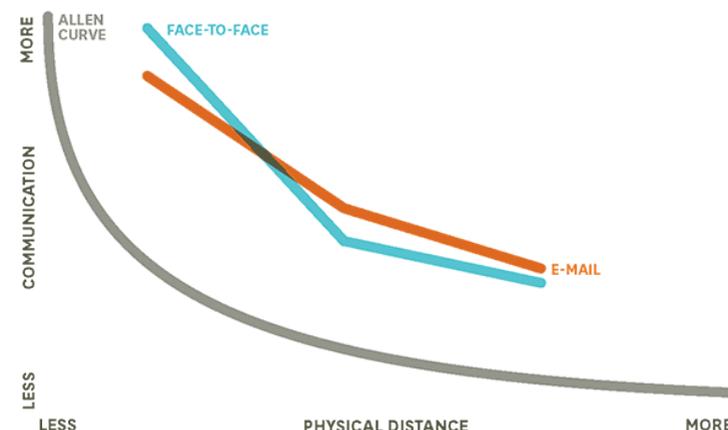


Figure 2. Source: Ben Waber, Jennifer Magnolfi and Greg Lindsay, “Workspaces That Move People,” *Harvard Business Review* (October 2014), <https://hbr.org/2014/10/workspaces-that-move-people>.

With the world making a move to mobility and freelancing, Google has established that their workplace ethos better aligns with presence and wants to keep up an environment where everyone attends work, fostering interaction. The firm is advanced in the development of group-working strategy: ‘office culture promotes “casual collision” between employees. This is paramount in demonstrating how collaboration promotes creativity and drives production.’<sup>6</sup> A visit to the Google offices in Sydney<sup>7</sup> shows that

next to open plans, individual or two-people working corners have been built to enable more private discussions as well as quiet relaxing and thinking places. The boundaries of these areas are fixed, and thus are determined in their function, which creates a radical dissociation from the open plan. There is an emphasis on the design of these small individual relaxing or working places: Woods Bagot designed them in a diverse array of shapes, colours and textures. The shift from group work in the open plan, to individual work in enclosed corners is not fluid in their current design. There are some exceptions that will be mentioned in the next paragraph, as well as Google's applied research on the subject for the future.

### Limits of 'Hot Desking'

The existence of private corners in the Google offices shows that having only open plans is not the solution. More generally, a literature review on the subject of workplace organisation shows a growing resistance to the suppression of individual office places, that goes against the ideological mainstream promotion of hot desking in open plans. Open plans can be fundamentally criticised as creating a spatial continuity and homogeneity of the workplace: this global tendency can just be mentioned in this article. More concretely, open plans including hot desk, can be inadequate for the functioning of the workplace. In a 2014 article entitled 'Google got it wrong. The open-office trend is destroying the workplace'<sup>8</sup>, Lindsey Kaufman draws our attention to the necessity of keeping a minimum of individual functioning and privacy, at chosen timeframes, in the workplace. Some voices could be heard in this sense during the 2017 *Next Generation Workplace* conference. 'Are open plan offices the solution or are they swaying us away from deep work?'<sup>9</sup> Clinton Parr, Head of People and Culture at Clemenger BBDO, discussed whether the pendulum is swinging too far and whether mobility is compromising the ability to complete work outcomes, and made conclusions about the importance of the concept of 'Deep Work' and of the benefits of staying focussed in a distracting environment. Open plan offices can be too distracting and there is a need to create places where people can really focus. Clinton Parr, Dr Darragh O'Brien, Knowledge and Design Leader at Peckvohartel, and Alice Drew, Head of Workplace at LendLease discussed how 'one size does not fit all': adaptable, smart environments should display a hybrid space, where collective and individual work coexist to accommodate varying personality types and work styles. There are effects of open plan workspaces on privacy and confidentiality, and there is an impact of not having a set desk: personalising or nesting one's desk enhances wellbeing, creates opportunities for privacy, and does not mean that there are no collaboration and social interaction at other times. Computationally designed boundaries could enable this flexibility, from individual to collective work and interaction, and thus enable the different components that ultimately ensure collective creativity.

### 'Politics of the Workplace' in Preserving Differences between Collective and Individual Places

Creativity of the individual is enhanced by the relation the individual has with other employees or co-workers. However, until artificial intelligence surpasses human creativity, human creativity will rely on individual brains. In a modern context, one needs to be connected to others (and other disciplines) to be up-to-date to work on complex multidisciplinary projects, and the creative individual cannot remain isolated. Therefore, the individual needs a creative workplace to achieve the coexistence and/or succession of time and place for group work, and the time and place for individual work. Both work environments need to be developed, and in the best case be expanded through the possibilities of computers. Computational design is expanding the array of architectural tools that enable the transformation from a collective workplace to an individual workplace in the same space. One driver motivates firms to subscribe to this idea that both workplaces alternate or coexist in the same space: price of working space.

Which are the latest technologies used by firms like Google to organise the fluid shift from group work to individual work amongst its employees? The examples of meeting rooms that are publicly documented by Google do not yet rely on high-level technologies. Google Sydney offices, designed by Woods Bagot, display a series of open plans next to meeting rooms of different sizes. One meeting room is nicknamed 'the cube' has one plain wall with a plasma screen and three glass walls that can be obscured through rolling screens in relation to the level of privacy the gathering group needs. One entrance area is defined by thread curtains in the shape of a spiral. The classical flexibility of the curtain linked to the semi-transparency of the thread curtain creates a place where boundaries are blurred and transformable.

In Google's London offices designed by AHMM (Allford Hall Monaghan Morris) in 2016, central to the flexibility concept is a modular meeting and videoconferencing room, which can be reconfigured in multiple ways. Employees gave it the name Jack, and AHMM even prepared a helpful manual encouraging everyone to 'Hack a Jack'. It is built with plywood panels that can be simply bolted together. Both the interiors and the exteriors are purposely neutral for personalisation with different cladding and shelving.<sup>10</sup> The design of Google's LA office at Playa Vista is kept confidential at this date. Jeremy Neuner, Real Estate and Workplace Services at Google, contributes to the development of collaborative environments where employees can 'thrive'<sup>11</sup>. The innovative ideas and concepts of the actors of these projects will be presented in the next paragraphs.

Issue 119 of *Frame* magazine<sup>12</sup> tackles 'the responsive workplace' and explores offices that 'adapt to their digitally empowered personnel'. 'Today's advanced digital technologies go even further: what we think of a 'fixed interior' can become places that change in response to human movement.'<sup>13</sup>

Nicola Russi and Angelica Sylos Labini's project for the new Milan offices of QuintilesIMS (2017) presents a series of flexible furniture along the full length of the workspace, that adapt to different uses. One can easily imagine how computational design could facilitate the flexibility of the structure, but the use of data input to activate workplace features seems to so far have been rarely applied. One example is Georgia Tech's Crosland Library, designed in partnership with Herman Miller (Jennifer Magnolfi who used to work for the firm at that time) in 2010 displays interactive walls and lighting features.<sup>14</sup> Omar Khan's project *Design Innovation Garage*, Buffalo, NY<sup>15</sup> (Figure 3) is a design innovation centre modelled on open source concepts, using multiple communications options between black boxes including secure information networks, projections, visual reflections, opacities and transparencies, occupant conversations, overhearing and glancing. In terms of partitioning, the concept stays rudimentary in its realisation, even if its representation evokes the idea of flexibility of boundaries between individual and collective places.

There should be more use-related application coming. The number of artists' projects tackling interactive technologies is a sign of their future application in interiors and especially in the workplace. Topological transformations of the 'structure' in space and time are not yet deployed in our everyday environments and are only laboratory prototypes for the moment<sup>16</sup>.

#### How Can Computational Design Contribute to the Flexibility of Individual and Collective Work?

Antoine Picon describes in his book *Digital Culture in Architecture: An Introduction for the Design Professions*<sup>17</sup> from 2010 how with computational design architecture shifted from 'architectural design' to 'technology-based architectures'. A first distinction can be made between 'parametric design', which is about using parameters to design things (if the parameters change, the results change), and 'computational design' that refers to the use of computers and a mathematical approach to the generation of geometries, objects and architecture. In both cases, the focus is on designed networks and processes instead of designed objects. The system is usually controlled from the outside, but the dynamics mimic self-organised bodies as we find them in nature. Systems and processes could accommodate ever-quickenning continuously-changing contexts.

The first stages of parametric design are based on rational systems that are inherited from the history of techniques, but in an extremely complex and dematerialised way today. Complex surfaces replace traditional plain walls. 'The digital turn in architecture and design has freed surface from the 'body' of a built object to a new landscape of possibilities.'<sup>18</sup> Forms are replaced by 'patterns', and the way surfaces become complex, creates a shift towards the notion of 'hypersurface', as multiple parameters or algorithms

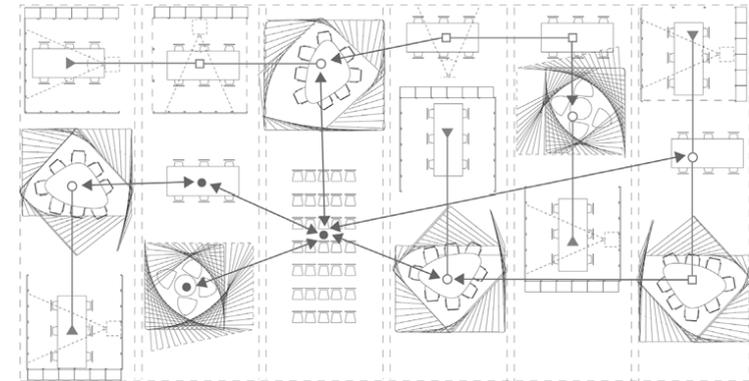


Figure 3. Omar Khan, *Design Innovation Garage*, Buffalo, NY, 2013 © Omar Khan.

implied mimic the possibilities of a n-dimensional space, projected or interpreted or represented in our 3-dimensional space. Complex joining and panelling systems can be developed. There is a shift from the fabrication of modern walls that can be considered as standardised for ideological or technological purposes, to non-standard surfaces that open up a wide range of possibilities and versions based on a set of parameters or algorithms. With computational design, the system can be less linear in its functioning than with parametric design. The shift from parametric to computational facilitates the creative aspect of the design. Instead of relying on a fixed structure, we shift to complex continuously dynamic systems, and instead of a law, we shift to variations of the norm. For Frédéric Migayrou, our current situation, when the object positions itself in a continuum through variation, sees the fluctuation of the norm replace the permanence of the law.<sup>19</sup> 'This norm, always in the process of being defined and always deferred, is transcribed into objects fluctuating on the variable curves of the new industrial series.... There are no longer pre-established functions requiring a form, we have only the occasional functions of fluctuating forms.'<sup>20</sup> This relates to 'dynamic tectonics' according to the *Handbook of Interior Design's* definition of versioning, and would have an impact on the structuring of the workplace environment.

The use of data input and computationally designed partitioning can be an efficient tool to organise the passage from individual to collective work and vice versa. New digital technologies enable designs of unprecedented complexity, and through parametric methods and their technological realisation, an interaction with data coming from a person, a group of persons, or a broader context. The virtue of these technologies is adaptation to changing needs, especially in the types of action and interaction we have with others in space. On the base of the respect of 'common laws' of humans in terms of interactions (or its approximation, that enables respect of each other; it is utopian to code the common laws or rules of

interactions between individuals), and of 'common rules' of the workplace, each person could influence the characteristics of the interior: size of the area, level of closeness and privacy of the partitions, level of natural light, acoustic qualities, etc. Like politics in general, workplace relations are a constant negotiation. Boundaries between places would frequently have been negotiated, accelerating to the timeframe of hours or minutes what is negotiated today at the timeframe of years with fixed partitioning. The knowledge and experiences around permanence and adaptability of partitioning is the historical background of these innovations. The status of places and ways to maintain privacy (for example of an office place in an open plan project) have been researched extensively. A smart design of long term adequate partitioning has been the main aim of architecture so far. Even if there was a primary and a secondary structure that could evolve in a lapse of a few months or years, and even if there was a wall or furniture piece that could expand and retract according to the needs, the plasticity enabled by new technologies is now unprecedented.

Who would control the change of boundaries in the workplace? The possibility of collective creativity needs to be questioned by taking into account this new redistribution of power. If we follow Google's philosophy on the expression of each of its employees, each person should be able to discuss these boundaries and be able to play with them and act on them. By welcoming the innovation processes around the plasticity of shapes of walls, and maybe also floors and ceilings, through parameters and algorithms, it is necessary to think and control the design of these near future possibilities because they challenge the political organisation of the workplace. The transformations of partitioning in laboratory prototypes enabled now in a short period of time (seconds) are new characteristics that affect work relations. Richard Sennett<sup>21</sup>, who analyses the two extreme tendencies of homogenisation and extreme clustering of individuals in our society, proposes concepts that can be guidelines for new organisations, such as 'concentration without centralisation': on the basis of the concept of a working unit without a centralised decision-maker, designers could propose new flexible boundaries of workplaces. Having multiple leading persons, in an open changing process in time, could be organised through multiple 'cores' on the open plan, like those represented in Omar Khan's project. The input of each employee could be managed by these multiple decision makers in order to achieve each time a temporary consensus that matches the working requirements.

#### **Computationally Designed Boundaries as a Creative Environment**

Could there be 'an adequate aesthetic' of computationally designed boundaries that enhances collective creativity in the workplace? Perceiving around oneself walls that are not easily understandable rational structures,

but have an aesthetic quality, could tend to inspire oneself to be creative in the same way. In the context of computationally-designed boundaries, the perception of the boundaries could be slightly different each time, which enhances their contemporariness. They could enhance creativity because transformable architectural features affect directly the perception of the persons working by evocating transformation, affecting the senses, and thus enhancing creativity. Between purely functional purpose (without aesthetics) and purely artistic use (without function), new technologies need to be used adequately for design issues, and especially for the partitioning of workplaces. If we follow the hypothesis from the introduction, i.e. that an artistic partition feature stimulates the creativity of people working in this environment, one still needs to study the need to have an artistic computationally-designed partition. Technological innovation is not automatically aesthetic innovation. Designers are challenged to top-up the complex technical requirements to develop aesthetic qualities that inspire the people who work in the environment. How can we safeguard creative singularities in the system that keeps the aesthetics of these boundaries?

There is a difference between pure transformation enabled by technique and an aesthetic architectural boundary, which is, according to French philosopher Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, linked with the creation of affect and concept.<sup>22</sup> Technological innovation can create new kinds of shapes and thus bodily sensations, but there might be a difference between producing new bodily sensations and creating innovative architecture that creates an affect, linked with a concept (as will be defined in relation to Mehdi Belhaj Kacem's theory of affect). In which cases does the artistic potential associated with kinesthetic sensations create an affect? An example of a highly technological project is Mark Goulthorpe's (dECOi) *Hyposurface* from 2003. He used triangular shapes that are animated through a mechanical system creating moving 'waves' at the surface, in an interaction process with the persons who approaches it. According to Goulthorpe, '*HypoSurface* is the World's first display system where the screen surface physically moves. Information and form are linked to give a radical new media technology: an info-form device.' This surface moves, and we can witness on his website's video how the surface surprises people, and has a real impact on them. The system enables infinite possibilities. Each iteration of the experience provides another slightly different pattern on the surface. The openness of the system questions the possibility of an aesthetic value of an iteration, or of the system as a whole. Mehdi Belhaj Kacem's theory of affect could be summarised as follows: he defines an affect based on the 'virtual' as the gap between presentation and representation, or what fails in the forcing of representation into presentation. Affect is 'the identity of this infinity'. Kacem considers the event as the real of a disintegrated representation. There is a negative aspect of any relation, and this aspect is inherited from Hegel's notion of the 'Negative' as well as the negative of any relationship in

Lacan (the real of pleasure proves it). Void is always integral to things, and the site of the event (or 'eventual site') is always 'at the border-of-the-void'. Against the disappearance of aesthetics value in art and architecture, and against the disappearance of boundaries between public and private space, architecture is considered as the site of the event (or 'eventual site'), 'at the border-of-the-void'. *Hyposurface* has a too linear parametric functioning (and a generic aspect of the triangular shapes) in order to create real affect. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the chaos of its movements does not create a real affect either. With a parametric system functioning on a strict law, or its opposite of endless possibilities through the absence of any law, boundaries tend to disappear between human and nature. Homogeneity through repetition and the systematic tends to prevail. At the scale of the array of boundaries, the consequence is that boundaries between places of different statuses, as defined by cultural and political functioning, and aesthetic value, are also disappearing. At the scale of the boundary itself, a clear shift from parametric design to computational design of the *Hyposurface* surface (and a distance taken with the generic triangular shape of the elements) could enable a clear aesthetic value of the dynamic surface, through the creative intention of an individual or collective author.

The MIT Self-Assembly Lab is at this point today in terms of research on transformable walls. It is a cross-disciplinary design research centre to develop innovations that serve societal needs. They develop research on transformable structures, comprising transformable screens and transformable meeting places, using different geometric and material properties. The aim of the 'transformable meeting places' team is to reimagine interior office or building environments. Open office plans have been shown to decrease productivity due to noise and privacy challenges, yet they provide flexibility and collaborative opportunities. Fixed offices offer privacy and quiet environments but restrict the type of working places available and occupy more square footage. This research proposes an alternative whereby structures can easily transform between private phone booths, lounge places or other quiet meeting places into open flexible areas. After Skylar Tibbitts (MIT Self-Assembly Lab) met architect Michelle Kaufmann at a TED conference in 2016, they started a research collaboration with Google to explore the future of workplace environments. Over the subsequent months, they turned initial sketches into concepts that became these prototypes of Transformable Meeting Places. They published one project of transformable office pods<sup>23</sup>. Other projects include a transformable woven structure, and an interactive rolling partition (Figure 4).

Architect Michelle Kaufmann had already joined forces with top-secret research lab Google X team (Astro Teller and Sebastian Thrun) as a consultant in 2010. In 2012, she co-founded Flux<sup>24</sup> to apply artificial intelligence and computer science 'to help make thoughtfully designed, healthy, durable buildings accessible to everyone.' Kaufmann says her start-

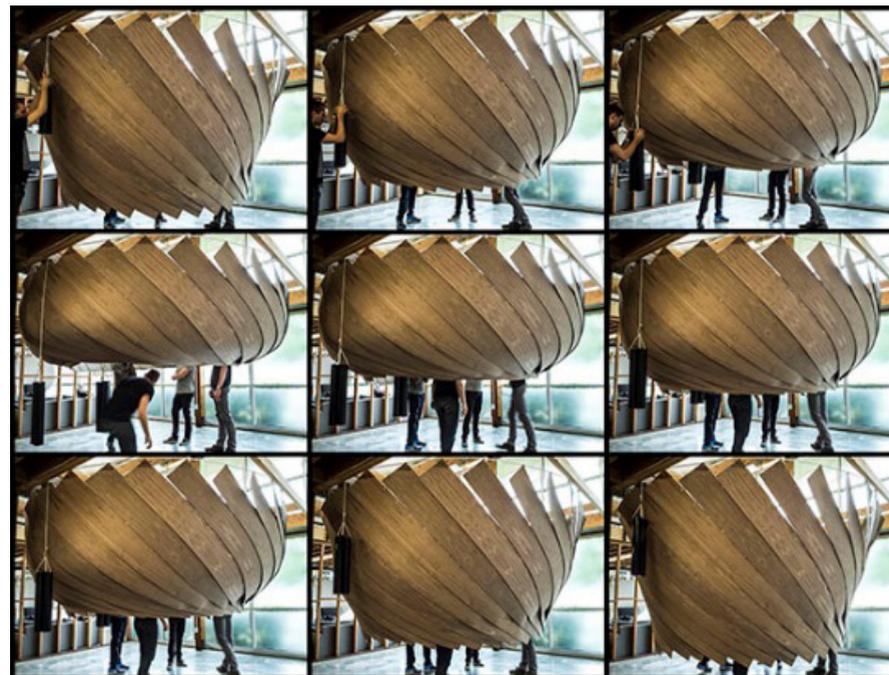


Figure 4. MIT Self-Assembly Lab, *Transformable office pods*, 2016.

up, the first official company spun out from Google X (now part of parent company Alphabet), will enable architects and urban planners to tap in to the massive efficiencies of a software platform in a profession where 'essentially each building is still designed and built from scratch.' Flux builds software that Kaufmann says will adjust for everything – from zoning regulations to the angle of the sun or the size of a screw – in seconds. Kaufmann runs the R&D lab for Alphabet and Google's new campus in Mountain View, near San Francisco, which is set to break ground in 2018 (and also for Google Sunnyvale, California and in Google London). She is collaborating with the project's two architects, Bjarke Ingels and Thomas Heatherwick, using rapid prototyping and other product-design principles to develop new kinds of building materials and adaptive structures, like 'a handkerchief [roof] in the middle [of a building] that can open and close and create energy.'<sup>25</sup> Details of the projects are not known at the date of publication of this article.

#### Possibility of Collective Creativity

Following what has been described about computational design, its complexity, and its links with natural processes, means that if there is creativity in nature, it would be theoretically possible to witness a collective creative process on the base of computational design tools. It would just be a question of complexity and calculation capability. In relation to the subject

of collective data input into a system of architectural boundaries, it means that the collective could be 'creative' in this manipulation itself, and thus enhance their creativity for other tasks.

As the technological environment tends to mimic natural processes, collective creativity could emerge on the model of 'emergence' in the animal realm. 'In the simplest commonly used definition, emergence is said to be the properties of a system that cannot be deduced from its components, something more than the sum of its parts.' The theory of emergence posits that sometimes nature 'jumps' from one state to another in sudden and unpredictable ways<sup>26</sup>, creating 'singularisation' and 'individuation'<sup>27</sup>. The way parameters and algorithms could be set to function in this model is theoretically feasible in the future according to theories of 'emergence'. On the basis of the possibilities of computational technologies to take into account a considerable amount of input data and parameters that relate to the key sociological aspects of negotiations of boundaries between individual and collective workplaces, a creative outcome could happen in the system. It could be a threat or an unprecedented positive tool to use for collective practice. What computational tools enable, and that creates a shift from traditional practice, is the input by multiple participants (with negative and positive effects that it can engender). As mentioned previously, the use of collective data questions the transfers or sharing of power and decision-making. Through the multiplicity of parameters and algorithms, power can be shared at different levels: between the boss and a group, or between a group and an individual person<sup>28</sup>. The use by a group of persons, with the tensions inherent to the functioning of this group, could have a consequence on the emergence of a creative configuration of the system. It is a utopian idea to imagine the emergence of singular events in architecture, but if René Thom is not contradicted, it is theoretically feasible with the level of complexity achieved by computational tools. If this evolution is possible in nature, the hypothesis is that with the level of data and complexity enabled by computers, it is also possible for artificial objects.

Through the lens of history, the notion of collective creativity is not especially new and is deeply rooted in the period before the emergence of the figure of the individual artist as a genius in the Renaissance. This emergence of the notion of the subject in the Renaissance era coincides broadly with the emergence of rational and controlled planning of cities and architecture. The similarities of the layout of cities with nature-related shapes in Mesopotamia and Egypt, ancient India and China, ancient Greece and the periods to the Middle Ages (with the exception of the Roman *cardo* and *decumanus maximus*), are replaced by rational geometric planning in the Western world. During the Renaissance, a shift to a rational and artificial way to layout cities is clearly visible. Computational design is a powerful contemporary tool that enables us to embrace ideas and concepts from pre-Renaissance history. Also, because of the capabilities of computers today,

emphasis is on what makes humankind irreplaceable: the creativity of the individual. By being able to combine both collective and individual forms of thinking and creating, through fluctuating relations between persons enabled by interior architecture configurations, the computational design relates in two ways to historical aspects. Neither the isolated subject from the *studioli* that appear in Renaissance paintings, nor the purely functional and playful open plan models of the workplace developed in the nineteenth and twentieth century, can have the fruitful outcomes made possible by the new connection between these two figures from the past (that is, the collective creativity and the emphasis on the creativity of one person). This conceptual model could be more similar to the *botteghe* from the Renaissance, described by Piero Formica as 'the innovative coworking places of 15<sup>th</sup>-century Italy'.<sup>29</sup>

#### **Conclusion: The Possibility of a Creative Workplace through the Development of Computationally Designed Boundaries**

In the actual context of a critical approach towards classical open plan offices, computational design enables the creation of boundaries that organise shifts between individual and group work in the same space. Cost efficient in terms of allocated space, they also stimulate collective creativity through the alternating of private thinking moments and collective discussions. The possibilities of computer calculation enable collective input and control at the scale of the group, and thus question the sharing of power in the workplace. Employees can possibly have more control on their workplace environment. This is possible if the 'boss' or multiple horizontal decision makers allow this sharing of power. Considering these capabilities could effectively create better places of creative co-working practice. The computationally designed boundaries themselves, can stimulate the body and the senses, and enhance creativity.

In a more theoretical and utopian way, the collective input of data in a computational system could generate creativity in the design of workplace features, on the basis of 'emergence' as with nature. It is a question of scale (complexity and data). The collective body would be able to evolve in an environment that enhances events, affects and singular evolutions in time. This concept is not new in the history of planning our environment, as collective creativity existed in the Middle Ages (cathedrals are an iconic example), and the focus on the creativity of one person has been a deep shift from the Renaissance era. However, both aspects are more highly valued today because of the power of technology. Collective creativity and individual creativity, combined in the creative work organisation can be greatly expanded through technology. As we know from the subjects of the ongoing research by laboratories like the Google X team, computational designed workplaces have immense potential for our future.

## Notes

- 1 An artistic quality does not necessarily mean overly expressive. There are other points of view on this aspect. The complementary point of view, which is equally compelling, is that one needs a neutral environment to be able to open up to new ideas and aesthetics, and not be stuck by the aesthetics of the time when the environment has been created. In SpaceEncounter's project for Sony Music offices (2017) in Amsterdam, the application of interactive design is levelled at a minimum: displaying a programmable ceiling lighting that creates a sensory environment into a minimal greyish geometric environment. Instead of adding the sum of individual requirements, the interactive environment is levelled at its minimum.
- 2 Ben Waber, Jennifer Magnolfi and Greg Lindsay, 'Wokspaces That Move People,' *Harvard Business Review* (October 2014), <https://hbr.org/2014/10/workspaces-that-move-people>.
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- 6 Workspace Design and Build Ltd, 'What can we learn from Google's offices about workplace design?' <http://www.workspacedesign.co.uk/what-can-we-learn-from-googles-offices-about-workplace-design>.
- 7 On 7 February 2017.
- 8 Lindsey Kaufman, 'Google got it wrong. The open-office trend is destroying the workplace,' *The Washington Post*, 30 December 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/12/30/google-got-it-wrong-the-open-office-trend-is-destroying-the-workplace/?utm\\_term=.0eb392e9eae6](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/12/30/google-got-it-wrong-the-open-office-trend-is-destroying-the-workplace/?utm_term=.0eb392e9eae6).
- 9 '2017 Next Generation Workplace conference program.'
- 10 Giovanna Dunmall, 'At Google's London Office, AHMM Overturns Decades of Workplace Norms,' *Interior Design*, 27 June 2017, <http://www.interiordesign.net/projects/13291-at-google-s-london-office-ahmm-overturns-decades-of-workplace-norms>.
- 11 '2017 Next Generation Workplace conference program.'
- 12 Nathan Openshaw, 'The responsive workplace,' *Frame* 119 (November/December 2017), 146–73.
- 13 Norman Kietzmann, 'A modular frame incorporating diverse functions is at the heart of a Milanese workplace,' *Frame* 119 (November/December 2017), 164.
- 14 Jennifer Magnolfi, 'Programmable Habitats: Designing the future workplace for man and machine,' Youtube, re:Work with Google, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQzw1cAloYQ>.
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- 16 Interview with Hank Haeusler, head of Computational design course, UNSW Sydney, April 2017.
- 17 Antoine Picon, *Digital Culture in Architecture: An Introduction for the Design Profession* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2010).
- 18 Interview with Hank Haeusler. William J. Mitchell, 'A New Agenda for Computer-Aided Design,' in Achim Menges (ed.), *Computational Design Thinking* (Chichester: Wiley, 2011), 86–93; Neil Leach, 'Parametrics Explained,' in Neil Leach and Philip F. Yuan (eds.), *Scripting the Future* (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2012).
- 19 Frédéric Migayrou, 'The Order of the Non-Standard: Towards a Critical Structuralism,' in Rivka Oxman and Robert Oxman (eds.), *Theories of the Digital in Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2014), 22.
- 20 Migayrou, 'The Order of the Non-Standard,' 22.
- 21 Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* (New York: Norton, 1992).
- 22 Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, *L'Affect* (Auch: Tristram, 2007).
- 23 Self-Assembly Lab, 'Transformable meeting places,' <https://selfassemblylab.mit.edu/transformable-meeting-spaces/>; Honghao Deng, Poseidon Ho, Luis Alonso, James Li, Juan Angulo, 'Amoeba,' *Tomorrow's Workplace Design Competition* organised by *Metropolis* magazine, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4Ins4tTtBQ>.
- 24 Michelle Kaufmann Studio, <http://www.kaufmannstudio.com/flux-factory>.
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# OPEN SESSION

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# OPEN SESSION

Session chair:

**Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen**, Yale University

## The Process of Change in Zurenborg: The Evolution of the Suburban House in Antwerp

Susan Galavan,  
KU Leuven

### Abstract

As the first country on the European continent to industrialize, Belgium was an important centre for the flowering of modernism. It was also the first country in Europe to move out of the city into suburban villas, aided by solid transport networks. This paper will focus on the Zurenborg district of Antwerp, a large real estate development which emerged outside the city in the late nineteenth century. Built between 1884 and 1929, the district was managed by one development company that interpreted the needs and tastes of its rising suburban population, reflected in the diverse social and spatial stratification of its architecture.

The paper will focus on the work of Joseph Bascourt, a particularly skilled architect whose designs oscillated between modest Neoclassical dwellings, Art Nouveau houses, and eclectic mansions. Through a study of original drawings as well as the as-built artefact, it will follow his work over time, examining its main characteristics from external form to plan type; from building materials to architectural expression. How does his work reflect the rapid changes occurring in society at large, and the reactions for and/or against these changes? Furthermore, how did the architect mediate between the strict controls imposed by the building company and the macro socio-historical developments that were changing residents' desires?

This paper will highlight the role of the suburban house as a vehicle for the expression of the themes of late nineteenth-century life in the birthplace of industrialization in continental Europe.

## Postwar Gaudí: Acts of Ventriloquism and Architectural Criticism

Pep Avilés,  
Penn State University

### Abstract

Growing international attention towards the architecture of Antoni Gaudí during the post-war years was historically opportunistic. Architects and critics promoted Gaudí's work as the ideal companion for the visual and dialectical renewal of architectural culture that ran in parallel to the development of American formalism. Some concentrated on his 'freedom' in the use of materials; others, on Gaudí's original and 'fantastic' organic forms. All of them fostered architectural imagination to bring new impetuses to the idea of modern architecture. Bruno Zevi, for instance, selected an image of the undulating benches in Parc Güell for the cover of his *Storia della architettura moderna* published in 1950 and Nikolaus Pevsner added additional footnotes and photographs of Gaudí's 'strange' architecture in each subsequent post-war remake of his *Pioneers* while publishing longer articles in widely read journals such as *The Listener*. Magazines such as *Perspecta*, *The Architectural Association Journal*, *The Architectural Review*, *The Architectural Forum*, and *Zodiac* (as well as mass media like *Time Magazine*), introduced the work of the Catalan architect to a wider professional audience during the 1950s with significant formal and ideological overtones. Institutions like the Museum of Modern Art sponsored research by Henry Russell-Hitchcock in Barcelona in preparation of the first exhibition on Gaudí's work in New York (1957–1958).

Equally significant was Josep Lluís Sert's collaboration with art critic and curator James Johnson Sweeney, resulting in several writings during the 1950s and the publication in 1960 of a monograph on Gaudí's work. Sert and Sweeney underscored Gaudí's photogenic materiality, a 'new vision' reminiscent of the work of Moholy-Nagy and that echoed previous studies by Carola Giedion-Welcker on Parc Güell's tiles published in 1955. Considering the increasing fascination towards Gaudí's architecture, this paper will discuss the role that architecture critics played in the construction of post-war sensibilities and ideologies. The work of Gaudí was alibi and illustration: a litmus test against which architectural criticism could ascertain post-war liaisons and formal agendas.

## Formalizing Knowledge: The Example of the Ethio-Swedish Building Institute in Addis Abeba

Helena Mattsson, KTH Royal Institute of Technology  
Erik Sigge, KTH Royal Institute of Technology

### Abstract

The Ethio-Swedish Institute for Building Technology, ESIBT, in Addis Abeba was founded through a bilateral agreement between Ethiopia and Sweden in 1954. The institute was established as a response to the foreign control of building construction in Ethiopia with the aim to educate Ethiopians in building professions, to conduct research and testing of building materials, and to plan and build low-cost housing. The agreement was modeled on the principles for development cooperation set forth by the UN after WWII, in particular through the type of aid called 'technical assistance'. The agreement thus sought, as declared in General Assembly Resolution 200 (III), to arrange for: the organization of international teams of experts to advise local governments; the training abroad of experts (in Sweden); the training of local technicians (in Ethiopia); and to provide facilities designed to assist Ethiopia in obtaining technical personnel, equipment, and supplies.

This paper will investigate ESIBT's development during the 1950s and 1960s from the point of view of knowledge circulation, in which the analytical emphasis is on the role of knowledge in the historical development of the building institute, and knowledge's relation to cultural, political, and economic contexts in which architecture and planning expertise are produced. This perspective could be described as a knowledge history of building technology in which European technology is transferred to Ethiopia, while at the same time local traditional building techniques and materials are documented and categorized in line with emerging international classification systems.

The analysis will focus on ESIBT's relation to the UN and international institutions like CIB (International Council for Building), and highlight ESIBT's emphasis on building research in the establishment of their new educational programmes and the development of new course curricula.

## Postmodern Architecture in Poland: Meaning and Appropriation under Late Socialism

Florian Urban,  
Glasgow School of Art

### Abstract

Postmodern architecture – the term usually evokes images of candy-coloured façades, fake marble, plaster columns, and the joyfully ironic use of no-longer venerated classical precedents. The scholarly literature tends to root it deeply in a pluralist, economically saturated society that cherishes playfulness and individual expression, as well as a certain level of superficiality and self-satisfaction. But what if postmodernism had developed in a completely different environment, far removed from capitalist exuberance?

This was exactly the situation in socialist Poland during the 1980s. While Polish postmodern architects received important impulses from their colleagues in the West, they were faced with a very different environment. They worked under conditions of scarcity and used their design as a form of resistance against a collectivist dictatorship, connected to a yearning for truth, inner values, and spiritual fulfilment.

My presentation will attempt to make sense of this apparent contradiction. I argue that Polish postmodern architecture is remarkable for several reasons. First, it appeared 'through the backdoor', manifesting within the rigid framework of the communist planned economy, often without explicit support by the rulers, and often, particularly in sacred architecture, through bottom-up or self-build initiatives. Second, it was influenced by strong national-conservative ideas in which the Catholic Church became a catalyst of anti-socialist opposition and hopes for political change, and by a design tradition that had inspired much of nineteenth and twentieth-century architecture. And third, it was not connected to a post-industrial society like postmodernism in the West, but largely grew out of an industrial economy that at the time was subject to certain modifications. Against this background, I argue that the habitual connections of postmodernism to post-Fordism, a post-industrial society, and neo-liberal politics have to be revised. At the same time, my article will point to the flexibility of meaning and content in architecture, and to the windows of opportunity within an apparently rigid system.

Examples will include the housing schemes Na Skarpie in Cracow-Nowa Huta (1985–1995, Romuald Loegler/Wojciech Dobrzański/Michał Szymanowski) and Nad Jamną in Mikołów near Katowice/Silesia (1983–1986, Stanisław Niemczyk), the Old Town rebuilding project in Elbląg/Masuria

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(1983–1997, Szczepan Baum, Ryszard Semka, Wiesław Anders) and the examples of sacred architecture such as Ascension Church in Warsaw-Ursynów (1980–1985, Marek Budzyński and Piotr Wicha), Holy Ghost Church in Tychy/Silesia (1978–1983, Stanisław Niemczyk), and Our Lady of Częstochowa Church in Cracow-Nowa Huta (1984–1995 Krzysztof Dyga, Andrzej Nasfeter).

# ROUNDTABLES

**433 WHO (STILL) NEEDS EASTERN EUROPE?**  
Carmen Popescu, Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Bretagne

**447 BEYOND INSTRUMENTALITY:  
ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORIES OF ARCHITECTURE**  
Daniel A. Barber, University of Pennsylvania

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# WHO (STILL) NEEDS EASTERN EUROPE?

Chair:

**Carmen Popescu**, Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Bretagne, Rennes

Discussants:

**Irina Tulbure**, Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest

**Alina Serban**, Bucharest National University of Arts

Eastern Europe made a late appearance in the architectural historiography. Ironically, Sir Banister Fletcher's *A History of Architecture* (1896), which distinguished between 'historical' and 'non-historical' architecture, was one of the first (and rare) surveys to mention examples from the region, including them in the second category.

It took almost one century to integrate Eastern Europe in the historiographical discourse, following the dismantling of the Communist bloc (1989–1991) which, parallel to the paramount reframing of global geopolitics, had also triggered a remapping of the art and architectural history territories. This late integration was accomplished through a series of narratives. On the one hand, by emulating the prolific studies in Nationalism and Identity, scholars interested in the region used its marginality to their advantage by analysing its architecture in terms of idiosyncrasy. On the other hand, the Cold War progressed as a powerful field of study, which came to be seen in the following years as the most relevant perspective for looking at the region. Hence, Eastern Europe was assimilated to its recent history – as a significant part of the Communist bloc – and its architecture was studied as a by-product of this, insisting both on its politicization and its ordinariness. More recently, the Spatial turn brought

a complexification of this understanding and of its geopolitical implications, giving more room for a comparative approach that questioned the polarized frame of the Cold War by expanding its territory and thus introducing the Third World in an analysis founded on transfers and circulation.

Paradoxically, this (disputable) integration led to a change in the very concept of Eastern Europe. Its progressive dilution within the more or less dominant discourse could be understood as an indicator of the relative success of the historiographical assimilation. If such a withdrawal is justifiable – the fear of the limitation inherent to all area studies, the belief in a ‘global’ history, etc. – it still shows a certain methodological turn.

The roundtable aims to debate this withdrawal and proposes an analysis of its causes and consequences. Is it still useful to refer to a geo-historical concept when writing an architectural history that aspires more and more to be transversal and inclusive? And if so, how is it possible to make such a concept recover both its historical dimension and the acuteness of its particularities? By taking Eastern Europe as a (valid) pretext, the roundtable questions the current mechanics of architectural historiography.

## Eastern Europe Is Not the Centre or the Periphery

Kimberly Zarecor,  
Iowa State University

### Abstract

As Larry Wolfe reminds us, the edge of Europe is somewhere in the middle of Russia and ‘Eastern Europe’ is an invention of eighteenth-century intellectuals. Locating the division between civilisation and backwardness in Prussia, and along the schism of Germanic and Slavic languages, these intellectuals set up a framework for interpreting Europe that remains with us today. Until World War II, this division was about perceptions of an urban, industrialised West and a rural, agricultural East. There was no definitive mark where the West ended and the East began. Consensus came only after 1945 as the definitive categorisation of the East became countries aligned with the Soviet Union or a ruling Communist Party. The clarity of this Cold War terminology has now faded. Architectural historians succeeded in bringing attention to Eastern Europe in the 1990s. First as a missing history of the avant-garde, and then back into nineteenth-century national identity formation and forward to postwar Stalinism and industrialisation. This aligned with a disciplinary move toward postwar research and, for a time, Communist countries had the appeal of being the unknown. We are now in the midst of another shift, the re-marginalisation of Eastern Europe on the same terms as in the eighteenth century. As the Global South has become the focus of intense scholarly attention, Europe and North America have become the normative centre, but only some of this territory matters. The perception that Eastern Europe is still backward, trying to catch up to the West after decades of communism, means that it cannot be fully representative of the European experience. It is neither the centre, nor the celebrated other, so it is marginal and overlooked. The methodological question is where to go from here and how to re-situate the region and its historiographic concerns within the discipline.

### Keywords

Eastern Europe, marginalisation, Czechoslovakia, Global South.

In the 1990s, Larry Wolff’s formulation of the ‘invention of “Eastern Europe”’ provided legitimacy for scholars working to make the histories of this region visible within global historiography. If Eastern Europe was an invention of enlightenment intellectuals, then this East/West construction could be challenged. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the regional communist

parties that had defined the 'East' since the 1940s gave urgency to this agenda. For many intellectuals in the region, belonging once again to the centre and therefore to the West, was critical. They wanted to distance themselves from perceptions of Eastern European backwardness. The active discourse around the term Central Europe in the 1990s made this regional dialog visible to outsiders and the compromise of 'East Central Europe,' that is still popular in Czech and Polish contexts, is a reminder that there are still high stakes for many people in the debate about terminology.

My interest in participating in this panel was prompted by my own sense in the last ten years or so that we are in the midst of a historiographic shift, what amounts to the re-marginalisation of Eastern Europe on the same terms as in the eighteenth century. Architectural historians succeeded in bringing some attention to Eastern Europe in the 1990s, a focus that remained consistent well into the 2000s before starting to recede again. Attention went first to reconstructing the missing history of the region's avant-gardes, then back into the nineteenth century to illuminate the formation of national identities, and finally forward to postwar Stalinism, industrialisation, and prefabrication – the topic of my dissertation, completed in 2008. The Cold War focus aligned with a disciplinary move toward the postwar period and nationalism as a theme connected to interdisciplinary conversations about post-colonial and post-imperial spaces. For a time, the former Communist countries had the appeal of being the unknown, places inaccessible to outsiders for decades, where minor languages were spoken, and with grey and crumbling formerly grand cities. This is no longer the experience of the region and scholarly focus has shifted.

The new frontier is the Global South. Europe and North America are now the normative centres, foils for arguments about the importance of transnational flows of expertise and knowledge paradigms through networks of alternate centres and peripheries. But, only some of Europe matters in these new discourses. Eastern Europe has once again become a shorthand for being behind or backward. Architecture and urbanism in the region is seen as still trying to catch up to the West after decades of Communism, and therefore not fully representative of the European experience. Eastern Europe was also the imperial hinterland, whereas Western European countries were the colonisers and their links to the Global South survive through linguistic and material culture connections. For example, French, Portuguese, Italian, or Spanish language knowledge provides access for scholars to primary sources in many parts of the Global South.

Neither the centre, nor the celebrated other, Eastern Europe has moved again to the margins. One strategy to overcome this has been to posit the relevance of the Second World through its collaborations with the networks of the Third World. In this context, the Cold War divisions of East and West can be redrawn as a global technocratic discourse in which modernisation as a practice can complicate the traditional binaries. The work of Lukasz Stanek

and Elidor Mëhilli shows the promise and appeal of such approaches. Yet the Second World framework itself is situated in the twentieth century, so it cannot encompass geographic and local cultural distinctions that are evident on a longer historical timeline, before and after Communism.

In my most recent writing, I argue for the utility of the category of Eastern Europe on its own terms through contemporary culture and politics. Eastern European countries have responded differently than those in Western Europe to the on-going migrant crisis, the Eurozone financial problems, and in the face of Russia's and its own politicians' increasingly authoritarian stances. The reasons for this reach back into the nineteenth century and sometimes earlier and are tied closely to the region's self-perception as a periphery and one repeatedly subjugated by others, including the Soviets. International news is full of coverage of growing authoritarian tendencies of the region's rightwing leaders including in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria. The Czech Republic has not seen a decline in civil liberties, but its political class is increasingly drawn from a wealthy rightwing elite. The region may be losing some of its historiographic significance, but at the same time, the question of legacies is increasingly relevant as Western Europeans observe a region within Europe that does not always adhere to its perceptions of Europeanness. If architectural history continues its re-marginalisation of Eastern Europe, we lose the opportunity to use our disciplinary tools to explore the differences that have and are still emerging between Europe's East and West.

A city like Prague has always been a misfit in this territorial geography. The former seat of the Holy Roman Empire, due north of Vienna with many bi-lingual residents, and highly industrialised by the twentieth century, Prague had a Czech-speaking elite with nineteenth-century connections to the Pan-Slavic movement, but German was the language of power and international commerce into the twentieth century. After 1918, the city's Czechs, Germans, Jews, and other ethnic and linguistic minorities aligned themselves culturally more with Paris and Berlin than any city to the east and easily moved between languages and international cultural references. After 1948, Prague moved completely into the East, behind the Iron Curtain, but since the mid-1990s its patterns have been harder to delineate and categorise in these binary terms.

The fuzziness reinforces the necessity of the term, Eastern Europe. Prague's location on this threshold highlights the importance of the category, not as an arbiter of civilisation and backwardness (terms largely discredited in the specialist literature), but instead as a marker of historical continuities and discontinuities, of political and cultural experiences, and post-imperial nation building. Sociologist Tomasz Zarycki's book, *Ideologies of Eastness in Central and Eastern Europe* (2014), explores the origins and current state of the question of the 'East' in the region. He argues that the focus should not be in overcoming the region's orientalisation

(borrowing from Edward Said), which he argues is insurmountable, but rather in understanding ‘the mechanisms which stand behind the discursive stigmatisation of [this] part of Europe,’ both external and internal.<sup>11</sup> In these terms, my interest in the Czechoslovak case resides in its own specificities, not in claiming its Western or Eastern *bona fides*, but as a place marked by and defined by particular political ideologies, geopolitical power networks, forms of urbanity, and professional practices. Decoupled from any measurable geographic location in the East, Czechoslovakia, and now the Czech Republic and Slovakia, exist in this discursive space, which itself exists to illuminate the subtleties of the European narrative and also the global questions of networks and centres/peripheries in the postwar era.

### Notes

- 1 Tomasz Zarycki, *Ideologies of Eastness in Central and Eastern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2014), 1.

## Local? Global?: The Power to Define Conceptual Categories

Veronica E. Aplenc,  
University of Philadelphia

### Abstract

As noted, since the 1990s scholars have sought to reconceptualize Eastern Europe, foregrounding its particular characteristics along new lines while simultaneously pushing it aside as a category of analysis in favor of greater paradigms. Importantly, this work countered the peripheral status historically assigned to Eastern Europe along geographic, disciplinary, and architectural production lines. However, the region’s new position as both a generative, yet disappearing, analytical category raises important theoretical questions.

We must ask whether the focus on supra-local categories, such as national, transnational, and global, reifies Eastern Europe’s historically peripheral status along existing lines by denying influence from regional scholarship on these very categories. Some would argue that Eastern Europe finds itself in the challenging position of not being “Other” enough to generate its own conceptual categories. For example, it stands in contrast to South Asia and subaltern studies. However, research findings from the region complicate this interpretation.

Eastern European cities reveal a complex understanding of the so-called national, global, and transnational within their specific contexts. Tarik Amar has demonstrated for 1950s Lviv that the application of Soviet practices allowed the city to develop along national lines. My research on Slovenia finds that Slovene planners embraced a local, highly bounded, focus for 1970s Ljubljana’s development. In the first case, “national” is complicated by the socialist; in the second, it is a socialist configuration that is highly bounded, versus a “national” one. Both examples ask that we interrogate these categories from a local – or, to borrow an anthropological term, emic – perspective as they do not precisely mirror Cold War-era paradigms. This, in turn, asks researchers to reassess the position of Eastern Europe in a now unclear world order. Importantly, it also calls them to interrogate the nature of their own research and political positionality, as well as that of Eastern European colleagues.

## Second World Urbanity: Beyond Area Studies Towards New Regionalisms

Daria Bocharnikova, Center for Fine Arts BOZAR / KU Leuven  
Steven E. Harris, University of Mary Washington

### Abstract

The concept of Eastern Europe remains haunted by the orientalist vision, invented as early as the eighteenth century (Larry Wolff), of an underdeveloped and uncivilized neighbour of enlightened Western Europe. The scholarship of the past twenty years on Eastern Europe, including the history of architecture, has gone far to unmake this prejudice by showing the pan-European aspirations for modernity, including the agency of local architects, engineers and intellectuals in producing its unique visions.

Although this work contributes to the provincialising of the West, Eastern Europe lingers as an artificial tag lacking strong theoretical ambitions. Scholars typically use it as a professional marker, not as a theoretical model, to promote their research within an inherited area studies paradigm created by the Cold War. But is it really a useful tool today for writing global, comparative, and entangled histories of architecture?

This paper argues in favor of inventing new terms that allow scholars to overcome the vocabulary of area studies. The task of writing global history reveals the necessity of thinking anew the multiple links between centers and peripheries, as well as overcoming the simplistic binary of center and periphery, and grasping more complex hierarchies of solidarities and competing universalisms. Among available alternatives to 'Eastern Europe,' this paper explores the category of the 'Second World' as a more useful term to capture the diversity – at times regional, national, or local – and the global implications of what architects and urban planners undertook in state socialisms. In this context, the presenters will discuss research under the umbrella of the Second World Urbanity project, which explores the architectural history and urban planning of socialist cities throughout the world, past and present, from Havana and Berlin to Tashkent and Dalian.

## Reconsidering Eastern Europe from the Margins

Francisco Martínez,  
University of Helsinki

### Abstract

What kind of container is Eastern Europe? What is the contour and what is the content? Besides the geographical connotations, does it refer to a liminal condition, an *othering* process, a fertile third space,<sup>1</sup> or a zombie category never made obsolete to the end<sup>2</sup>? We can also ask if Eastern Europe remains as a generative term to be retained in the future and even if it is nowadays used by the local population. Then, in terms of this conference, we can posit the question of its very usefulness in writing an architectural history and studying contemporary societies at large. This paper argues that there is an increasing need to analyse Eastern Europe in relation to the global present, and not as substantively defined based on past geopolitical vocabulary. I do not call however for the complete dismissal of the category, but rather to reflect on how it is losing value and to reflect on the ways in which the region reveals new vocabularies without leaving behind completely the old ones.

### Keywords

Post-Eastern Europe, *Peripheristan*, peripheral wisdom, zombie categories, cross-locations.

### A relational notion of the Eastern Europe

Globality is not happening elsewhere. In this paper, I point out that there is an increasing need to analyse Eastern Europe in relation to the global present, and not as substantively defined based on past geopolitical vocabulary. The category 'Eastern Europe' is losing value as an overarching framework and the region is becoming more difficult to define or event to decipher,<sup>3</sup> characterised by multi-scalar processes such as Europeanisation, postsocialism, nationalist setbacks, global circulation of cultural products, and neoliberal peripheralisation. which add in some cases new relations of domination to the pre-existing ones.<sup>4</sup>

Hence, I argue that in order to develop a more relational understanding of the region, as a place and as an idea, we should pay special attention to how young people in the former Socialist bloc take on this and other related concepts. For instance, in some of my recent works<sup>5</sup>, I have discussed how the 'children of the new east'<sup>6</sup> approach categories such as post-socialism

and Eastern Europe in a rather playful and generative way, not trying to occupy the centres, neither making any effort to get rid of past categories. As a result, not only post-socialism, but Eastern Europe as a category shows a decreasing analytical functionality, working nowadays as a weak container that refers to vaguely recognisable conditions and spatio-temporal frames. Otherwise, when Eastern Europe is applied as a zombie-category to young people, one should be aware that a patronising agenda is at stake, or a victimist discourse in order to collect funding from Western institutions. Hence, it is important to ask: Who is speaking in the name of Eastern Europe, who is the ventriloquist? And *cui prodest*?

Categories persist because they are implicated in power relations. We can assume, with many authors, that the concept of post-socialism has contributed to perpetuate the 'othering' of Eastern European societies,<sup>7</sup> constructing a 'double framing'<sup>8</sup> and a discourse of 'liminal Europeans'<sup>9</sup>. Yet we can argue too, also with many authors, that global networks, technological shifts and generational change have made possible that Eastern Europe is everywhere as a corollary of globalisation,<sup>10</sup> making us all East European now<sup>11</sup>. The most interesting is that both approaches are reciprocal, and became part of a global cultural economy; especially if we pay attention to how processes of privatisation and dispossession were not simply contemporaneous in different parts of the world but also justified by parallel arguments and ideologies, pursued by interrelated groups of elites, personally and corporately linked to each other.

### Not Moscow, Not Mecca: Peripheristan

As Carmen Popescu has pointed out,<sup>12</sup> the discursive marginality of Eastern Europe, presented as belonging to non-history, lead to analysing its architecture in terms of idiosyncrasy, becoming the Cold War and modernist architecture the most relevant perspective for looking at the region. For centuries, Eastern Europe has been circulating as a self-explanatory category, reinforced by economic, geopolitical, religious and infrastructural features, and hard to supplement conceptually with other adjectives or adverbs (such as post-Eastern Europe, über-Eastern Europe, off-Eastern Europe...).

Since the Enlightenment, the region has been presented as an eccentric land, *not Moscow, not Mecca, not Berlin, not London* (paraphrasing the artist group Slavs & Tatars). A sort of *Peripheristan*, pointing a syncretic way of making-do derived from its own historical experience of abrupt changes.<sup>13</sup> Eastern European societies have been living in a constant process of change and turbulence for centuries,<sup>14</sup> making the familiar unfamiliar several times; as a result, local people have developed a particular competence to cope with uncertainty derived from their own experience, a sort of 'thick skin' that allows for a certain distance towards the unpredictable. Therefore, Eastern Europe could be considered as a way of thinking about problems

too, entailing a peripheral wisdom, a way of making-do, which is more perspectival, simultaneously outward and introspective.

Eventually, this assumption helps to understand the specific continuities and anti-continuities of these societies, and also points at the features shared across the region: abrupt changes, a particular capacity of appropriation and syncretism, and the orientation of mental agility towards resolving problems that will not appear as such in the core. Hence, I claim for deeper efforts in comparative ethnographic studies and more theorising from the peripheries<sup>15</sup> in order to understand the specific continuities and anti-continuities of these societies.

### Globalisation Turned Peripherality into a Relative Issue

Not only centre and periphery, but locality itself is perceived as increasingly ambivalent, since global dynamics have produced changes in relations between places and people, forming hybrid and/or multiple attachments (see Sarah Green's research project 'Crosslocations'). Hence, centre and periphery are less and less categorical and based on geographical distinctions, and increasingly refer to a diversity of ways of seeing and knowing.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, I want to list two important features, which might help to contextualise our discussion about the relevance of 'Eastern Europe' as a category in 2018.

On the one hand, not only did Europeanisation not happen in the way originally planned, but our continent is nowadays repositioned and altered as a place and as an idea,<sup>17</sup> to the point that Europe is being posited not simply as a nexus of political concern but as a problem too, for instance by migration processes that challenge solidarity discourses and reiterate the 'buffer zone' status of Eastern Europe.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, the actual asymmetries in knowledge-production within Europe seem to be decreasingly based on an East/West divide, and more connected to on-going global phenomena such as neoliberal policies and also the multiplication of niches of expertise and cross-located networks thematically organised, which make it more difficult to ignore the work done in the peripheries and favour communication and collaboration at the margins.

We can add that, in the same way that no one now refers to Western Europe as post-feudal, post-viking or post-catholic, there will come the time when post-socialism will tell little about actual dynamics in the so-called Eastern Europe,<sup>19</sup> and probably it will be related to generational change<sup>20</sup>. Likewise, global peripheries can also be central, because of functioning as a distinct regional hub or meeting platform, or by gaining capacity to make theory from the margin.<sup>21</sup> Hence, I want to conclude this essay with an invitation for learning how to view the region from different (temporal, spatial and scalar) perspectives, also reflecting on how it reveals new vocabularies without leaving behind completely the old ones.

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## Defamiliarizing Formal Analysis: A New Methodology to Study Ordinary Modernism

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### Abstract

The call provoking this roundtable insightfully argues that the powerful emergence of Cold War Studies had a dire effect on the architectural study of Eastern Europe – as it ‘was assimilated into its recent history’. But can we take exactly this point and push it further in order to eclipse the view of Eastern Europe as a ‘by-product’ of such sweeping global history, and instead explore the potentially unique position of Eastern Europe in articulating the form, space, and materiality of the ideas propelling this history?

Toward this end, this contribution to the roundtable suggests a methodological shift – to defamiliarize an old methodology of formal analysis. Instead of focusing on the aesthetic properties of particular styles, it is possible to conduct a careful formal analysis of ordinary mass produced modernism. Such analysis draws on the new focus on form in literary studies that refuses to separate between the formal and the socio-political. Instead of exploring exclusively the aesthetic properties of form, scholars look at its affordance – the potential uses or actions latent in a particular form that arrange elements and therefore power relations in our environment.

If Eastern Europe was indeed a laboratory of ordinary modernism, the site where the social aspects of the modern experiment were nearing its radical ends, then a careful study of this radical ordinary modernism can yield insights into one of the most intriguing questions of modernism’s dissemination: how could formally related practices implicate diverse, often contradictory political legitimizations and sustain deep ideological differences? In other words, what are the relationships between aesthetic and political forms, and what can the particularities of the Eastern European case – the radicalization of interwar experiments – teach us about different paths to globalization?

## BEYOND INSTRUMENTALITY: ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORIES OF ARCHITECTURE

Chair:

**Daniel A. Barber**, University of Pennsylvania

Respondent:

**Sophie Hochhäusl**, University of Pennsylvania

Against the backdrop of contemporary environmental challenges, Anthropocene debates have prompted interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary forms of scholarly inquiry, giving rise to the environmental humanities. Insights from this capacious field have informed architectural scholarship methodologically, thematically, and discursively, and have encouraged understanding the past and envisioning environmental futures that exceed the familiar trope of the technological fix.

Architectural history has produced fruitful modes of inquiry that are specific to the historical and theoretical study of the built environment. Scholarship has focused on, for example, material and immaterial resource histories and landscapes of extraction (Di Palma, Ferng, Massey, TenHoor); forms of media generated by scientific disciplinary and institutional formations in biology, geography, climatology, and anthropology (Cheng, Haney, Barber); and their embeddedness in colonial, imperial, and capitalist apparatuses of power (Chang, King, Cupers, Pyla, Scott). Scholars have also engaged how architecture’s own modes of production

– from its rootedness in the history of art to the production of drawings, models, and computer renderings – have held ramification for environmental thought particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Coen, Narath, Lystra). Finally, architectural historians have gestured at the relationship between the history of environmental ideas in spatial disciplines and the contemporary challenges we face today (Graham et al., Martin, Sickells).

In this roundtable, we aim to discuss the methodological challenges faced by the environmental history of architecture. We seek contributions that focus on methodological developments in architectural history that are sensitive to contemporary environmental pressures, and which foster new directions and potentials for research in the field. In keeping with the interdisciplinary nature of this inquiry, we are interested in proposals that implement and rethink concepts in science and technology studies and environmental history and/or introduce them to architectural history. Moreover, we welcome essays that engage previous revisionist impulses, in particular relative to post-colonial and gender studies. We equally encourage proposals that re-interrogate architectural history's own disciplinary fascination with formal and aesthetic analysis. We are particularly concerned with architectural history's use of drawings, images, and multiple media as forms of conveying environmental knowledge. Finally, we are also interested in methodological approaches that examine the political histories of environment in architecture that have been engaged in both enclosing and opening up spaces of engagement for activists, experts, and citizens.

## Narrating Modern Architecture and Economic Growth

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### Abstract

What is the most appropriate political-philosophical framework for historicizing 'environment' in modern architecture? In the context of anthropogenic climate change, this question must be framed around the problem of resource-intensive growth paradigmatic of modernity. How should the modern imperative of economic growth be explained, analyzed, narrated – and how can architecture aid in this task?

We might distinguish three key approaches for tackling this problem: the critique of ideology, of geopolitics, and of biopolitics. Ideology concerns how a determinate structure of production mystifies its own violence and expropriation, widening class distinctions. Geopolitics suggests there is an inherent disjunction between nation-state jurisdiction and the global dynamics of capital, generating disruptive crises, nationalisms, wars, and other power-political asymmetries. Biopolitics offers a framework for thinking power-knowledge in terms of discourses over the government of life, from the conduct of conduct to the configuration of the managerial sciences of the state.

In this paper, I would like to suggest that critical histories of environment must necessarily narrate the connection between economic growth and modern architecture through a combination of the above approaches, qualified as follows. First, architecture must be understood as a managerial technology for mechanizing and automating labor-power. Second, it must be framed in the context of modern jurisdictional competition and warfare, not only between classes, social groups, and professions, but between political-economic units at all scales (persons, corporations, regions, states, sectors, etc). And third, it must be understood as a techno-discursive apparatus essential for upholding the modern distinction between work and leisure (or utility and culture, necessity and freedom, civilization and barbarism, etc).

Yet, attempting to understand the cultural and material effects of modern economic growth – re-examining structural accounts of global capitalism and imperialism since the early twentieth century, from Hobson to Arrighi – also necessarily requires attempting to translate them through the situated ecological histories, legal frameworks, and onto-epistemologies of indigenous, decolonial movements. As an example, I propose to consider the modern architecture of Palm Springs, California – quintessential environment of the work-leisure and national growth imaginaries, and built in the desert through the displacement and dispossession of a Native American tribe.

# Architects and the Circular Economy: Knud Lönberg-Holm, Buckminster Fuller, and the Structural Study Associates

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## Abstract

This position considers the role played by architects in theorizing regenerative fabrication – a critical concern for building in the Anthropocene. The idea of Spaceship Earth, popularized by Fuller and the economist Kenneth E. Boulding in the 1960s, inspired the fields of industrial metabolism, energy accounting, and cradle-to-cradle, or what is now called the circular economy. But Boulding's contemplation of the input and output of energy, matter, and information within the ecosphere was already essential to the SSA, a coalition of architects allied to Fuller during the Depression. Their unique cybernetic, ecological, and systemic vision of buildings as transformers of energy and transmitters of information allied them to Lewis Mumford, the economist Stuart Chase, and to other technocratic thinkers, who scrutinized the impact of machine production on labor and natural systems. By introducing resource chart-making that took into account the energy cost of fabrication and the problems of waste and obsolescence, these groups prophesied a vital standard for the consumer as producer. Moreover, Lönberg-Holm – a pioneering figure of the new objectivity and an SSA member – translated the biological functionalism and energetics of international constructivism to the question of performative shelter, by working in unrecognized spheres of practice at F.W. Dodge Corporation and as a CIAM delegate.

These sources of sustainable architecture – which have been obscured by prevailing ecological paradigms, received histories of the international style, and scholarship on Fuller – can be uncovered through a deep reading of concepts that emerged in technocratic circles in the 1930s when environmentalism, rather than challenging large-scale industrialization as in the 1960s, sought a confluence of the natural and technological. Social theories of technology offer tools for looking beyond conventional notions of design practice, by considering the role of micro-actors and day-to-day work in modifying practice, rather than great paradigm shifts. In formulating novel inscriptional methodologies for design cycles from research to renewal, Lönberg-Holm's vision of building as a form of environmental control transcends its apparently instrumental origins to offer a historic case of architects in the circular economy.

# How Did It Fail? Considering the Decline of Environmental Experiments

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## Abstract

This paper proposes a conceptual framework to study the decline of environmental experiments within architectural history. It is based on a case study: the trajectory of a solar heating device named Trombe wall. A key component of solar architecture, it was experimented during the post-war decades and became highly popular during the 1970s oil crisis, but it did not manage to be applied on a large scale, and its appeal ended up declining. The Trombe wall case is analysed using two main frameworks developed in the history and sociology of science and technology. Firstly, Bruno Latour's in-depth analysis of a technological failure (*Aramis, or the Love of Technology*) invites to beware of simplistic arguments focused on the efficiency of a given experiment, and instead to investigate the dynamics of social actors and cultural factors that are involved in innovations, contributing to their success or failure. Then, Jean-Baptiste Fressoz' proposition to interpret modernisation as a process of 'disinhibition' (*L'Apocalypse joyeuse*), by which environmental awareness and alerts have been bypassed, leads to interrogate the counterpart of the decline of environmental experiments within architecture, namely the domination and impact of building technologies and types that have become widespread.

## Keywords

Solar architecture, Trombe wall, history of technology, decline.

## Confronting Failure

On 24 November 1973, the French national television channel broadcast an enthusiastic report about the use of solar energy in architecture.<sup>1</sup> On the screen, scientist Félix Trombe detailed the research he was doing in his laboratory located in the Pyrenees mountains, in the very south of France. He presented a series of buildings equipped with a solar heating device he had invented two decades before and which came to bear his name: the Trombe wall (Figure 1). It was designed to catch the sun rays on a black wall placed behind a glassed south facade; the air located in between was warmed and naturally distributed to the room at the back by upper vents, while part of the energy was stored in the wall and released at night.

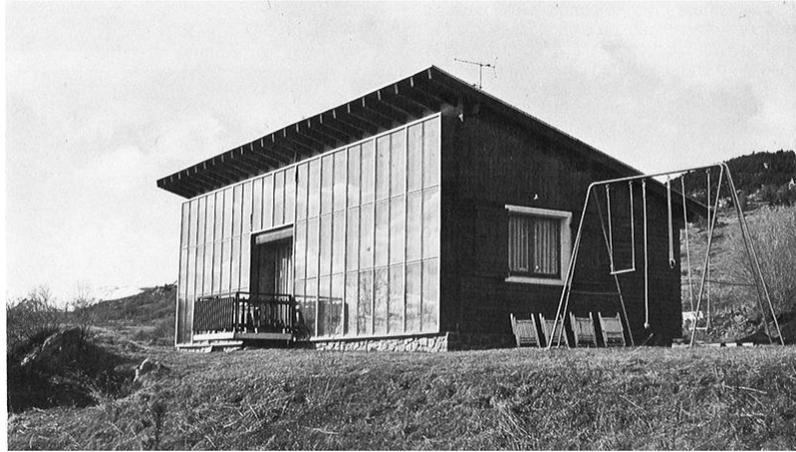


Figure 1. Experimental house equipped with a Trombe wall, Odeillo (France), 1967.  
Source: Detail.

Developed by scientists in collaboration with modernist architects in the post-war decades, the Trombe wall became a highly popular technology during the oil crisis, being internationally celebrated. As in the television report of November 1973, it was presented as a device capable of heating buildings without fossil fuels, while reducing pollution and increasing the inhabitants' awareness of climate and nature. In countless discourses, the Trombe wall and solar architecture were promoted as major solutions to solve energy and environmental problems, in present and future alike.<sup>2</sup>

Today, nearly half a century after this report, the Trombe wall is almost forgotten, relegated in some bioclimatic architecture handbooks, little discussed and rarely used. The Trombe wall, and more broadly solar architecture, after having been intensely investigated in the 1970s, declined and did not manage to become widespread. How did they fail?

The Trombe wall and solar architecture are not isolated cases. As historians gradually bring to light the ways environmental concerns emerged within architecture, and gave rise to various experiments, they have to confront the fact that most of them somehow failed: they did not manage to be applied on a large scale and their appeal ended up declining.<sup>3</sup> In this paper I propose a conceptual framework to study the decline of environmental experiments. I discuss how frameworks developed in the history and sociology of science and technology – fields of research that have long addressed these issues – can be used to analyse the Trombe wall case and contribute to the comprehension of environmental issues within architectural history. I discuss two main propositions: Bruno Latour's plea to go beyond efficiency arguments to explain failure, and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz' outlook that leads to consider decline symmetrically to the domination of other technological paths.

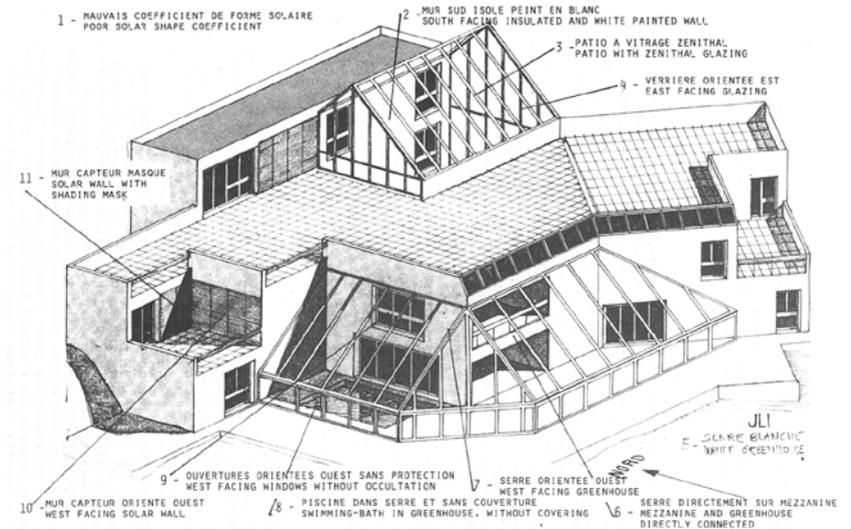


Figure 2. Jean-Louis Izard, 'Monstre bioclimatique montrant les principales erreurs visibles', 1982. Source: *Architecture solaire: Compte-rendu de la conférence internationale tenue à Cannes, France, du 13 au 16 septembre 1982* (Paris, New York: Lavoisier, American Energy Society, 1983) 470.

### Beyond Efficiency Arguments

A common reason that immediately comes to the fore to explain the failure of environmental experiments is efficiency: if a device or a method did not manage to be adopted on a large scale, it is because it was not efficient enough, and was thus abandoned. At various stages of its trajectory, the Trombe wall did face many problems. As it was developed in the 1950s and 1960s, difficulties of two sorts appeared.<sup>4</sup> On the one hand, the first experiments were subject to technical problems: it appeared difficult to properly regulate the warmth provided by the Trombe wall, causing overheating during hot summer days, and insufficient heating during long period of bad weather in the winter. On the other hand, the Trombe wall generated aesthetic questionings and problems of cultural acceptance: the first houses built by scientists with engineers were criticised for their repetitive design and the strangeness of their south facade, fully glassed but with a dark wall placed just behind the major part of it. It is to solve these problems that Félix Trombe collaborated with architect Jacques Michel, a disciple of Le Corbusier, who realised a series of buildings meant to improve the Trombe wall design and its integration within architecture. Then, during its phase of diffusion, the Trombe wall also caused problems: builders insufficiently aware of its requirements implemented it improperly, as a drawing from 1982 emphasises, showing the main errors made in solar buildings (Figure 2).

But are efficiency problems sufficient for explaining failure? In his book *Aramis, or the Love of Technology*, Bruno Latour argues that efficiency plays only a relative role in the process of failure.<sup>5</sup> Studying the case of a transportation system developed in the post-war decades, and meant to revolutionise mobility within cities and suburbs, he shows how this innovation faced a series of difficulties, ranging from technical complications to economic obstacles. But according to Latour, none of these difficulties are responsible for Aramis' abortion in the end of the 1980s. Indeed, a series of compromises were made to adapt the initial design to the successive requirements that appeared – just as for the Trombe wall, which was improved and turned out to be able to heat houses when well designed.<sup>6</sup> Latour thus argues that to be successful, an innovation must not only evolve and adapt, but most importantly generate support and create demand in order to bypass the scepticism it may generate at some points. To do so, the persons in charge of its development – whom Latour calls 'spokespersons' – have to convince more and more people of the technology benefits, turning them into 'allies'. Beyond efficiency arguments, Latour thus puts at the fore the importance of the social and cultural dynamics that are involved in an experiment.<sup>7</sup>

#### Decline as Marginalisation

This theory should lead us to adopt a larger scope and to consider a given experiment within the field of forces and interests in which it evolves. Returning to the Trombe wall and solar architecture, it implies wondering who their supporters and opponents were, and how they confronted each other.

During the 1970s, the Trombe wall was first involved in a controversy about the role of technology within solar architecture. It became a symbol of passive solar architecture, as opposed to the active one. The partisans of passive solar architecture considered that a good use of basic elements, such as glazing and thermal masses, were sufficient for harnessing the sun's energy, and were the only vehicle for transforming the housing design and the inhabitants' way of life.<sup>8</sup> In the meantime, they opposed to the active technologies, which required electricity to work and were conceived so as to be industrialised. As a caricature by a well-known French cartoonist and environmentalist incisively pointed out<sup>9</sup>, the passive solar partisans accused active solar technologies of being responsible for a bad perception of solar architecture as a whole, as they most often consisted in adding technical equipment onto standard buildings, without much cultural consideration and with bad performances. But this intense controversy between passive and active solar architecture was then brushed aside by a major shift of context in the first half of the 1980s. At that moment, oil prices declined, and the rise of other energy sources wiped out the hopes that had been placed in solar heating. In France, the domination of nuclear power, combined with

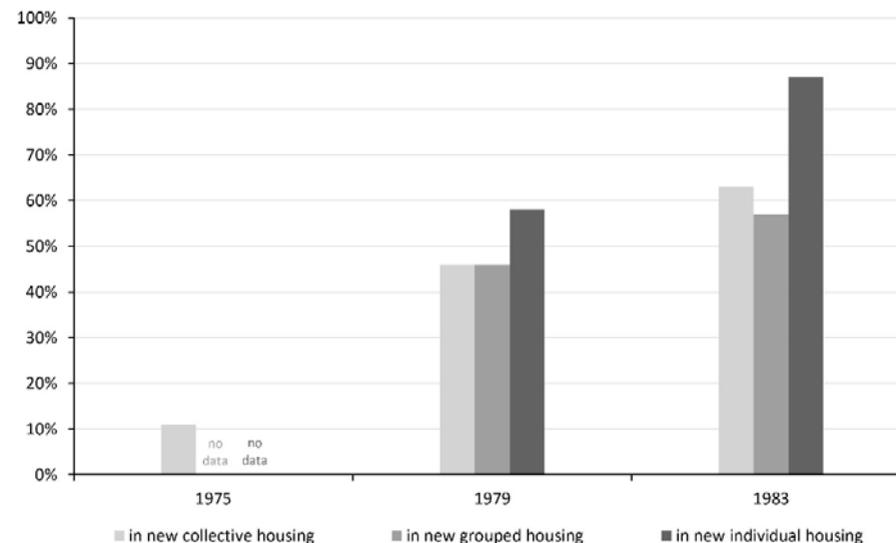


Table 1. Proportion of electric heating installed in different types of new housing in France in 1975, 1979 and 1983. *Source:* Paul Bouet, 2018; data from: Ministère de l'urbanisme et du logement, "L'équipement énergétique des logements neufs", *Statistiques et études générales* 107 (1984).

the effects of thermal regulations decided in the aftermath of the oil crisis, led to the generalisation of a building model based on high consumption of materials for insulation and full dependency on electricity and gas (Table 1), while environmental issues were lastingly marginalised in architectural debates. From that moment on, the Trombe wall and solar architecture brutally declined.

Such twin phenomenon of rise and decline can be related to the work of Jean-Baptiste Fressoz. In his book *L'Apocalypse joyeuse*, Fressoz studies a series of environmental controversies provoked by the development of technologies during the industrial revolution.<sup>10</sup> He argues that despite awareness and alerts about the deleterious effects that these technologies caused on health and nature, they imposed themselves, and softer alternatives were belittled. Fressoz thus proposes to consider modernisation as a process of 'disinhibition', in which 'devices', such as forms of regulation and ideologies, were invented to knowingly bypass environmental alerts and alternatives. In other words, if environmental consciousness and experiments emerged at certain points in history, they were marginalised by dominant forces – in this case, industrial capitalism. Following Fressoz' theory, understanding the decline of environmental knowledge and experiments implies shedding light on their contrary, with which they are tightly interwoven. If solar architecture failed, then what type of building came to dominate, and with what consequences on the environment? Answering this kind of question would certainly lead to a more 'anonymous

history', to paraphrase the subtitle of Sigfried Giedion's *Mechanization Takes Command*,<sup>11</sup> and to explore the less regarded although ubiquitous 'B-side' of environmental experiments. It would imply investigating the genealogy of common building technologies and types, the discourses that accompanied their spreading, and their major environmental impact.<sup>12</sup> If such an inquiry seems to bring us to the limits of the traditional scope of architectural and art history, is it not the condition to really, materially, understand the role architecture and the built environment have been playing in what researchers named the Anthropocene to describe the effects of centuries of human activities on the Earth?<sup>13</sup>

Whatever the ways we choose to explore, as historians shed light on the emergence of environmental experiments, considering their decline seems of primary importance. It is not only a condition to avoid an instrumental use of the history of environmental architecture, that would only search for efficient designs in the past to be transplanted in the present situation. It is also a necessity in order to better understand architecture's involvement in the Anthropocene, highlighting the paths that were followed through the options that were dismissed.

### Notes

- 1 Michel Péricard and Louis Bériot (presenters), television report on solar energy, *La France défigurée*, Première chaîne de l'ORTF, 24 November 1973.
- 2 I developed this case study in *Le mur Trombe, 1952-1986: Expérimentation et marginalisation d'une énergie alternative* (master thesis, École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2017).
- 3 Just to mention a few examples, neither the ecological design methods developed by former Bauhaus members and studied by Peder Anker in *From Bauhaus to Ecohouse: A History of Ecological Design* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), nor the solar devices experimented by American scientists and architects analysed by Daniel A. Barber in *A House in the Sun: Modern Architecture and Solar Energy in the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), nor the prolific investigations of the 1970s in North America highlighted in *Sorry Out of Gas: Architecture's Response to the 1973 Oil Crisis* (Montréal, Montova: CCA, Corraini Edizioni, 2007), managed to be applied on a large scale.
- 4 For a summary of these difficulties, see Jacques Michel, 'Utilisation de l'énergie solaire', *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* 167 (May-June 1973), 88-96.
- 5 Bruno Latour, *Aramis, or the Love of Technology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), first published as *Aramis ou l'amour des techniques* (Paris: La Découverte, 1992).
- 6 Although its performances were a matter of debate, the Trombe wall provided between 50 and 95 % of total heating in the houses where it was tested, depending on the location and design. The rest was provided by an auxiliary system, most often electric heating.
- 7 Latour formulated his argument, typical of the social construction of technology theory, together with his colleagues of the Centre de sociologie de l'innovation, in an article published in two parts: Madeleine Akrich, Michel Callon and Bruno Latour, 'À quoi tient le succès des innovations ? 1. L'art de l'intéressement', '2. Le choix des porte-parole', *Gérer et comprendre: Annales des Mines* 11 and 12 (1988), 4-17 and 14-29.
- 8 For arguments in favour of passive solar

architecture, see for instance: Edward Mazria, *The Passive Solar Energy Book: A Complete Guide to Passive Solar Home, Greenhouse and Building Design* (Emmaus: Rodal Press, 1979); Patrick Bardou and Arzoumanian Varoujan, *Archi de soleil* (Roquevaire: Parenthèses, 1978), 108.

- 9 Reiser (Jean-Marc), *Le solaire, c'est moche et ça marche pas !* (ca. 1975). Reiser was relaying a common critic opposed to an experiment conducted by the state company Électricité de France (EDF). In 1974, EDF had implemented solar heating panels, inspired by the American research of the 1950s, on standard suburban houses in both Le Havre (north of France) and Aramon, near Montpellier (south). The active systems they were equipped with soon malfunctioned, and the houses were discredited by architects for their lack of formal quality.
- 10 Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *L'Apocalypse joyeuse* (Paris: Seuil, 2012).
- 11 Sigfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948).
- 12 Examples of such inquiries can be found in the close research field of urban environmental history. See in particular Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of Environmentalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), and William Cronon's major book on the co-construction of city and countryside, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York/London: W.W. Norton & Co, 1991). The idea of considering common architectural technologies and types can also be related to historian David Edgerton's work. In his book *The Shock of the Old: Technology and Global History since 1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), he criticises historians' obsession for innovation, for starting points, which mask the fact that most of the technologies in use throughout the world are very common and old ones.
- 13 For a critical discussion on the consequences of the Anthropocene concept for humanities, and especially

history, see Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History and Us* (New York: Verso, 2016), first published as *L'Événement Anthropocène: La Terre, l'histoire et nous* (Paris: Seuil, 2013).

# Why We Must Destroy the Environment

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## Abstract

At the 1970 International Design Conference in Aspen, sociologist Jean Baudrillard warned about the concept of environmental protection. The theme of the conference, 'Environment and Design', had brought together environmental collectives and radical architects, and a French delegation of designers and sociologists. In the conference postscript, Baudrillard wrote a striking criticism of the discourse of the 'environment', which he believed was a symptom of late-capitalist forces. Based on Baudrillard's criticism of the 1970 Aspen conference, this speculative paper aims to critically rethink the concept of 'the environment'. The paper thus highlights architectural discourse's multifaceted engagement with the concept of the environment and proposes that the environment must be critically destroyed in order to rethink it.

## Keywords

Environmental design, Ant Farm, 1970s, Jean Baudrillard, radical architecture, ecology.

In the evening of 17 June 1970, the neo-avant-garde architecture group Ant Farm arrived at the week-long International Design Conference in Aspen in their Media Van and erected a transparent inflatable plastic object, *Spare Tire Inflatable*, which the conference participants could enter and move through (Figure 1). The theme of the conference, 'Environment and Design', had brought together American designers, architects, corporate representatives, business leaders, and a French delegation of designers and sociologists for discussions about the powerful new slogan *the environment*. Ant Farm's soft plastic room functioned as the conference recreation area – or playground – as the delegates moved and played inside the bubble in between keynote presentations, roundtable discussions, and paper sessions. Ant Farm's inflatable room was an object of soft plastic with no other tangible supporting structure. As air filled up the flat-packed room, it transformed the object and it became very close to nothing. *Spare Tire Inflatable* was an unstable object, a structureless structure almost entirely of air – more interested in becoming than in being. *Inflatable* explicated an expansion of the understanding of what an object could be, both regarding its formal qualities and the epistemological categories objects usually are

ascribed to. First, in both these terms the room challenged stability. It evoked an unstable temporality, as the room would never stay the same. Ant Farm's room was always moving, always becoming. As air was blown into the structure and gave it form, the room also became physically and conceptually governed by the environment. Second, *Inflatable* materialised a presence of intangibility. The material which gave the room its form (air) was the same, inside and outside the object, and the continuum was separated by a layer of soft plastic. The softness of the material and its transparency epitomised that the boundary between the object and the environment softened. This paper understands Ant Farm's inflatable room to embody virtues of freedom and flexibility; a room not confined to a private, interior space; rather, a movable, transparent form that resisted rigidity, confronted conformity, and rejected history. Further, *Inflatable* was governed by the notion of play. With its soft structure that never really stabilised, the room opened up a play of endless possibilities.<sup>1</sup>

Ant Farm's *Inflatable* exemplifies and participates in a major issue and theme in both art and theory in the early 1970s, namely the relationship between inside/outside, interior/exterior.<sup>2</sup> Aesthetic explorations of this relationship converged on a common critical position, in so far that this practice was deeply immersed in conceptual terms such as connectedness, networks, interactions, semiology, co-operation, feed-back loops, and infrastructures – all of which can be claimed to belong to the realm of *ecological* thinking. Operational terms such as these were assumed to induce a new conceptual model of the world governed by notions of liberty, free from rigid structures of stable hierarchies. Briefly put, the ecological mode of thought facilitated a reconfiguration of the concept of the *environment* in the late 1960s and early 1970s: the environment lost its status as an independent and stable entity that surrounded the subject (or object), and came instead to be recognised as a *relational* floating structure between subjects, objects, communication, languages, and signs. As, for instance, exemplified by a description of the concept of the environment by Manuel Castells from 1972: 'The environment is no longer a physical "given," exterior to human action, but a particular form of matter (human or nonhuman), an *expression*, a relation among elements.'<sup>3</sup> This conceptual model of the world, in part provided by ecology, facilitated a mode of thinking that allowed considering entities as a part of a relational network of co-existing entities. In the years around 1970, then, the environment came to be understood as a *network* of relations,<sup>4</sup> and found its aesthetic equivalents in, for instance, spaces without borders and objects without fixed structures – such as Ant Farm's *Inflatable*. At the Aspen conference, the plastic room took part in a conceptual open-ended relational network, inextricably bound to the conference participants who brought life inside the object. It was the interactions and the connections between object and environment that constituted Ant Farm's work. However, one participant at the Aspen design

conference questioned the new, relational conception of the environment and even understood this reconfigured environment to be a symptom of danger.

At the last day of the conference, the French delegation of sociologists read a statement written by conference participant Jean Baudrillard who warned about the concept of the environment, a major theme (in both critical and aesthetic terms) in the works of all the specially invited neo-avant-garde architecture groups gathered under the label 'Environmental Action Groups'.<sup>5</sup> Baudrillard observed with presumably deep concern the inflatables and the artistic explorations of 'the environment', which aimed at dissolving the borders between the inside and the outside. Why did Baudrillard warn about this concept? What was wrong with the inflatable room?

In brief, Baudrillard claimed that the conceptual model of a relational, networked environment projected a certain social and political organisation into society.<sup>6</sup> In the recently reconfigured environment (exemplified by Castells' description quoted above), the whole world was seemingly placed in a relational conceptual network. In this new understanding of environment, previously stable entities (such as machine and human, life and non-life, ecology and technology) became ambiguous, and were seen instead as dynamic and completely interrelated entities. However, if all entities were considered as interrelated, and if all entities were considered to partake in a conceptual network, *as a holistic ecological system*, this new environment would become inescapable. Baudrillard claimed the new discourse of the environment (as aesthetically explored by for instance Ant Farm) characterised a holistic – and totalitarian – mode of thought and this holistic mode of thought then projected a certain social and political organisation into society. In his critique of the conference, Baudrillard tied the bonds between the dissemination of the recent reconfiguration of the environment, to the dissemination of late-capitalism. 'Aspen is the Disneyland of Environment and Design', Baudrillard wrote, 'but the real problem is far beyond Aspen – it is the entire theory of Design and Environment itself, which constitutes a generalized Utopia; Utopia produced by a Capitalist system'.<sup>7</sup>

Baudrillard argued that the recent discourse of the environment was a symptom of late-capitalist forces: 'This holy union created in the name of environment', he wrote, 'is nothing but the holy union of the ruling classes of rich nations'.<sup>8</sup> He added sarcastically: 'Nothing better than a touch of ecology and catastrophe to unite the social classes'.<sup>9</sup> He called for an alternative way of thinking about ecology and the environment that did *not* place the entirety of the world into a relational – and thus inescapable – system. Baudrillard claimed that the recent discourse of the networked environment was projecting a conceptual model of the world into society that allowed the inescapable structure of capitalism to keep on working. Moreover, the recent

governmental developments of environmental protection, he wrote, was an indicator of control of the ecological system, and further, it transported natural resources like air and water into the 'field of value' – that is, into late-capitalist market circulation. Baudrillard understood the recent aesthetic discourses of spaces without borders and objects without fixed structures to display the same mode of being, the same functioning, or, better put, the same economy, as late-capitalist ideals.

Ant Farm's *Inflatable* played with the limits of what a room could be; it blurred the boundaries between the atmosphere and the object's internal atmosphere, thus *Inflatable* had an omnipresent structure. When the structure, that is, the air, played and flowed inside and outside the plastic substance, the room moved into the ambience of ubiquitous absence. The flexible room posed the question of what was the inside and what was the outside world. *Inflatable* was an object removed from itself, it was a disappearing object on the border to nothingness; apparently free from structure.

Baudrillard's doctoral thesis, *Le Système des Objets*, published two years before (1968), holds a key to understanding his attack on the concept of the environment at the Aspen conference. In his neo-Marxian critique of consumption, Baudrillard considered recent developments in architecture and design, such as modular plastic furnishings, as material symptoms of late-capitalism. Pure plastic, multi-combinable single-block components that could be put together in an infinite variety of ways, pointed towards a new danger. He explained:

What we glimpse today in modern interiors is the coming end of [a certain] order of Nature; what is appearing in the horizon, beyond the break-up of form, beyond the dissolution of the formal boundary between inside and outside and of the whole dialectic of being and appearance relating to that boundary, is a qualitatively new kind of relationship [...that is] putting the very idea of genesis into question and omitting all the origins, received meanings and 'essences' of which our old pieces of furniture remained concrete symbols; it implies practical computation and conceptualization on the basis of total abstraction, the notion of a world no longer given but instead produced.<sup>10</sup>

At the 1970 Aspen conference, Baudrillard must have understood Ant Farm's *Inflatable* in the same manner as he understood spaces without borders and objects without fixed structures: the plastic room displayed the same mode of being as a certain social and political organisation of society. This paper claims that the inflatable room points to a horizon of a seemingly ongoing loop of open-endedness. Thinking with Baudrillard, *Inflatable* materialises (or rather, immaterialises) a limitless loop of totality.

Two years after the Aspen conference, Baudrillard identified that the conceptual reconfiguration of the environment also brought into question the conceptual status of objects. In both formal terms (as for instance *Inflatable*) and in critical terms, objects lost their stability. There was a *decay of the signified* taking place, of ‘the real, objective referent of the denoted function, of ‘truth’.<sup>11</sup> Baudrillard compared this decay of the signified with the dissolving of the Gold Exchange Standard: The recent ‘Nixon shock’ (1971) in which the American president had dissolved the direct international convertibility of the United States dollar to gold: the dollar consequently floated.<sup>12</sup> The decay of an object as an objective signified is conceptually related to the reconfiguration of the environment, described in this paper. The outcome, wrote Baudrillard, was a dangerous conceptual model of the world where ‘[t]here is no truth of the object.’<sup>13</sup>

*The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels expected that the outcome of unbridled capitalism would entail a flexibility without limits; to be a constant expansion of what Baudrillard later called the sign-exchange value. ‘All that is solid melts into air’,<sup>14</sup> reads the English translation of Marx and Engels’ statement written in 1848. In the wake of the understanding of the environment as a floating equation of relations, both subjectivity and objectivity as epistemological notions were destabilised. Ant Farm’s *Inflatable* played a part in this destabilisation. *Spare Tire Inflatable* was an unstable object that materialised that, in the words of Baudrillard, the Great Referent *truth* was under threat. This is what was wrong with the inflatable room. Baudrillard warned about the concept of the environment because it set up an inescapable network lacking the Great Referent truth. Once inside the plastic bubble, can we ever get out? With no inside and no outside, can we escape ‘the environment’?

This question brings the paper to a concluding episode. In 1966, Theodor Adorno published his magnum opus *Negative Dialectics* (which he had started to write before World War II). *Negative Dialectics* was a key discursive document for the Frankfurt School and an important influence for the European New Left. In the preface to *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno quoted Walter Benjamin’s declaration that the time had come to ‘cross the frozen waste of abstraction to arrive at concise, concrete philosophizing’<sup>15</sup> – a declaration which outlines the key tasks and tools of Critical Theory. Adorno warned about the danger of considering the ‘world as the entirety of all there is’,<sup>16</sup> which would create an inescapable system. An inescapable system will lead to a totalitarian ontology, argued Adorno, that is, the ‘will to grasp the whole without any limits being placed on its cognition.’<sup>17</sup> According to Adorno, philosophy needed to *cut* the discrepancy between power and ontology, and his philosophical project was consequently an attempt to attack the inescapable system of power.<sup>18</sup> Adorno’s methodology in *Negative Dialectics* is to inhabit ontology and *find its limits*. Adorno held that reality can only be grasped through its fragments, and further, in order to escape

the totality one must turn the totality into a concept that can be criticised, as revolution can only be possible if one locates the faults in the totality. Opposition to the central power can only be possible if one locates the impossibilities in the possibilities.

Global warming and capitalist globalisation has created an environment that we cannot escape, that we cannot change.<sup>19</sup> This paper argues that we must rethink how we can ‘think outside’ the inescapable systems of global warming and capitalist globalisation, that is, rethink how we can think outside the inescapable environment. Drawing on Baudrillard’s neo-Marxist attack on the ‘Disneyland of Environment and Design’ in Aspen 1970, I would suggest that in order to escape the inescapable environment, one must first conceptually destroy it, as forcefully demonstrated by Baudrillard in his critique of holistic thinking in the discourse of ‘Environmental Design’.

### Notes

- 1 As Felicity D. Scott describes, Ant Farm themselves ‘understood inflatables ... as one channel in a multimedia environment or event.’ Scott emphasises further that Ant Farm’s inflatables participate in the group’s medium for research ‘into the very conception of what the environment might mean in an electronic age.’ Felicity D. Scott, *Ant Farm: Allegorical Time Warp: The Media Fallout of July 21, 1969* (Barcelona: Actar, 2008), 86–8.
- 2 The collective’s experimental assembly of inflatable plastic objects and performance art partakes in a broader critical and aesthetic practice in counterculture post-war architecture. Works by R. Buckminster Fuller, Frei Otto, Rayner Banham, and Cedric Price inspired a younger generation of neo-avant-garde architecture collectives working with inflatables in the late 1960s and early 1970s: Utopie, Archigram, Haus-Rucker-Co, and Coop Himmelblau. See Marc Dessauce (ed.), *The Inflatable Moment: Pneumatics and Protest in ‘68* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999).
- 3 Manuel Castells, ‘Urban Symbolism and Social Movements: On a New Institution for the Study of the Urban Environment’ [1972] in Emilio Ambasz (ed.), *The Universitas Project: Solutions for a Post-Technological Society* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2006), 66.
- 4 The discourse of the ‘networked environment’ is a clear conceptual precursor of the development of actor-network theory as formulated by Bruno Latour more than a decade later. See Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987).
- 5 The specially invited vanguard architecture and design groups were Ecology Action, People’s Architecture Groups, Environment Workshop, Farallone Institute, and Ant Farm.
- 6 Baudrillard articulates this argument more explicitly in later works, for instance in the essay ‘The Ecstasy of Communication’ from 1983: ‘But today ... something has changed, and the Faustian, Promethean (perhaps Oedipal) period of production and consumption gives way to the ‘proteic’ era of networks, to the narcissistic and protean era of connections, contact, contiguity, feedback and generalized interface that goes with the universe of communication.’ Hal Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend: Bay Press, 1983), 126–7.
- 7 Reyner Banham (ed.), *The Aspen Papers: Twenty Years of Design Theory from the International Design Conference in Aspen* (London: Pall Mall, 1974), 210.
- 8 Banham (ed.), *The Aspen Papers*, 208–9.
- 9 Banham (ed.), *The Aspen Papers*, 209.
- 10 Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* (London: Verso, 1996), 28.

- 11 Ambasz, *The Universitas Project: Solutions for a Post-Technological Society*, 64.
- 12 Reinhold Martin has eloquently discussed Nixon's disconnection of the US dollar to gold and its conceptual relationship with the discursive architectural discussions on the concept of 'the environment'. See Reinhold Martin, 'Environment, c. 1973,' *Grey Room* 14 (2004), 78–101.
- 13 Jean Baudrillard, 'Design and Environment: Or, The Inflationary Curve of Political Economy,' in Ambasz, *The Universitas Project: Solutions for a Post-Technological Society*, 59. Italics in original.
- 14 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), 63.
- 15 Walter Benjamin quoted in the preface of Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), xix.
- 16 Adorno, 61.
- 17 Adorno, 62.
- 18 In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno argues that Martin Heidegger (in *Being and Time*) gives authority to Being, a philosophical position, which for Adorno allowed for a social structure of totalitarianism, and as such, Heidegger had philosophically enabled national socialism to gain a foothold. Adorno argues that Heidegger's philosophy aimed at grasping the whole; a limitless system of totality, which prevented ruptures and revolution.
- 19 See for instance Jason W. Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* (London: Verso, 2015); Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

## Oil Spaces: The Global Petroleumscape in the Rotterdam/The Hague Area

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### Abstract

Architectural and urban history have a unique opportunity to investigate the spatial impact of petroleum and its products. To gain insights into the ways in which petroleum has shaped the built environment through its physical and financial flows, as well as through its depiction in corporate, public, and independent media in globally interconnected ways, I have proposed the concept of the *palimpsestic global petroleumscape*. The feedback loop between diverse spaces of oil, their selective representation, and the ways in which these uses influence the minds of citizens in their everyday lives, has links to Henri Lefebvre's theory of everyday life and his understanding of space as socially produced and then appropriated by the powerful as a tool.

This contribution will expand on the methodological approach of the petroleumscape and its implications for cross-cultural, networked, and balanced research. To illustrate the concept and the feedback loops in the petroleumscape, the second part of the article uses the Rotterdam/The Hague area, part of Amsterdam-Rotterdam-Antwerp (ARA) (the biggest petrochemical hub after Houston), as a case study. To better understand the ways in which the concept of the petroleumscape elucidates themes of power, class, and space relationship, the contribution finally discusses opportunities to engage the general public in visualizing the role of oil in creating our built environment through an open access webpage (oilscapes.nl) and an interactive augmented reality tool (AR Black Gold).

In conclusion, the contribution argues that only in appreciating the power and extent of oil in shaping the built environment can we engage with the complex challenges of sustainable architectural and urban design and policymaking, develop heritage concepts, and meaningfully imagine future-built environments beyond oil.

# The Air-Conditioning Complex: Toward a Global Historiography of Environmental Technology, Architecture, and Society

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## Abstract

This paper posits that the history of air-conditioning and the built environment in Singapore and Doha – exemplifying cases of the hot and humid tropical climate of Southeast Asia, and the hot and dry desert climate of the Arabian Gulf region – challenges certain underlying assumptions in global environmental and architectural histories. First, this history does not fall neatly into what Ramachandra Guha and Joan Martinez-Alier characterize as bourgeois environmentalism or environmentalism of the poor. Not only do Singapore and Qatar defy easy categorization as either developed or developing countries, air-conditioning blurs the boundary between luxury and necessity in an age of climate change. Second, actually existing designs and practices of air-conditioning and the built environment in these two places problematize two prevailing theories in architectural history: a technophobic theory of air-conditioning as a universal technique that produces placelessness and an optimistic theory of air-conditioning as a form of techno-fix in geographies and climatic conditions that purportedly inhibit capitalist development.

Against such constructions of the developed/developing and global/local binaries, and assumptions about causality and correlation between environmental technology, architecture, and society, this paper puts forward an alternative framework with its attendant methodology for understanding the environmental history of air-conditioning and the built environment in the global South. Through examples drawn from Singapore and Doha during the key historical moments of transiting between the various phases of air-conditioning dependency, I argue that air-conditioning and the built environment should be understood as a socio-technical and material assemblage I call the ‘air-conditioning complex’. I argue that that the relationships between environmental technology, architecture, and society should best be understood as convergence and divergence, territorialization and deterritorialization of heterogeneous components through which hybrid formations – beyond the binary of air-conditioning or non-air-conditioning – have previously coalesced, and similar alternative futures of post-air-conditioning could still emerge.

# LATIN AMERICAN DIALOGUES

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# LATIN AMERICAN MODERN ARCHITECTURE GROUP

Session chairs:

**Horacio Torrent**, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

**Ruth Verde Zein**, Mackenzie Presbyterian University

**Ana Estaban Maluenda**, Universidad Politecnica de Madrid

Recent exhibitions, catalogs, and books on Latin American modern architecture and cities have revived their presence in contemporary international debates, corroborating its importance and breadth. A hybrid cultural and human landscape, Latin American art, culture, and architecture manifestations have deep roots branching across the continents, from Asia to Africa, and certainly Europe. The connecting ties between Europe and the Americas are undoubtedly of great relevance and have been considered by scholars and researchers from both continents, establishing a dynamic corpus of academic debates. For our first meeting in Tallinn, we are proposing a discussion on the cultural encounters between Latin America and Europe since the nineteenth century which might include topics such as the displacement of European-born professionals to Latin America, cross transfers of modern architectural ideals and models through the written word as well as images, the Latin American historiographical constructions vis à vis the European Modern narratives, as well as Latin American architecture and urbanism, and the concepts of hybridization, translations, and cultural transference.

# Latin American Architecture as a Category of the Historiography of Modern Architecture

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## Abstract

The category of 'Latin American architecture' is already a part of the tradition of the historiography of architecture; it adopts a long-standing idea from the social and political sphere, but with a strong development in relation to modern architecture. The idea of the existence of Latin American architecture has been frequently and widely discussed. The strongest moment in the consolidation of this idea, both in the Latin American and international scenes, seems to have been in the 1960s. This paper reviews the main liminal texts, and the ideas, that were initially promoted considering regional architecture as a total of the cultural production of an ample and diverse subcontinent as Latin America.

## Keywords

Latin American architecture, modern architecture, historiography, history of architecture.

The category of 'Latin American architecture' is already a part of the tradition of the historiography of modern architecture; it adopts a long-standing idea from the social and political sphere, but with a strong development in relation to modern architecture. The idea of the existence of Latin American architecture has been frequently and widely discussed. The strongest moment in the consolidation of this idea, both in the Latin American and international scenes, seems to have been in the 1960s. However, its beginnings are clearly linked to the international recognition of the role of modern architecture in relation to the economic development of some countries of the region during the 1950s.

Although, since the first decades of the twentieth century, there was a certain interaction between architects from different countries of the region, in part fomented by ideas of a common objective established in the Pan-American Congresses of Architecture, rarely were these intentions articulated further than an attention to particular cases or projects, and a number of common activities.

The most panoramic visions, which also had the ambition of encompassing the totality of the region, were configured during the late 1940s and 1950s. The most interesting precedents can be seen in the

special reports about different countries – in which Brazil was prominent – that were successively published in the most important magazines in terms of international distribution from the 1940s, such as *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (1947 and 1952), *Architectural Review* (1943 and 1950), *Domus* and *Casabella* (1954), and *Architectural Forum* (1947).

However, it was the exhibition, *Latin American Architecture since 1945*, curated by Henry-Russell Hitchcock in 1955, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York that consolidated and amplified the idea<sup>1</sup>. The exhibition arose in parallel to a previous exhibition, *Built in USA: Post-War Architecture* that Hitchcock had realised for the MoMA in 1953<sup>2</sup>, and clearly fed on the transcendence that the *Brazil Builds* exhibition in 1942<sup>3</sup> had had.

The condition of a parallelism with the exhibition in North America is not a minor fact, if we consider that Hitchcock himself had warned that in some fields such as the university cities and the residential complexes, Latin American architecture demonstrated a larger impetus than North American architecture. Mostly because, although it might not seem like it, Hitchcock did not base his reading on a supposed dichotomy between Latin American and international architecture, but instead on an evident integration of the region, adopting the parameters of quality instated by modern architecture at the time. Without a doubt, the 1955 exhibition was not only an important point of reference for the constitution of Latin American architecture as a critical and historiographical category, but it was also fundamental for its interpretation.

The text of the exhibition's catalogue-book begins with wide historical and sociocultural approaches that situate the public, and a series of generic constructions with continental ambitions, which incorporated peculiar and rather schematic visions relating to the Iberian tradition or religion. Its main idea was the presence of a constructive 'boom' in the region, characterised by a high quality architectural expression. In terms of architecture, Hitchcock's lecture was basically oriented towards the use of materials, the relationship with the climate, and artistic tradition.

Hitchcock also recognised the level of the architects according to their formation, in international and local schools (such as the school at Montevideo, the National University of Mexico and the Catholic University of Santiago in Chile), and in schools that maintained a Beaux-Arts formation, which were in the majority. He particularly noted that architecture was still considered an art, in which the community expected more of architects than merely providing functional solutions, with a strong public consideration of architecture as the expression of a cultural ambition.

Explaining socio-cultural components to a public that might not be familiar with the region, he wrote in relation to some of the themes that he found interesting or particular. The selected works allowed him to establish a series of relationships with themes that particularly characterised Latin American architecture, although he recognised differences in the responses.

The series of works principally comprised a notable material homogeneity that referenced the tradition of masonry construction and in the modern transcendence of reinforced concrete, the attention to climatic variation, and the repeated use of control mechanisms such as the *brise soleil*, solid cultural traditions with the 'very considerable' use of colour and tiles.

It is also interesting that the text opens the discussion of the 'international style' category, which Philip Johnson developed in 1932, and which Hitchcock himself had evaluated some years prior<sup>4</sup>. He wrote about a certain distance that he saw in Latin American architecture and a reference to local conditions as closer to the approach of Latin counties of southern Europe.

He considered that Latin American architecture had its own intrinsic values, which were evidenced in the examples shown, apart from differences in the case of Brazil, with particularity as well as great influence in the region. He affirmed, that considered as a whole and measured against the achievement of Western Europe or of North America in the first half of the twentieth century – particularly considering the work of Le Corbusier or Frank Lloyd Wright – the achievement of Latin America seemed to be more limited. However, from the post-war years, Latin American architecture managed to excel in both quality and quantity. A final affirmation that the 46 selected buildings were able to prove that modern architecture in Latin America had 'come of age', is notable. Not only does it suggest that the initial low expectations had been exceeded by empirical evidence, but also that it could guide itself, that is to say, it could exercise in cultural freedom away from the initial paternalism of European and North American modern architecture.

Although, on the first hand, having been acquainted with the field of work through a trip undertaken to put together the exhibition and travelling to the different places – even if to some very briefly – Hitchcock's vision had some problems concerning the historiography of modern architecture: the consideration of the object of architecture, its stylistic autonomy, and the idea of founding a new tradition with a positive evolution. To this must be added the latent paternalist genealogy and the construction of units by the recognition of individual conditions. As well as taking on a descriptive position based on the juxtaposition of the works, it had a neutral approach, not controversial, which seems to have been the product of his own idea of the objectivity of history, although it was undoubtedly influenced by the politically correct atmosphere of North American criticism and historiography of the time. This position would not allow for a discussion of the problems or challenges destined to face Latin American modern architecture.

The gradual affirmation of a category with a certain critical peculiarity was accentuated during the late 1950s and the 1960s. In Latin America itself there arose a series of monographic publications that revised the national

panoramas of different countries, such as in Chile (1968) and Uruguay (1970) in *Summa*<sup>5</sup>, as well as more consecrated ones such as that by Sibyl Moholy-Nagy on Carlos Raúl Villanueva and the architecture of Venezuela<sup>6</sup>, published in German and English in Stuttgart in 1964, that would also affirm the idea of the integration of the arts; to name but a few examples. This critical peculiarity also had its real correlation, with the reunion of individualities around common aspirations, in the Congress of the International Union of Architects in Havana (1963) and in Buenos Aires (1969).

In 1969, Francisco Bullrich consolidated the experience that was dispersed throughout the continent and that had not been captured until then. The book was published under the title *Arquitectura Latinoamericana* by the editorial Sudamericana in Buenos Aires<sup>7</sup>, and later as *Arquitectura Latinoamericana 1930–1970*, by Gustavo Gili in Spain<sup>8</sup>, and in an extended version titled *New Directions in Latin American Architecture*<sup>9</sup> by Braziller in New York, which was also published by Blume in Spain, under the name *Nuevos Caminos de la Arquitectura Latinoamericana*<sup>10</sup>, being an exceptional case in terms of the extension obtained in the editorial business.

The volume was published on the occasion of the X Congress of the UIA that was realised in Buenos Aires at the time. At the beginning, it warned that art and architecture in Latin America was as unknown in Europe and to the North of the Río Grande, as in its own continent, 'and if it is like that, it is because we are only just discovering that mutual knowledge requires a daily effort that must be realized beyond rhetoric'<sup>11</sup>. Bullrich was showing what Alison and Peter Smithson might have called the 'heroic period' of Latin American architecture. The 1950s and 1960s might go down in history as the best years of architecture of the twentieth century from the region.

*New Directions in Latin American Architecture* represents one of the strongest initial historiographical productions of Latin America as a group. Articulated at first by country, it looked to build a superior interpretive order that would give the group a meaning. For this, a series of supranational categories were established: utopia and urban reality, the architecture of the city, technology and architecture, monumental architecture, and the new generation. While the most interesting cases were marked by country, certain recognition of the figure of the *masters* was established, incarnate in Carlos Raúl Villanueva. In part, it repeated a historiographical focus similar to that of modern architecture: a genealogy, pioneers or tutelary figures, some key ideas in relation to construction, some formal shared conditions, new themes, and a venturesome future.

If Hitchcock was attempting to undertake a description by country – and order his photographs with a formal approach –, the operation of Bullrich seems to be more orientated towards the construction of the Latin American architecture term as an interpretive category that related urban phenomena, conditions of production, materials and professionals, cultural diversity, beyond unitary pretensions or formal approaches.

Criticism and history have been predominant fields in the construction of the idea of Latin American architecture, and they have frequently found themselves subjected to the ideas around economic and social development. As the 1950s and 1960s constituted the time of most historic transcendence in the cultural articulation of Latin American architecture, its developmentalist dilemmas still somewhat remain. Even in some of the later dual options such as the theoretical approaches around the 'spirit of the time and spirit of the place' remained submitted to the same interpretative frame. If in some moment architecture could represent development, the later interpretations gave the project and the work, the ability to represent the contents proper of the culture.

Already two decades ago, the category, Latin American architecture has become habitual as an aggregation of different works and critical discourses that, although often different, have the region as their place of production. This also seems to be a consequence, in no small way, of the economic conditions that notably reduced the possibilities of the production of materials and works, while also expanding reflexion and giving way to the different interpretations of the experience of Latin American architecture as a whole. The increasing strength of the characterisations that arose in the different products, and moments, of Latin American architecture, along with the habitual aggregated conception of Latin America in international criticism, has configured a category, which although rather opaque, is, for the moment, still an orientation towards the future.

In architecture, the pretence of a common mark of identity, of a local colour, or of a representation through the language of the work, has often been demanded, both by international curiosity, as well as by the architects themselves, who live and produce in the region. A hasty response could lead us to suppose that facing these demands, architecture has not had the ability to take on and represent the conditions of geography and Latin American societies. The historic-critic interpretations around architecture, as the prescriptions around what should be projected and built, have remained within the wide descriptive frames of incomplete development.

The Latin American mosaic, as an articulation between geography and social image, has exploded. The wide and abundant spaces and landscapes are places in which there is a mix of icons and varied images, but also where strategies through which to conduct aspirations, not only of development, but also, and particularly, of change. Realities change, as do the representations that people have of them, and the possibilities that they can manage to see through every concrete situation. In this context, it seems that there is no place for the question of whether architecture can represent a distinctly Latin American condition. It is no longer possible to assume a condition of mimesis. The great problems that appear latently in Latin America are nothing, more or less, than those of the universal architectural culture in its current condition, which take on a particular form in this

region of the planet. They can no longer appear through language, but rather through the recognition that reality and the aspiration of change have real scenarios: the cities and cultures are simultaneously the trouble and scene of Latin America.

### Notes

- 1 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Latin American Architecture since 1945* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1955).
- 2 Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Arthur Drexler (eds.), *Built in USA: Post-War Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, Simon & Schuster, 1952).
- 3 Philip L. Goodwin, *Brazil Builds: Architecture New and Old 1652–1942* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1943).
- 4 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, 'The International Style Twenty Years After,' *Architectural Record* 110 (1951), 89–90.
- 5 'La Arquitectura en Chile,' *Summa* 11 (1968) and 'Uruguay: Panorama de su Arquitectura Contemporánea,' *Summa* 27 (1970).
- 6 Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, *Carlos Raul Villanueva and the Architecture of Venezuela* (New York: Praeger, 1964) and its translation: *Carlos Raúl Villanueva y la arquitectura en Venezuela* (Caracas: Ediciones Lectura, 1964).
- 7 Francisco Bullrich, *Arquitectura Latinoamericana 1930/1970* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1969).
- 8 Francisco Bullrich, *Arquitectura Latinoamericana* (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 1969).
- 9 Francisco Bullrich, *New Directions in Latin American Architecture* (New York: George Braziller, 1969).
- 10 Francisco Bullrich, *Nuevos Caminos de la Arquitectura Latinoamericana* (Barcelona: Blume, 1969).
- 11 Bullrich, *Arquitectura Latinoamericana*, 11.

# Bonet and Dieste at the Casa Berlingieri: A Successful Encounter on the Shores of the Atlantic

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## Abstract

Antonio Bonet moved to Paris in 1936 to work with Le Corbusier. There, he was surprised by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Without the possibility of returning to Spain, he emigrated to Rio de la Plata where he applied some of the teachings acquired in his European training. In Punta Ballena (Uruguay), he would build one of his most famous works: the Casa Berlingieri. While seeking local assistance on a structural problem, Bonet met the young engineer Eladio Dieste, who suggested that the thin vaults of brick had to be reinforced so as to function as shell structures. This was Dieste's first application of structural masonry, which he would develop and improve later.

If Bonet had not raised his problems to Dieste, would the latter have developed the technique of reinforced ceramic? We will never know. This paper does not aim to answer this question, but to point out the Casa Berlingieri as an example of contact and hybridisation between the Mediterranean tradition and the Latin American reality, from which emerged a constructive system perfectly adapted to the circumstances of the region.

## Keywords

Antonio Bonet, Eladio Dieste, hybridisation, tile vault, reinforced ceramic, structural masonry.

As an architect, I want to start building and as you already know here it cannot be done. For this and for many other reasons, I have decided to settle in Buenos Aires.<sup>1</sup>

When Antonio Bonet (Barcelona, 1913–89) wrote these words from Paris to his mentor and friend Josep Torres Clavé, he could never have imagined the importance of his transfer to Latin America. Bonet had travelled to Paris in 1936 to work in the studio of Le Corbusier. Shortly afterwards the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) began. So, in 1938, with the conflict in full swing and with the idea in mind that his period of training with the Swiss master had ended, Bonet selected Buenos Aires as the place to develop his career.

Antonio Bonet has been the subject of numerous monographs and research that present him as a realistic and meticulous architect who continuously experimented through his work. This text does not intend to add to all those that highlight the quality and sensitivity of Bonet's architecture but tries to situate him – together with the Uruguayan engineer Eladio Dieste – at the centre of the framework of figures, circumstances, and encounters, that led to the appearance of a new constructive technique in Latin America, based on traditional Mediterranean techniques: the 'structural masonry'. But, trying to understand how that fusion between both sides of the Atlantic took place, we have to move several centuries back.

A tile vault is a curved surface formed by bricks on bed with plaster, on the first layer, which is folded or 'tiled' with successive layers joined by mortar. Although many authors have seen a possible origin of this type of construction in the brick tiling of Roman monolithic concrete vaults, or in the Arabic tradition of masonry vaults, it seems that the first tile vaults as described here, did not appear until medieval times and then spread through unknown means through various countries along the Mediterranean coast. In each one of them it acquired its own name, so that we can speak of *bóvedas tabicadas*, *catalanas*, or *extremeñas* in Spain; of *abobadilha alentejana* or *abóbada com tijolo* in Portugal; of *volta a foglia* in Italy; and of *voûte plate* or *voûte à la Roussillon* in France. In Spain, it seems that the first appearance of the tile vault was in the fourteenth century in Valencia<sup>2</sup> and, unlike in other places, the tradition of building with tile vaults did not diminish with the passing of the centuries. Particularly in Catalonia, the technique underwent considerable improvement in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as it was used and improved, among other things, in modern industrial buildings.

## Le Corbusier and Gaudí

Among the architects who used them in their buildings in those years, was Antoni Gaudí, who created a very particular world of structures and shapes thanks to them. Gaudí employed different types of tile vaults, such as the chimney stacks and attics in Casa Batlló and Casa Milà. However, one of the most spectacular results of its application was in the school for workers' children at the Sagrada Família, whose walls and roof have curvilinear forms created by a succession of conoids built with tiled thin bricks.

Precisely, this building was one of those that most impressed Le Corbusier when he visited Barcelona in 1928. In fact, in his travel notebook C11 he drew the conoid vaults of the Gaudí's school alongside a classical Catalan vault. Le Corbusier's interest in traditional construction and cultural heritage conserved in buildings represents a constant and recurrent element in his activity as a designer.<sup>3</sup> This interest, combined with his search for economic methods of construction, led him to develop several original systems that he tried to patent. These included the insulating 'aeroscoria

brick' and the system of housing construction that he experimented with in the Maisons Monol project (1919), with a covering system of light vaults, similar to the one he had designed three years before for the Villa Paul Poiret (1916). At the end of the 1920s, his interest in vernacular architecture and traditional construction techniques was gaining strength.

Le Corbusier's first project to show a direct link with the tile vaulting is that of the Villa Henfel (1934). Given that he had already proposed vaults fifteen years earlier in the Maisons Monol, at first glance it might seem that there is no relationship with the architecture of Gaudí. However, in one of the sketches of the project, Le Corbusier drew two solutions for the same volume: one composed of individual units covered with cylindrical vaults, much closer to the final solution; and, alongside that, another in which the walls and roofs curve and form conoid surfaces very similar to those he had seen in the school at the Sagrada Família. (Figure 1) And, besides the second drawing he wrote the definitive clue: 'Casa Gaudí', a note that ends up clarifying the origin of the reference of the project.

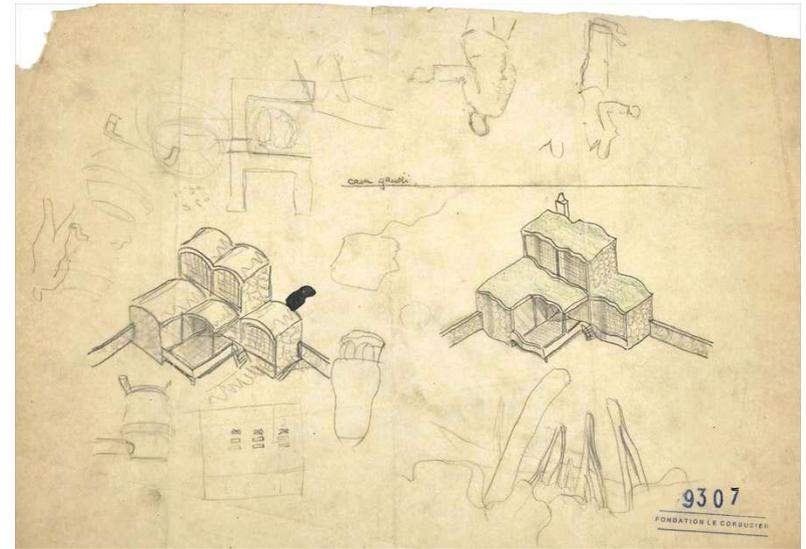


Figure 1. Le Corbusier. Villa Henfel, La Celle-Saint-Cloud (1934).  
Source: Fondation Le Corbusier, FLC/ADAGP 6/8.

### Sert and Le Corbusier

From these first experiences, Le Corbusier's taste for the architectural languages of vernacular architectures would become more and more accentuated and the vaulted element would become a constant and characteristic reference in his projects. He shared this taste with Josep Lluís Sert (Barcelona, 1902–83), a young Catalan architect whom he had met on his first visit to Barcelona in May 1928, and who soon after collaborated with him in his studio in Paris and ended up sharing the spotlight with him at the CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) congresses, even collaborating professionally in urban plans such as the Plan Macià for Barcelona (1934) and the one for Bogotá (1950).

Le Corbusier maintained a close relationship with Sert, with whom he had the opportunity to discuss and reflect on tile vaulting on several occasions. In fact, it was Sert at the 1951 CIAM in Hoddesdon who told him about Domènech Escorsa, a Catalan master builder emigrated to France who specialised in that system, as Le Corbusier documented in his notebook E21. From that moment on, Domènech Escorsa would become an essential reference for Le Corbusier in everything connected with tile vaulting. In fact, he built a real example before his eyes and taught his collaborators how to build them.<sup>4</sup>

Returning to the beginning of the 1930s, the intellectual primacy of the Grup d'Arquitectes i Tècnics Catalans per al Progrés de l'Arquitectura Contemporània (GATCPAC; Group of Catalan Artists and Technicians for the Advancement of Contemporary Architecture) was exercised without discussion by Josep Lluís Sert and his partner, Josep Torres Clavé (Barcelona, 1906 – Omellóns, 1939). Both collaborated on the project for a small, easy to dismantle weekend house integrated in the project of the GATCPAC's

Ciutat de Repós i de Vacances (City of Rest and Holidays) that was never built, but that was reproduced in a model exhibited in Plaça de Ramon Berenguer el Gran in Barcelona. This model for a minimal dwelling of approximately twenty square metres consisted of a dining room, living room, covered terrace, kitchen, toilet with shower and space for bunk beds. The model exuded concepts such as standardisation, universality, abstraction and, above all, economy of means, an economy that could be achieved by using traditional techniques from the region.

Two years later, Sert and Torres Clavé would work on a new project based on this experience, although they abandoned the technical and aseptic thinking that characterised it, to embrace a traditional Mediterranean construction of three houses in El Garraf. Among the typical elements employed that were replicated, was the Catalan vaulting used to cover the living room of one of the three households.

### Le Corbusier and Bonet

Antoni Bonet was born in Barcelona in 1913. He was greatly influenced by Josep Lluís Sert and Josep Torres Clavé, with whom he came into contact around 1932, when he was still a student. He immediately enrolled in GATCPAC and began his professional career with them. He was part of the GATCPAC delegation that participated in CIAM in Athens in 1933, where he had the opportunity to meet Le Corbusier in person. The fascination of the young Bonet for the Swiss master originated earlier, although it should be noted that it was not a blind admiration. But his real meeting



Figure 2. Antoni Bonet Castellana. Sketch for the Maison Jaoul (1937).  
Source: Historical Archive of the Architects' Association of Catalonia, Antoni Bonet Collection.

with Le Corbusier would come in 1936, when on finishing his studies he travelled to Paris to work at the studio in Rue Nungesser-et-Coli. Before leaving for France, Bonet had worked for Sert and Torres Clavé during the design of the houses in El Garraf.

When Bonet arrived at Le Corbusier's studio, the latter had just designed the Villa Henfel, bringing to mind Gaudí's conoid surfaces that so impressed him when he was in Barcelona. In 1937, the studio began work on the proposal for the Maison de week-end Jaoul. Le Corbusier put his assistants to work on this proposal and, together with Roberto Matta (surrealist Chilean artist), Bonet prepared a series of drawings in which there is a proposal for an undulated roof that appears to be designed with a sequence of truncated cone-shaped vaults. (Figure 2) Le Corbusier rejected this option and proposed a huge pitched roof. As is well known, the final project changed radically with respect to these first proposals and it was not built until 1951. However, it is a curious coincidence that Le Corbusier ended up using Catalan vaults to cover the rooms of the Maisons Jaoul.

Going back to Bonet, aware that he should start his own career, in the spring of 1938 he landed in Buenos Aires, only 25 years old, but already with an impressive amount of experience behind him. A year later, together with his colleagues from the Austral Group Alejandro Vera Barros and Abel López Chas, he built a block of artists' studios at Calle Suichapa in Buenos Aires. The two studios on the top floor were covered by a vault slightly recessed from the facade, which was not exactly a Catalan one, but a concrete barrel vault parallel to the facade. As in the first proposal for the Maison

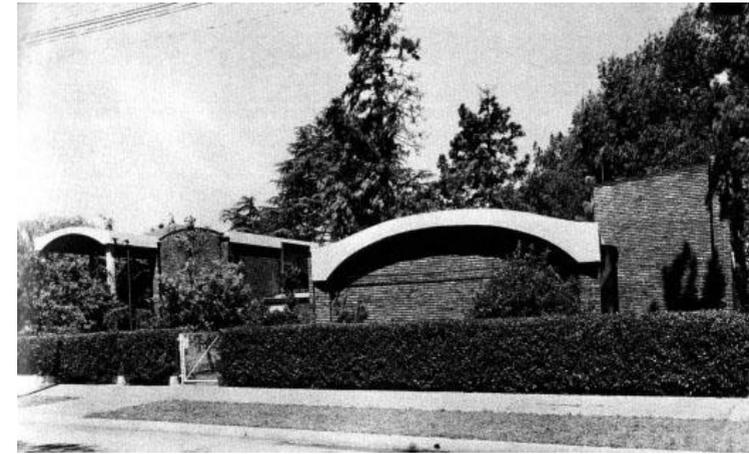


Figure 3. Houses in Martínez (1941–42).  
Source: Historical Archive of the Architects' Association of Catalonia, Antoni Bonet Collection.

de week-end Jaoul, the vault is shown with a very unique character within the overall conception of the project.

Bonet's work at this time remained close to the ideas of the Austral Group. In the search for the creation of new styles of living they embraced the interest of local materials or traditional elements, such as vaults. Bonet built four houses in Martínez (1941–42) with exposed brick walls and, again, covered by recessed vaults of reinforced concrete. (Figure 3) Although the vaults were also made in concrete, the prominence it acquired as a formal defining element of the project is a clear advancement over previous examples.

In 1945, Bonet moved to Uruguay to build the residential development of Punta Ballena. Among the successful homes he built, Casa Berlingieri (1947) is particularly interesting. (Figure 4) When he was designing the project, he looked for an open-minded interlocutor to help him calculate concrete vaults that were as light as possible.

#### Bonet and Dieste

Antoni Bonet called Eladio Dieste (Artigas, 1917 – Montevideo, 2000), a young civil engineer educated at the Faculty of Engineering in Montevideo. Dieste's suggestion was barrel vaults made of brick that, with some reinforcement would become structural shells. His final proposal consists of an inner layer of thin, hollow bricks, arranged in the manner of the tile vaults, but in a single layer, to which he added steel reinforcing bars located on each transverse mortar joint. Above this structural vault, an air chamber was created based on lightweight supports that formed ribs perpendicular to the back of the vault, which were then covered with a new layer of hollow bricks that rested on them. Following this they were covered with a layer of



Figure 4. Casa Berlingieri (1941–42). Source: Historical Archive of the Architects' Association of Catalonia, Antoni Bonet Collection.

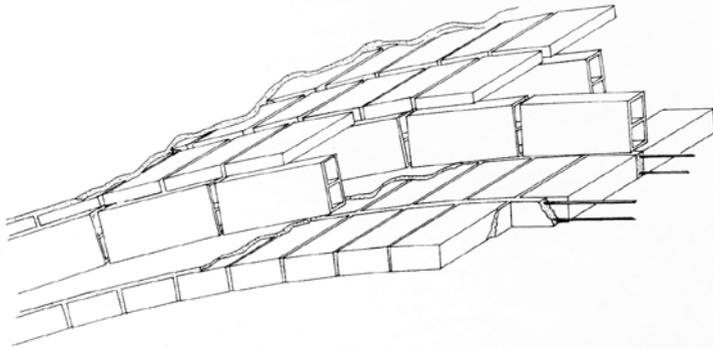


Figure 5. Jos Tomlow's interpretation of the Casa Berlingieri vaults. Source: Jos Tomlow, Hochschule Zittau / Görlitz FH, Germany 2000.

mortar that was weather resistant. (Figure 5) *Cerámica armada* (structural masonry) was born.

It is not known for sure if Dieste would have arrived at the solution of structural masonry if he had not known Bonet. What interests us here is not to clarify exactly what each one contributed to that discovery, but to point out this collaboration as the starting point of a new construction technique, inspired by the Mediterranean tradition, but adapted to the Latin American reality. Obviously, the influence did not occur only with the emigration of Bonet to the River Plate; one cannot ignore the important Hispanic and Portuguese construction traditions of Latin America, which date back to the sixteenth century, that is, immediately after the development of tiled vaulting systems in the Iberian Peninsula. Influences and exchanges are not usually produced by one specific event, but are the result of an amalgam of circumstances that occur over centuries. However, that does not mean that important moments within these processes cannot be detected and it is indisputable that the encounter between Bonet and Dieste at Casa Berlingieri was the trigger for the development of structural masonry, a system resulting from the perfect distillation of the European roots of economic and geographical needs with the cultural memory of the south of the New Continent.

#### Notes

- 1 Antoni Bonet's letter to Josep Torres Clavé, 11 February 1938. Historical Archive of the Architects' Association of Catalonia, Torres Clavé Collection, CAT AHCOAC-B (Correspondència professional amb arquitectes. 1938), C 1879 / 7: 7.6 (Carta d'Antoni Bonet Castellana del 11-2-1938).
- 2 Salvador Tarragó, 'Las variaciones históricas de la bóveda tabicada,' in Santiago Huerta (ed.), *Las bóvedas de Guastavino en América* (Madrid: Instituto Juan de Herrera, 1999), 217–40.
- 3 Ricardo Gulli, 'La huella de la construcción tabicada en la arquitectura de Le Corbusier,' in Santiago Huerta (ed.), *Las bóvedas de Guastavino en América* (Madrid: Instituto Juan de Herrera, 1999), 73–85.
- 4 Fernando Marça and Esteve Roca, 'La volta catalana a l'obra de Le Corbusier,' in *Le Corbusier i Barcelona* (Barcelona: Fundació La Caixa de Catalunya, 1988), 111–34.

# Beyond the Mediterranean: Le Corbusier, Lúcio Costa, and Vernacular Modernism in Brazil

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## Abstract

In their 2010 book, *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identities*, Michelangelo Sabatino and Jean-François Lejeune have brought to light the debt (too often unmentioned or eclipsed in the traditional historiography of modernity), that twentieth-century architects (from northern and southern Europe) owed to the vernacular building traditions of the Mediterranean region. This essay attempts to expand the horizon of 'vernacular modernism' from Europe to Latin America, open new avenues of research and interpretation, and reassert the connections between Latin American modernism and the vernacular of the Mediterranean. It is an introduction to the complex first period of Brazilian modern architecture, between 1929 and the 1940s, first celebrated internationally in the exhibitions and publications of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, *Brazil Builds*.

## Keywords

Le Corbusier, Mediterranean, modernism, vernacular, Brazil, Costa.

It is generally acknowledged that Le Corbusier's first journey to the Southern Cone (October–December 1929) played an essential role in the evolution of his ideas about urbanism and architecture.<sup>1</sup> From a ship, an airplane slowly flying over the meandering river, or on foot climbing a hill, he had his first revelation of a non-European experience. In absence of mosques, Roman ruins, or any genuine autochthonous monument, it is the landscape, the colours, the light, the mountains, the vernacular and the life of people, which inspired his enthusiasm: 'the sand of the ocean comes to the edge of houses and palaces; an immense light puts its motor in your heart.'<sup>2</sup>

In a pivotal episode, he stumbled on the simple houses of the informal neighbourhoods, the favelas, which were rising up on the hills overlooking Rio de Janeiro (Figure 1). Beyond the physical beauty and the goodness of 'the blacks', he praised their houses as admirably sited, their colours, the smallness of their rooms largely adequate, their windows opening on 'magnificent spaces': 'the eye of the man who sees wide horizons is prouder,



Figure 1. Le Corbusier. Favela, Rio de Janeiro, 1929. © Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.

wide horizons confer dignity; that is the thought of the planner.'<sup>3</sup> As his Brazilian hosts learnt that he climbed the favela hills, he maliciously quoted their racist reactions – 'It is a shame for us, civilized persons ... the blacks will kill you in those awful neighbourhoods.'<sup>4</sup>

The appearance of the favela marked the beginning of an urban form in full contrast to both colonial urbanism and the modernist vision of the city, and whose apparent freedom and modernity seduced Le Corbusier. The early favelas spoke to him about another way to think about a new concept of life and a new 'concept of happiness,'<sup>5</sup> about low-cost housing and the role – or not – of the architect. Le Corbusier's optimism and overly romantic and intellectualised way of looking at the problem of informal housing might appear naïve, but it clearly reflected his fascination for an 'architecture without architects.' The black music that he heard in the favelas appeared to him like a new but crucial element added to the landscape and the vernacular architecture. As Francesco Passanti has posited, 'Unlike classicism, which was a closed formal system internal to architecture, the vernacular model insisted on connecting architecture to something external to it, the identity of a society; and it further insisted that such connection be not invented but found.'<sup>6</sup> In Asunción, Le Corbusier sketched the vernacular houses – 'whitewash under the portico of bamboo or twisted beams supporting a vine (as wherever people want to live well)'<sup>7</sup> –, blending them in the landscape along with the silhouettes of Indian women. Everything seems to go in the same direction, 'the return to the simplicity of the vernacular culture, as an alternative to the cultivated and academic development of European culture.'<sup>8</sup>



Figure 2. Le Corbusier. Page from *Précisions sur un état présent de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme* (Paris: Crès, 1930). © Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.

It is in the Buenos Aires lecture of 17 October 1929, titled 'The World City,' that Le Corbusier best expressed his interest for the vernacular housing type of Buenos Aires and La Plata, in particular the *casa chorizo*. Like a reporter, he writes 'The other day, at twilight, we took a long walk in the streets of La Plata....'<sup>9</sup> He draws a house, a 'modern house' perhaps.... And he adds, 'their dimensions are right, their forms are right, ... a standard plan, and a play of forms in the Argentine light....'<sup>10</sup> (Figure 2). Le Corbusier described the simple design composition by pointing to five architectural facts – the little door in the wall, the door cutting the wall into two, the big garage door, the narrow passage between the two parts, and the 'oblique line of the roof and its overhang.'<sup>11</sup> He emphasised the presence of the windmill in the yard. In doing so he linked two types of vernaculars – the well-anchored one, at once rural and urban, and the industrial one – within a single discourse: 'I should give my student a problem to solve: go measure the house ... you will study this sort of folklore for mass production, in steel for instance (dry-mounted) or in concrete (standardized or combinable elements).'<sup>12</sup> As Passanti noted, for Le Corbusier, the vernacular 'provided a conceptual structure for integrating the new ideas and "facts" into the discipline of architecture,

and for broadening its vocabulary and responsibilities.'<sup>13</sup> Corbusier would remember this composition when, in 1930, he projected the Casa Errázuriz on the Pacific coast of Chile, with its V-shaped roof echoing the profile of the distant mountains. The decision to design a base of local stone that also made up the interior ramp 'constituted the second gesture made towards regional considerations, with construction techniques using Chilean wood.'<sup>14</sup>

### Vernacular Transparencies

In 1934, following the appointment of Gustavo Capanema as Minister of Education, the young Lúcio Costa wrote 'Razões da nova arquitetura' (Reasons of the New Architecture).<sup>15</sup> In this seminal text, Costa defended the alignment of the young generation with Le Corbusier, which he saw as the new Filippo Brunelleschi.<sup>16</sup> Modern architecture according to Le Corbusier implied a return to composition, a position validated by socio-cultural and technological change. To speak of a rupture with the history of the discipline was thus senseless. The new architecture did not 'pretend to escape the constraints of symmetry, but in fact reload it with the true and larger meaning of the ancients.'<sup>17</sup> Costa ended the essay with a clear direction:

The new architecture is affiliated ... with the purest Mediterranean tradition, with the 'reason' of the Greeks and the Latin, which revived in the fifteenth century and then sank beneath the artifice of academic makeup; it is now resurging with renewed and unexpected vigour.<sup>18</sup>

Exactly at the same time, on the other side of the Atlantic, Costa's essay echoed Josep Lluís Sert's declarations in 1934:

Technically speaking, modern architecture is largely the discovery of the Nordic countries, but spiritually it is Mediterranean architecture without style that influences this new architecture. Modern architecture is a return to the pure, traditional forms of the Mediterranean. It is one more triumph of the Latin Sea!<sup>19</sup>

For Costa, modern architecture was, in the words of Carlos E. Comas, 'a Mediterranean expression on its way to becoming international; it was not to be an international expression going local.'<sup>20</sup> It implied the recuperation of the lucidity and the objectivity of Greco-Roman architecture, here the Mediterranean one transferred from Portugal and Spain to their American colonies. It assimilated the elements of the new architecture with a rational and national tradition of construction. In 1922, Lúcio Costa had spent one year of research in the colonial cities of the Minas Gerais region, and its Mediterranean-colonial vernacular had no secrets for him.

Likewise, Costa's essay 'Documentação necessária' of 1937 pointed to the importance of the vernacular houses in Portugal and by extension in Brazil.<sup>21</sup> He advocated the need of a very precise documentation process, 'sympathetically addressing things that have always been despised or covered, [allowing] the opportunity to use it as material for further research, and also for us, modern architects, to learn a lesson from this experience of more than three hundred years – another lesson than that of purely reproducing its obsolete aspect.'<sup>22</sup> He enumerated all types of houses, from the large haciendas and the houses with three to five balconies common in the towns of Minas Gerais to the type 'which is the only one that continues to live across the country in spite of its fragile aspect', i.e., the 'minimum' house of the colonist (*casa do colono*) which, he argued, was made of earth reinforced with wood and thus followed the logic of reinforced concrete.<sup>23</sup> No doubt that such a process of documentation brought to light the inventive diversity of solutions employed by the vernacular builders of previous centuries to control the intensity of light penetrating both rural and urban housing types, in particular the deeply recessed verandas and the wood louvers and jalousies.<sup>24</sup>

Although Le Corbusier did not allude to the 'brise-soleil' in *Precisions* – he only makes reference to the new horizontal windows to 'be diaphragmed at will' – one can assert that the invention of the device paralleled his discovery of another aspect of the Mediterranean vernacular: in this case, not the tectonic volumetry of the white cubic houses of the Greek islands but the tradition of the screens, louvers, and other moucharaby that he encountered in Spain, northern Africa, and eventually in Brazil.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the architectural 'brise-soleil' made its apparition in 1933 with the unbuilt casbah-like residential district in Barcelona and the projects for Oued-Ouchaia in Algiers: 'the introduction in North Africa of the "brise-soleil" constitutes the first fundamental element of the regional North-African architecture.'<sup>26</sup> Beyond the functional role of the devices, Le Corbusier might have been attracted by a certain quality of 'Mediterranean light' – a 'decomposed' light which is the result of a 'filtered' transparency. As Daniel Barber has suggested, 'the brise-soleil was a "vernacular" object insofar that it followed on the use of overhangs and other methods of shading in folk or so-called primitive architectures – including, significantly, the pre-modern architecture of Brazil.'<sup>27</sup>

According to Philip Goodwin, Brazil's original contribution to modern architecture was 'the control of heat and glare on glass surfaces by means of external blinds,'<sup>28</sup> and thus to render tangible what was only a sketch by Le Corbusier. The implementation was a fully Brazilian matter and the achievement of Lúcio Costa, the MMM Brothers, Oscar Niemeyer, Jorge Moreira, and others. As the intellectual leader in 1930s Brazil, Costa was also the first one to put the theory of the new architecture into practice. He drew the project for the Casa Fontes (second version, 1930, Figure 3) in clearly



Figure 3. Lúcio Costa. Casa Fontes, 1930. © Casa de Lúcio Costa, Rio de Janeiro.

delineated perspectives that displayed Palladian and Corbusian themes: a two-story box with a central hall expanded symmetrically by protruding volumes on pilotis. The glazed panes protected by climatically responsive wood blinds assimilated 'the horizontal window to a characteristic element of colonial and imperial Brazilian houses.'<sup>29</sup>

In June 1936 Le Corbusier disembarked in Rio de Janeiro. This would be a seminal year for modern architecture in Brazil, with an exceptional cast of young actors – almost a collective 'atelier' in the Renaissance sense – coming front stage. The moment of synthesis was the design process and construction of the Ministry of Education building (1935–45): the team was led by Costa, along with Oscar Niemeyer, Affonso Reidy, Jorge Moreira, Carlos Leão, Ernani Vasconcelos, and landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx (Figure 4). Le Corbusier joined the group as consultant and designed substantial variations for the site and the scheme. Yet, Costa and his team were eventually the sole responsible artisans for the final solution. The ministry was a genuine *gesamtkunstwerk*.<sup>30</sup> With its giant order of concrete pilotis clad with stone, its vertical slab screened with concrete sunbreaks to the north and a transparent curtain wall to the south, the low volume containing, within its free plan, the major public spaces, circulations and theatre, the roof garden designed by Roberto Burle Marx, and the azulejos and paintings by Cândido Portinari, the ministry achieved a unique balance of Mediterranean tradition and modernity, of reinvented vernacular memories and modernist monumentality.

Costa's greatest achievement in Rio was the apartments' complex at Parque Guinle (1948–54). He planned five buildings – only three were built according to his designs – forming a gentle crescent, in the manner of the Royal Crescent in Bath, rising steeply around a tropical public park. Typologically, it marked the first extensive use of pilotis in high-society housing. For these large apartments Costa decided to apply the principle of the double patio/outdoor space of the traditional Brazilian house: the 'social



Figure 4. 3. Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, Affonso Reidy, Jorge Moreira, et.al., Ministry of Education and Public Health (today, Palacio Capanema), Rio de Janeiro, 1936–45. Foto Marcel Gautherot. © Instituto Moreira Salles, São Paulo.

veranda' attached to the living room here appearing like a deep terrace, and the 'private' one connected to the bedrooms and services. Filling the modular grid of visible slabs and columns, the verandas were screened with a mix of vertical brise-soleil, open wooden lattices, tiles, and glass.

Parque Guinle, like all the modern buildings of the late 1930s to the early 1950s in Rio de Janeiro, created a new synthesis between the constructive traditions of the Mediterranean imported through colonial times, the *plan libre*, and the ground floor pilotis. This combination created a new Brazilian vernacular, in part because of the capacity of the concrete frame to provide for a great diversity of infill systems, from the sophisticated brise-soleil to the makeshift vernacular ones found in the favelas on the hills. As a result, the Brazilian brand of vernacular/Mediterranean modernism veered away



Figure 5. Oscar Niemeyer. Casa Lagoa. From Da Philip L. Goodwin and G.E. Kidder Smith, *Brazil Builds: Architecture New and Old 1652–1942*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1943. © Museum of Modern Art NY.

from the wall-based tectonic tradition to embrace the concrete frame and, through the use of light-weight infill systems, reinvent another Mediterranean quality: that of a 'screened' transparency and its unique quality of light.

Discussing another icon of early Brazilian modernism, Oscar Niemeyer's first personal house, Casa Lagoa of 1942 (Figure 5), David Underwood claimed that it could be interpreted as a 'commentary about the formal city at the bottom and the informal city above.' In other words, Niemeyer adopted Le Corbusier's vision of an ideal urban realm high above the moral degeneration of the bourgeois street and city:

The legitimacy of the Lagoa house as a new cultural symbol for modern Brazil thus lies in its fluency with both the 'high' modernist discourse of Le Corbusier and the local Rio discourse of the hillside house. By appropriating and synthesizing both these discourses, Niemeyer gave his house a pedigree that is both modernist and Brazilian.<sup>31</sup>

## Brazil/Portugal: Post-Colonial Urban Migrations Through Architectural Objects

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### Abstract

The National Coach Museum opened in 2015, in Lisbon (Portugal) is, above all, a cultural fact, a transcontinental event that evokes the common histories of two countries in two continents: Portugal and Brazil / Europe and South America. The architect Paulo Mendes da Rocha began designing this project in 2008, in São Paulo, with a team from that city, MMBB (formed by the architects Fernando de Mello e Franco, Marta Moreira and Milton Braga), and then continued in the office of the Lisbon architect Ricardo Bak Gordon.

This paper questions the design of the new Lisbon museum in the perspective of its urban implantation and the new meanings that can bring to an old European city. Can an architectural object (a building) produce a disruptive effect in a consolidated city? As a starting point, exists the conviction that the design of the new Coach Museum is an idea of innate modernity, built in the South Atlantic. This invention is exercised through the discipline of Architecture, 'a peculiar form of knowledge' – as Paulo Mendes da Rocha stated several times – from a post-colonialist viewpoint that does not evoke the subordinate position of its colonial past but on the contrary raises it to a condition of superiority; a superiority that is also moral and that incorporates architectural design by the way the building 'floats' above the ground in the city. We should also add, at this point, that contemporary Brazil owes less to colonial Brazil (that representing the past shared with Portugal), and is closer to immigrant Brazil (composed by people with different roots and different backgrounds who arrived during the last almost 200 years of independence). Mendes da Rocha carries an urban culture, with a focus on the metropolis of São Paulo, very different from the assumptions of the European city. To what extent does the construction of the museum accurately reflect this differentiation?

Lisbon, by contrast to São Paulo, is a medium size city located north of the tropics. It is a place of temperate climate, on the shores of the Atlantic, the subsoil rich in archaeologies. The mouth of the Tagus river old ships symbolic departure point, has become the allegory of an ancient country. We believe the new museum sublimates this condition in its status as a promised 'monument'. It is – in a way – an infrastructure from the 'future'. It is also interesting to question the idea of post-colonialism when analyzing the possibilities of transformation that the new museum, in representing the Brazilian culture, formerly from a colonized territory, brings to Lisbon, the former capital of a colonial metropolis.

### Notes

- 1 Fernando Pérez Oyarzún (ed.), *Le Corbusier y Sudamérica: Viajes y proyectos* (Santiago: Ediciones Arq, 1991).
- 2 Le Corbusier, *Precisions on the Present State of Architecture and City Planning* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 2.
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- 7 Le Corbusier, *Precisions on the Present State of Architecture and City Planning*, 8.
- 8 Oyarzún, *Le Corbusier y Sudamérica*, 24.
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- 10 Le Corbusier, 227.
- 11 Le Corbusier, 228.
- 12 Le Corbusier, 228–30.
- 13 Passanti, 'The Vernacular, Modernism, and Le Corbusier,' 447–8.
- 14 Jean-Louis Cohen, 'Zapallar, Chile: Maison Errázuriz, 1930,' in Jean-Louis Cohen (ed.), *Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes* (New York: MoMA, 2013), 342–3.
- 15 Lúcio Costa, *Lúcio Costa: registro de uma vivência* (São Paulo: Empresa das Artes, 1997). References and translations from the Spanish edition *Razones de la nueva arquitectura, 1934, y otros ensayos* (Lima: Embajada del Brasil, 1986).
- 16 Costa, *Razones*, 36.
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- 18 Costa, 58.
- 19 Josep Lluís Sert, 'Raíces mediterráneas de la arquitectura moderna,' *A.C. Documentos de actividad contemporánea*, 18 (1935), 31.
- 20 Carlos Eduardo Comás, 'Report from Brazil,' in Jean-François Lejeune (ed.), *Cruelty and Utopia: Cities and Landscapes of Latin America* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 176.
- 21 Costa, *Razones*, 75.
- 22 Costa, 75.
- 23 Costa, 76.
- 24 Daniel A. Barber, 'Le Corbusier, the Brise-Soleil, and the Socio-Climatic Project of Modern Architecture, 1929–1963,' *Thresholds* 40 (2012), 25.
- 25 Le Corbusier, *Precisions on the Present State of Architecture and City Planning*, 132.
- 26 *Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret, Oeuvre complète, 1929–1934* (Zürich: Les éditions d'architecture, 1964), 167. v
- 27 Barber, 'Le Corbusier, the Brise-Soleil, and the Socio-Climatic Project of Modern Architecture, 1929–1963,' 23.
- 28 Philip L. Goodwin, *Brazil Builds: Architecture New and Old, 1652–1942* (New York: MoMA, 1943), 84.
- 29 Comás, 'Report from Brazil,' 174.
- 30 Roberto Segre, *Ministério da Educação e Saúde: Ícone urbano da modernidade brasileira, 1935–1945* (São Paulo: Romano Guerra Editora, 2013).
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# The Centre of Brasília as an Urban Archipelago, 1968–1973

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## Abstract

In articles published between 1968 and 1973 – across the press in Switzerland, Brazil, and France – Lúcio Costa described Brasília as still an ‘urban archipelago’. The architect used such an expression to stress the city’s urban arrangement as incomplete. Even though Costa was aware of a condition that would be modified in due time, the use and repetition through articles of the word ‘archipelago’ is intriguing. Regarding the city centre, it suggests buildings as isolated objects instead of buildings as an articulated group. A condition that raised design possibilities for architects and entrepreneurs at the time; while also granting an iconic quality to buildings that were meant to be just ordinary. This paper addresses the centre of Brasília in the early 1970s using the narrative framework of Brazilian *Acrópole* magazine. At stake, is the ambiguous character displayed by the buildings in the Banking and Commercial sectors, which became landmarks due to the emptiness of the site, and the consequent interruption of the urban arrangement thought for the area as a set of formal controls.

## Keywords

Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, city of modern architecture, modern planning.

## Introduction

Brasília is ‘still an urban archipelago’.<sup>1</sup> In articles published between 1968 and 1973 – across the press in Switzerland, Brazil, and France – Lúcio Costa used this expression to stress the urban arrangement planned to Brasília as incomplete. The statement may have grown up from his text ‘L’architetto difende la ‘sua’ città’ (1965),<sup>2</sup> but it appeared for the first time in the French version ‘L’urbaniste défend sa capitale’ (1968), published in the Swiss magazine *Architecture, formes et fonctions*. From there, the text and the statement were printed in Brazil as ‘Brasília’ (1968) in the magazine *Arquitetura*, translated as ‘O urbanista defende a sua cidade’ (1970) in *Revista do Clube de Engenharia*, and later as ‘O urbanista defende sua capital’ (1970) in *Acrópole*. They also appear as ‘Documento: Lúcio Costa fala de Brasília, do seu trabalho, de arquitetura’ (1973) in *Arquiteto*, being published once more as ‘L’urbanisme de Brasília’ (1973) in the French journal *Nouvelle revue des deux mondes*. Despite editions of the text, Costa kept his

statement and broadcasted it two-ways over the Atlantic – from the end of the 1960s to early 1970s, Brasília was still an ‘urban archipelago’.

Costa emphasised with the adverb *still* a condition that would be modified in due course. The architect was aware that Brasília could only develop over time.<sup>3</sup> Even so, the use and repetition through articles of the word ‘archipelago’ is intriguing. The expression could be seen as Costa’s critique to the fact that satellite cities emerged before the pilot plan had been completed, reversing the planned order for the site.<sup>4</sup> Acknowledging this matter was an important topic then, as well as it is now.<sup>5</sup> This paper, however, pursues another meaning in which Costa may have addressed Brasília as an ‘urban archipelago’. According to the *New Oxford American Dictionary*, archipelago means ‘a sea or stretch of water containing many islands’ or ‘a group of islands’.<sup>6</sup> Regarding its use in ‘L’urbaniste défend sa capitale’ and its different versions, the word may refer to the empty areas of the city centre, but it may also suggest its buildings as isolated objects instead of an articulated group. A condition that raised design possibilities for architects and entrepreneurs at the time; while also granting an iconic quality to buildings that were meant to be just ordinary. This paper addresses the centre of Brasília in the early 1970s using the narrative framework of Brazilian *Acrópole* magazine. At stake, is the ambiguous character displayed by buildings in the Banking and Commercial sectors, which became landmarks due to the possibilities of an empty site, and the consequent interruption of the urban arrangement thought for the area as a set of formal controls.

## Incompleteness

Among its published versions, Costa’s claim of Brasília as an ‘urban archipelago’ perhaps finds its best fitting in the July–August 1970 issue of *Acrópole* magazine. It perfectly matched the reassessment tone of the publication. The magazine dedicated a number to check the city conditions, following the organisation and promises of a special report published in 1960.<sup>7</sup> The architect used the magazine platform to reiterate his urban ideas for Brasília. On it, the emptiness of the desert and the sparse building array of the city centre can be seen as related subjects. But, if to Costa, ‘the city exists where some years ago there was nothing but a desert’;<sup>8</sup> the city centre did not. Besides the unfinished social and entertainment centre,<sup>9</sup> the high-rise densely arranged buildings intended to be the centre were barely done at the time. As such, the centre could not establish the visual and functional contrast with the low-rise and scattered blocks of the residential sector, which Costa had deemed indispensable to the city’s constitution.<sup>10</sup> Thus, despite already being acknowledged as the capital of Brazil, Costa reinforced that Brasília ‘is still an urban archipelago – the city centre does not exist and there are voids on all sides’.<sup>11</sup>

The centre of Brasília was full of voids by 1970 indeed. Even though the south sectors were more advanced than their northern counterparts, they



Figure 1. Centre of Brasília seen as a group.  
Source: "Setor Comercial e Bancário," *Acrópole* (July 1970), 59, <http://www.acropole.fau.usp.br/edicao/375>.

displayed scattered buildings intermingled with a construction site. Also, changes have been made in the schemes of 1957 and early 1960 increasing the site's area. The South Banking Sector was extended southwards by 8,5 hectares, and more parking lots were added.<sup>12</sup> The South Commercial Sector, though more finished than the Banking one,<sup>13</sup> had its low-rise galleries only halfway built. Adding to Costa's text, but somewhat challenging the impression of an empty city, *Acrópole* magazine offered an up-to-date visual account of these issues. An aerial shot, taken by the federal district photographic office, captures the city centre and highlights the section 'Setor bancário e comercial.'<sup>14</sup> Taken from the air, the image emulates the south portion of the city centre as a cohesive group (Figure 1). It is followed, though, by a caption stating such cohesion as faulty. It claims that

[t]he commercial and banking activity of the capital's centre is still reduced and dependent on political and subjective factors. For this reason, there is still not enough integration between buildings. In the Banking Sector, the awning, which would provide large and protected areas for pedestrians and commerce, has not yet been built.<sup>15</sup>

The aerial shot is followed by photographer José Moscardi's entries taken from the ground. Moscardi's wide photos, made from the opposite sides of the monumental and residential axes, also collaborate to force the South Banking and Commercial sectors to be perceived as the jointed group they

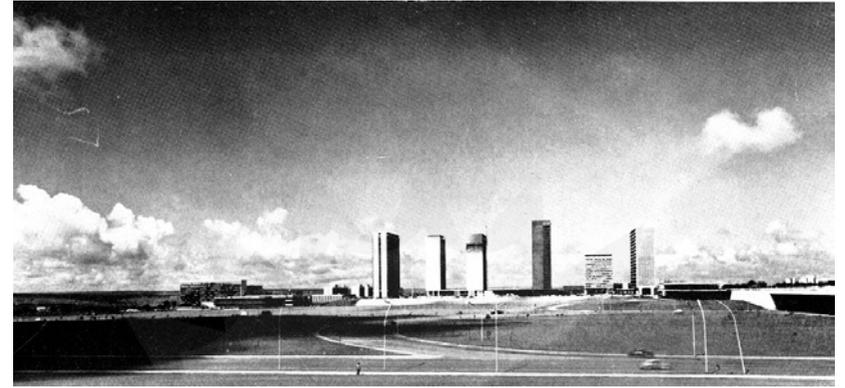


Figure 2. South Banking Sector. Source: "Setor Comercial e Bancário," *Acrópole* (July 1970), 60, <http://www.acropole.fau.usp.br/edicao/375>.



Figure 3. South Commercial Sector. Source: "Setor Comercial e Bancário," *Acrópole* (July 1970), 60, <http://www.acropole.fau.usp.br/edicao/375>.

were meant to be (Figures 2 and 3). However, these photographs show the sectors as a sequence of high-rise but detached buildings. On this, the Banking Sector is seen with the already finished National Bank for Economic Development, Seguradoras Building, Caixa de São Paulo, Regional Bank and the still-in-construction Bank of Brazil. The Commercial Sector appears with its sequence of 15-storey office buildings, and with the unfinished low-key rectangular buildings intended for commerce. Another caption follows the images. Quoting Frank Lloyd Wright, the editors of *Acrópole* magazine wrote that 'the site for a skyscraper is the desert because there exists conditions to see it as an isolated object, an individualised volume. The plan for Brasília allows one to 'see' the buildings, each building'. They complement by claiming that 'the legislation set the volume and controls the projects with rigidity. Such rigidity has been, perhaps, excessive, impeding a greater variety of solutions'.<sup>16</sup>

### Interruption

Costa did not use *Acrópole* magazine and his article to undermine the building approach made in Brasília, but Oscar Niemeyer, to a certain extent, did. He seemed concerned with the disruption of his former ideas about urban unity,<sup>17</sup> as empty areas stimulated property speculation while granting buildings an iconic quality not foreseen in plans and reports.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Niemeyer's text 'Brasília 70' comes right after Costa's in the magazine. Instead of writing about the architecture and urbanism of Brasília, Niemeyer reported his activity as an employee of the city's architecture and urbanism department. In it, the architect manifested the difficulties that he and his colleagues had had while selecting and controlling the projects submitted for the city. After 1964, explained Niemeyer, the office activity became reduced and, in place of 'choosing the most capable architect', it had to cope with 'plain price competition, which granted to the work a commercial direction that only jeopardised it'.<sup>19</sup> For him, 'the new buildings built in Brasília – without our control ... show how Brasília would be vulgar without the C.A.U. and the D.U.A.', or the architecture and urbanism department.<sup>20</sup>

Niemeyer did not point out which buildings he was referring to. However, he dedicated his testimony to Hélio Prates da Silveira, governor of the federal district, and to Bernardino de Oliveira, head of Novacap.<sup>21</sup> Maybe Niemeyer felt his and Costa's voice unheard within the city's municipality.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, between 1968 and 1972, Sérgio Bernardes was developing a project for the Brazilian Institute of Coffee,<sup>23</sup> and Prates da Silveira was strongly in favour of it.<sup>24</sup> Designed for a portion in the North Banking Sector,<sup>25</sup> later readdressed as a sector for autarchies, the building was 11 storeys high and had the shape of an arrow (Figure 4). According to the newspaper *Correio Braziliense*, Costa argued that 'such a project frontally harms his viewpoint regarding the density that he advocated for the buildings in the Autarchies Sector', even though he 'does not want to prevent the new architecture conceptions that Bernardes defended'.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the building, instead of being ruled by a certain volume, or controlled by the correspondent *gabarit* intended for the area,<sup>27</sup> was advertised as 'a new symbol with which the city, together with the cathedral and the other monuments, has been acknowledged worldwide'.<sup>28</sup> A building that, despite efforts made by the president of the Institute of Coffee, proved itself not feasible for being built.<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, Niemeyer was designing an office building for the South Commercial Sector (Figure 5). The building filled a projection nearby to the sector for hotels with 12 storeys plus ground level. The building was detached from, and perpendicular to, the row of slabs articulated by a pedestrian gallery. It corresponded to the scheme planned in 1960.<sup>30</sup> Niemeyer wrote a short description of this building entitled 'Explicação necessária' (1973), where he pointed out its main features along with drawings. Niemeyer's concern was designing an easy-to-be-built building,

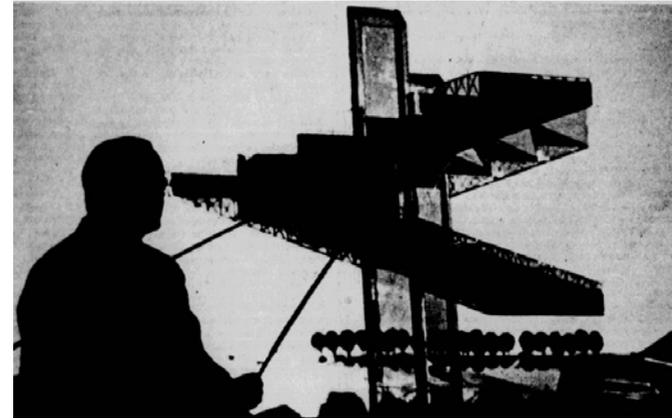


Figure 4. Sérgio Bernardes and the Institute of Brazilian Coffee.  
Source: "Bernardes Mostra IBC," *Correio Braziliense*, 20 July 1971,  
[http://memoria.bn.br/docreader/028274\\_02/13384](http://memoria.bn.br/docreader/028274_02/13384).



Figure 5. Oscar Niemeyer's building for the South Commercial Sector.  
Source: Edifício Oscar Niemeyer (1973), Fundação Oscar Niemeyer, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

the opposite of Bernardes's project. He ended his memoir in the tone of a response, by stating that it was 'a correct building, simple and sober as we desired it'.<sup>31</sup> What did not stop the Caixa Econômica Federal from building its headquarters as a 24-storey circular tower in the extension of the South Banking Sector in 1975. A building that, according to its architect J. A. Ortigão Tiedmara, searched for 'a plastic that will detach itself from the landscape where it is inserted'.<sup>32</sup>

### Conclusion

The Brazilian Institute for Coffee and the Caixa Econômica Federal Headquarters were the resulting buildings of an incomplete urban arrangement. Buildings that also somewhat interrupted predictions that this urban arrangement made for the centre of Brasília. As in these examples, other projects would come, like the Central Bank of Brazil (1974) and the Annex for the Bank of Brazil (1977). These buildings bear an ambiguity – they are, at the same time, landmarks isolated in themselves as well as part of a collection. They are the very components of an ‘urban archipelago’. But, while incompleteness leads to an ‘urban archipelago’, interruption is necessary for achieving the status of an ‘urban fabric’. The mixture of these two situations becomes fundamental. As Aldo Rossi emphasised in the introduction of the first American edition of *The Architecture of the City* (1984), ‘*fabbrica* means ‘building’ in the old Latin and Renaissance sense of man’s construction as it continues over time’, remarking that ‘this has nothing to do with the concept of open form or open work; rather it suggests the idea of *interrupted work*’.<sup>33</sup>

### Notes

- 1 Lúcio Costa, ‘L’urbaniste défend sa capitale,’ *Architecture, formes et fonctions* 14 (1968), 21; Lúcio Costa, ‘Brasília,’ *Arquitetura: revista do Instituto de Arquitetos do Brasil* (December 1968), 36; Lúcio Costa, ‘O urbanista defende a sua cidade,’ *Revista do Clube de Engenharia* (March 1970); Lúcio Costa, ‘O urbanista defende sua capital,’ *Acrópole* (July 1970), 8, <http://www.acropole.fau.usp.br/edicao/375>; Lúcio Costa, ‘Documento: Lúcio Costa fala de Brasília, do seu trabalho, de arquitetura,’ *Arquiteto* (March 1973), 11; Lúcio Costa, ‘L’urbanisme de Brasília,’ *Nouvelle revue des deux mondes* 10 (1973), 132. Unless otherwise stated, translations to English language were made by the author.
- 2 ‘L’architetto difende la ‘sua’ città: Brasília ha cinque anni,’ (1965), Casa de Lucio Costa, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- 3 Costa, ‘O urbanista defende sua capital,’ 8.
- 4 This sense can be seen in the interview to *Revista do Clube de Engenharia* and later in the lecture held at the seminar about the urban problems of Brasília. Cf. ‘Brasília dez anos depois segundo Lúcio Costa,’ *Revista do Clube de Engenharia* (March 1970), 7; Lúcio Costa, ‘Considerações em torno do Plano Piloto de Brasília,’ in *Seminário de estudos dos problemas urbanos de Brasília: estudos e debates* (Brasília: Senado Federal, 1974), 26.
- 5 As examples, see *Brasília, contradições de uma cidade nova*, directed by Joaquim Pedro de Andrade (Rio de Janeiro, Lider Cinematográfica, 1968), 22 min; *A cidade é uma só?*, directed by Adirley Queirós (Brasília, 400 filmes, 2011), 52 min. See also Maria Fernanda Derntl, ‘Além do plano: a construção das cidades-satélites e a dinâmica centro-periferia em Brasília,’ in *XIV Seminário de História da Cidade e do Urbanismo* (São Carlos: USP-São Carlos, 2016), <http://www.iau.usp.br/shcu2016/anais/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/37.pdf>.
- 6 *New Oxford American Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), s.v. ‘archipelago’.
- 7 The February–March 1960 issue of *Acrópole* published the main aspects of the city just before its inauguration. See *Acrópole* (February–March 1960), <http://www.acropole.fau.usp.br/edicao/256>.
- 8 Costa, ‘O urbanista defende sua capital,’ 7.
- 9 Costa, 7.
- 10 Costa, 7; 8.
- 11 Costa, 7; 8.
- 12 Plots 33 and 34 were added to the sector according to plan PR-14/1 (1972),

- SEGETH, Brasília, Brazil; Cf. plan SBS 2 3-9 (1960) and plan SBS PR 5/1 (1970), SEGETH, Brasília, Brazil.
- 13 See ‘Os vazios da cidade,’ *Correio Braziliense*, 7 August 1972, [http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274\\_02/25182](http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274_02/25182). See also ‘Uma dúzia de esperanças para 74,’ *Correio Braziliense*, 31 December 1973, [http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274\\_02/42719](http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274_02/42719); ‘Setor Bancário,’ *Correio Braziliense*, 19 March 1974, [http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274\\_02/45566](http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274_02/45566).
- 14 ‘Setor Comercial e Bancário,’ *Acrópole* (July 1970), 59, <http://www.acropole.fau.usp.br/edicao/375>.
- 15 ‘Setor Comercial e Bancário,’ 59.
- 16 ‘Setor Comercial e Bancário,’ 60.
- 17 See Oscar Niemeyer, ‘Unidade urbana (Town Planning Unity),’ trans. Eric Charles Drysdale, *Módulo: revista de arquitetura e artes plásticas* (February 1959).
- 18 ‘Os vazios da cidade.’ See also ‘Resolução 63 da Novacap visa evitar especulação,’ *Correio Braziliense*, 11 October 1968, [http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274\\_01/36591](http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274_01/36591).
- 19 Oscar Niemeyer, ‘Brasília 70,’ *Acrópole* (July 1970), 10, <http://www.acropole.fau.usp.br/edicao/375>.
- 20 Niemeyer, 11. C.A.U. and D.U.A. are acronyms for Coordenação de Arquitetura e Urbanismo and Departamento de Arquitetura e Urbanismo, respectively.
- 21 Niemeyer, 11.
- 22 See ‘Niemeyer envia carta a Prates,’ *Correio Braziliense*, 11 October 1970, [http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274\\_02/1966](http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274_02/1966).
- 23 Lauro Cavalcanti, ‘A importância de Sér(gio) Bernardes,’ *Arquitextos* (August 2009), 7. <http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/arquitextos/10.111/31>.
- 24 See ‘Brasília será sede do IBC já em 1972: obra iniciada,’ *Correio Braziliense*, 15 October 1971, [http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274\\_02/15720](http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274_02/15720).
- 25 ‘Bernardes Mostra IBC,’ *Correio Braziliense*, 20 July 1971, [http://memoria.bn.br/docreader/028274\\_02/13384](http://memoria.bn.br/docreader/028274_02/13384).
- 26 ‘Revisão de Brasília,’ *Correio Braziliense*, 28 August 1971, [http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274\\_02/14315](http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274_02/14315).
- 27 The Banking Sector was to be controlled by rectangular volumes, of 17 or 20-storeys-high. See Niemeyer, ‘Unidade urbana (Town Planning Unity),’ ‘Setor Bancário de Brasília (The Banking District of Brasília)’ trans. Eric Charles Drysdale, *Módulo: revista de arquitetura e artes plásticas*, (April 1959).
- 28 ‘Brasília será sede do IBC.’
- 29 ‘Brasília será sede do IBC; Cavalcanti, ‘A importância de Sér(gio) Bernardes,’ 7.
- 30 See the projection number 23 in plan SCS-2 2-8 (1960), Secretaria de Estado de Gestão do Território e Habitação, Brasília, Brazil.
- 31 Oscar Niemeyer, ‘Explicação Necessária’ (unpublished manuscript, Paris, January 1973), Fundação Oscar Niemeyer, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- 32 ‘Em 30 meses, mudança da CEF para Brasília,’ *Correio Braziliense*, 20 February 1975, [http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274\\_02/57973](http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/028274_02/57973).
- 33 Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984), 18.

# Shaping a National Image: The 1897 Competition for Mexico's Legislative Palace

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## Abstract

As part of the commemorations of the centenary of Mexican independence in 1910, the government of President Porfirio Díaz organised in 1897 an international competition for the design of the new Legislative Palace. The project was part of an urban initiative to expand the capital westwards. From its very conception, the competition was flawed and its result controversial. Antonio Rivas Mercado wrote of the inconsistencies of the competition, of corruption and of the obscure motivations behind the jury's decision. The first prize was declared absent and the project was commissioned by the president to the French architect Émile Bénard.

## Keywords

Eclecticism, Mexico, competition, corruption.

In 1889 Mexico participated in the Universal Exposition in Paris with a neo-indigenous pavilion that resembled an Aztec pyramid. The intention behind the building was not only to stress the national identity, but to put Mexico among those advanced nations that were dealing with the scientific advancement of anthropology and paleontology<sup>1</sup>. The pavilion was heavily criticized for its backwardness, a fact that Antonio María Anza took into account when designing the next entry for the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris. Anza proposed the neo-Greek style employed in France by architects such as 'Garnier, Hittorf and Labrouste'<sup>2</sup> and brought to Mexico by Ramón Rodríguez Arangoiti, as the model to follow for the Mexican pavilion, considering that, as opposed to other countries, Mexico had not a defined style that could represent its nationality. Therefore, the pavilion 'had to adopt a serious style that would reveal the character of the government that rules over its destiny and the neo-Greek was the style that satisfied such conditions.'<sup>3</sup>

The historicist pavilion was only an example of the aesthetic line adopted by Díaz's government (1877–80, 1884–1911). Strongly influenced by positivism, Díaz supported the idea that by importing European models of urban planning and architecture, the country would project an image of political stability and economic growth that would bring foreign investment and thus, pursue the desired policy of *order and progress* so needed for national development.

To achieve that goal, Mexico opened its doors to immigration and foreign economic ventures. European architects played a significant role in shaping the capital; the Paseo de la Reforma followed the example of the Parisian Champs-Élysées, entire neighborhoods were designed exhibiting the most diverse European sources in their houses and public buildings, from neo-Gothic to neo-Renaissance, Swiss *chalets*, Islamic decorations or art nouveau. New architectural types emerged such as department stores and train stations, designed mainly under French influence. As for the government, the construction of an image became a fundamental goal. Monuments, infrastructure and palaces for the different ministries were built mainly by foreign architects such as the Italians Silvio Contri, or Adamo Boari. French architects like Paul Dubois and American firms such as De Lemos & Cordes participated also in the design of public buildings, while others like Milliken Brothers introduced steel structures to the country.

The most significant attempt to develop a monumental piece of public architecture based on foreign models was the failed design competition for the Palace of the Legislative Power launched in 1897 as part of the commemoration of the centenary of independence in 1910. The contest showed the relevance of architecture as a political tool and the vices inherent to a system condemned to disappear.

On 18 June 1897, the Secretariat of Communications distributed the call for entries to the international competition. It was published in Spanish, English, French, German and Italian and specified three important aspects: the budget, the program and the character of the building. It indicated also the required plans and drawings, and requested the participants to cast their vote to select, together with the authorities, the jury.

The most controversial aspects of the evaluation were the program and the character. Concerning the former, the call for entries gave clear indications of the contents of the building, stressing that sessions should be held simultaneously and separately in both, the senate and the chamber of deputies, and be connected to the recess hall, 'the most decorated of the whole Palace.'<sup>4</sup> As for the latter, it required that 'the general structure of the building shall be in accordance with the elevated rank of the legislative body for which it is intended.'<sup>5</sup>

On 11 February 1898, the jury was finally constituted, including Emilio Dondé as representative of the deputies.<sup>6</sup> Five days later, the first twenty-nine projects that were of 'an inferior order'<sup>7</sup> were eliminated. On 16 March, six additional projects that were on transit at the time of the deadline were admitted, among them number 52 – *Majestas* that would strongly divide the jury. Finally, on 13 April the results were announced. It was decided that,

none of the projects subjected to final examination satisfies, to the judgment of the jury, the necessary requirements to be adopted without any observation or without requiring

modifications in order to be executed; since, if there were among them some that had good plans, their facades were unsatisfactory, while with others happened the inverse, and for that reason, they did not award any of them first-prize.<sup>8</sup>

Two days later the remaining prizes were defined. Three second-prizes were awarded to projects 17, 44 and 26. In addition, the jury awarded the third prize to number 52, the fourth to number 18 and the fifth to number 45. The jury proceeded then to reveal the names of the authors. The first second-prize was awarded to Adamo Boari for his project *S. Georgious Equitum Patronus in tempestate securitas*, the second second-prize to the Italians Pio Piacentini and Filippo Nalaletti for their design *Roma-Mexico* and the third second-prize to the American P. J. Weber for his project *Minerva's Head*. The third prize went to Piero Paolo Quaglia competing with the *Majestas*, the fourth to the only Mexican, Antonio Rivas Mercado for his *Golden Star*, and finally, a fifth prize went to Giacomo Missuraga with *Roma-Roma*.<sup>9</sup>

Except for the *Majestas* that consisted of a plan with only one large courtyard, all the projects proposed a square plan with four courtyards, and most of them placed the chambers on the north-south axis linked by the recess hall at the center. In Boari's plan, though, the chamber of deputies was located at the western end of the main axis while the senate occupied the southern extreme. The jury praised the clear axis that led from the entrance to the chamber of deputies through the grand stairway, explaining that, 'during the great solemn occasions that the President of the Republic has to attend, the way in which the entry is disposed following a straight line from the entrance until he ascends to the platform cannot be more proud or more majestic.'<sup>10</sup> The jury also noted the easiness of circulation through the five stories of the building, however, they found that the four courtyards 'do not contribute to the architectural effect of the building and serve only to provide light and ventilation.'<sup>11</sup> When further analyzing the project, they considered that such patios were not sufficient to adequately illuminate and ventilate many of the rooms.

In the case of Piacentini and Nalaletti's project, *Roma-Mexico*, the jury praised the imposing recess hall, elevated with a stylobate and placed at the center of the palace, as the relator Ibarrola recounts: 'the effect of this hall is sumptuous and reminds of the disposition observed in the edifices that the ancient Rome destined to meeting places.'<sup>12</sup> The jury admired its facades but found the plan deficient, especially in the treatment of circulations.

Weber's project *Minerva's Head*, shared the same composition. It consisted of a square plan with four courtyards that, as in other cases, were considered insufficient to illuminate some of the areas in the building. The chambers were located on the north-south axis and the main hall occupied the center of the plan and was crowned with an 80-metre-high cupola.<sup>13</sup>

The most important aspects were the character and the style. The jurors favored those with a classical origin, the one that could provide the desired character, as opposed to others, like the *Majestas* or the *Golden Star* that, being of a different style, were considered to be of an 'industrial'<sup>14</sup> or 'recreational' character respectively.<sup>15</sup>

Not always did the author's description match the criteria of the jury as in Boari's project. The architect cited the Renaissance, while the jury characterized it as neo-Greek:

This project reveals in its details an inspiration in the Greek elements that were profusely introduced about seven lustrums ago into French architecture, receiving the name of neo-Greek style, easily demonstrable by simply looking at the buildings constructed during that period. The comment made by the author that his design belongs to the classical style with forms from the Italian Renaissance is therefore inaccurate.<sup>16</sup>

The jury commented also on the rest of the winning projects. Piacentini and Nalaletti's *Roma-Mexico* was criticized for its plan but applauded for its character. The authors chose a classical Roman style as the one that could better give the palace the magnificent character it deserved.<sup>17</sup> The jury commented that, 'it is an edifice of imposing aspect, of the purest Roman style, in which classicism is sustained in all of its facades and the interior recalls in its central part the rotunda of the Pantheon; the whole and the details are in perfect harmony, without a single discordant note in the entire composition.'<sup>18</sup>

As for the third second prize, *Minerva's Head*, the jury recognized the inspiration as being Washington's Capitol Building with the proposal of a high cupola. Quoting the author, they explained that 'he believes that nothing interprets better the character of a capitol than a high cupola, and, therefore, it constitutes "the culminant point towards all that the building aspires."<sup>19</sup> The jury did not share such interpretation, nevertheless, they recognized in its character 'classicism, good lines and sobriety in its details.'<sup>20</sup>

The project that provoked the most severe disagreement among the jurors was the third prize, *Majestas*. Emilio Dondé and Santiago Mendez demanded to put Quaglia's project also in second-place, arguing that its plan was the most efficient and that it was 'the only one conceived with a truly philosophical as well as aesthetic spirit.'<sup>21</sup>

The rest of the jury did not share Dondé and Mendez's enthusiasm for the *Majestas*. Instead, they believed that, certainly the construction scheme is correct in project number 52, slogan *Majestas*; therefore, it is more the feeling that the elevations have a complete lack of beauty. They do not symbolize their purpose, they lack in character; that is, the first thought that will arise in sight of the spectator; its decadent



Figure 1. Monument to the Mexican Revolution. Carlos Obregón Santacilia, Mexico City, 1933–38

architecture deprived of beauty does not correspond to a building of this category producing only the effect of an industrial construction.<sup>22</sup>

Besides, the *Majestas* did not comply with the call for participation. Quaglia ignored some requirements of the program and presented the plans in different scales. Dondé and Mendez's passionate defense of such a project was incomprehensible. The results provoked an outraged reaction among the contestants and harsh criticism from the press. Antonio Rivas Mercado blamed the jury for its incapacity to comply with the call for participation.<sup>23</sup> He then published several articles revealing Dondé's hidden interest in the *Majestas*. Between the delivery of the projects and the publication of the results, Quaglia died in Italy. As none of the projects was ready to be built, by choosing the *Majestas*, Dondé could offer his services to replace Quaglia and execute his project. And so, it happened. Dondé was appointed as the architect in charge of the project and construction of the palace. He transformed Quaglia's composition by dividing the large courtyard into six smaller. Once again, Rivas Mercado denounced him, stressing that Dondé's entire defense of the *Majestas* was based on the plan and yet, he destroyed the original idea. After strong pressure from the press, Dondé was dismissed from his charge.

The competition was marked by irregularities, frauds and scandals that ended with the appointment of the French architect Émile Bénard in 1904. He removed the existing foundations ordered by Dondé and started an entire new project that largely exceeded similar buildings in other countries.<sup>24</sup>

Porfirio Díaz believed that the built environment had an important role in shaping a national image; the one he sought was not based on the sentimentalism of national history, but the one that could bring investment and thus the betterment of the living conditions of the Mexican people. That image was not indigenous but European. The fate of the Palace of the Legislative Powers shared the destiny of the regime. On 20 November 1910, the Mexican Revolution broke out. In 1913, the construction of the palace was finally suspended.

### Notes

- 1 Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Artifugio de la nación moderna: México en las exposiciones universales, 1880–1930* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998), 103
- 2 Sebastián Mier, *México en la Exposición universal internacional de París 1900* (Paris: J. Dumoulin, 1901), 229
- 3 Mier, *México en la Exposición universal internacional de París 1900*, 229
- 4 Francisco Mena, 'Specifications for the construction of the Building intended for the Federal Legislative Body in the City of Mexico,' 23 April 1897, SCOP Palacio Legislativo Papers 530/1, Archivo General de la Nación, 13.
- 5 Mena, 'Specifications for the construction of the Building...', 13
- 6 Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Obras Públicas, 'Concurso para el Palacio del Poder Legislativo Federal,' *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, 19 February 1898, SCOP Palacio Legislativo Papers 530/1, Archivo General de la Nación.
- 7 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 94.
- 8 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 101.
- 9 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 102–4.
- 10 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 110.
- 11 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 107.
- 12 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 111.
- 13 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 113.
- 14 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 134.
- 15 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 117.
- 16 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 107.
- 17 Pio Piacentini and Filippo Nalaletti, *Concours pour le Palais du Congrès a Mexico, 1897*, SCOP Palacio Legislativo Papers 530/2, Archivo General de la Nación, 34.
- 18 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 111.
- 19 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 114.
- 20 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 114.
- 21 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 120.
- 22 Ibarrola, *Relación Completa de las Sesiones del Jurado Calificador*, 134.
- 23 Antonio Rivas Mercado, 'Arquitectura, El Palacio Legislativo Federal I,' *El Arte y la Ciencia* 2, 1 (April 1900), 1–4.
- 24 Gilberto Montul, *Informe preliminar del proyecto de Emile Benard*, 30 June 1904, SCOP Palacio Legislativo Papers 530/255, Archivo General de la Nación, 49.

# Bruno Zevi, Brazil, Brasília: Historiographical Constructions in the Post-War World

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## Abstract

This paper aims to revisit Bruno Zevi's writings about modern Brazilian architecture and what would be its greatest accomplishment – Brasília. The motto is the 1959 International Association of Art Critics (AICA) Congress, which had the new capital – still under construction – as one of its venues. After the Brasília experience, the criticism is exacerbated: the city and its architecture are converted to symbols of a larger clash with a background to construct a narrative *towards an organic architecture*.

## Keywords

Bruno Zevi, Brasília, Brazilian modern architecture.

In September 1959, Brazil hosted the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) Congress, with the presence of artists, architects and intellectuals of worldwide relevance, such as Giulio Carlo Argan, Meyer Shapiro, André Chastel and Bruno Zevi. Brasília is one of the event's venues – besides São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro – and becomes the scene of discussions and controversies about modern Brazilian architecture and the city itself.

Brazilian modern architecture reached an international reputation in the 1940s and the Brasília experience brings forth a hegemonic atmosphere in the national territory. Hailed as a vigorous renovation on the world scene it has also had several opponents, and found in Bruno Zevi, one of its harshest critics. An assertive opponent of modern Brazilian architecture and the new capital, such a position is reaffirmed at the congress and exacerbated in the following publications, turning him into an inconvenient guest. *Enfant terrible* of the congress, in the words of Mário Pedrosa – coordinator and proposer of the theme 'New City: Synthesis of the Arts' – the provocations of the Italian polarised the discussions at the second session under the theme 'Urbanism' and generated controversy beyond the forum.

This paper aims to revisit the Italian critic's statements, writings and polemics about modern Brazilian architecture and what would be its greatest accomplishment – the new capital, Brasília – as symbols of a larger clash with a background to construct a narrative inscribed in a true humanist and democratic culture *towards an organic architecture*.

The meeting's general tone was one of appeased criticism and reiterated enthusiasm. At first, not even Zevi was indifferent to the *Brasília experience* alleviating the previous criticisms:

What are we going to criticise? Dr. Lúcio Costa or Oscar Niemeyer? I do not think that makes much sense, because visiting Brasília, and even examining photographs and plans, as we did in Europe, even those of us who have expressed many doubts or reservations about this adventure felt that Brasília's flaws are flaws of our culture. We are all responsible. If there are flaws, it is because Brasília concretises the problems that we – all of us, in all parts of the world – did not solve.<sup>2</sup>

In his writings on modern Brazilian architecture, he condemned the 'extravagant' architecture and the lack of social commitment of his proselytes. He takes Brazilian architecture and Brasília as symbols of the deep crisis that, according to him, rested modern architecture and its spatial conception, anticipating authoritarian lines in the traces of the new capital, as he would write after he visited the city, in his weekly *L'Espresso*.

What would these problems be? In his lecture, 'The Dynamics of Urban Structures,' Zevi argues that the urban problem at that time was the lack of harmony between the city dynamics and the dynamics of human beings to live in those cities.

Modern architecture, after having won its battle in the linguistics field, is in deep crisis. In Italy, we feel this crisis very strongly, it is very evident in the United States, and much less evident in Brazil, but it exists around the world.<sup>3</sup>

A masterplan – the so-called *Pilot Plan* – is necessary, but not sufficient. An architecture is necessary to give a meaning and make it three-dimensional, and 'a conception of human life that makes it four-dimensional – a human experience through the ages.'<sup>4</sup>

Here it seems to be briefly exposed all his initial Brasília criticism. The Italian denounces the 'artifice of its origins': the Pilot Plan and its architecture, and the weakness of its own political operation, in view of the objectives of redirecting the country's occupation. The city does not emerge from a vital necessity – this is the question that is crucial to him. Could Brasília ever have an autonomous life? Within his democratic and humanising view, Brasília would be at the opposite extreme: governmental, paternalistic and, therefore, bureaucratic and authoritarian. The result seems to be foreseen: a static urban plan, a monumental, representative architecture, anonymity of

the housing blocks. Both seem to appear suddenly, gratuitous acts with no connection with the place or, of course, with a *conception of human life*.

The city would combine the flaws of the closed plane and the open: in its monumental axis resides the strangled civic centre, 'classic and inert'; the wings for dwelling, which extend to infinity, do not end for an intimate urban reason – they are the 'continuum of super blocks' in its mechanical and anonymous repetition.

Oscar Niemeyer's architecture would present the same 'gaps' as Costa's urban plan:

Urban structure invites monumentality; the search for 'representativeness' increases the risk of falling into rhetoric. But even saying and acknowledging all this, a large margin of architectural freedom remains. A parallel: the masterplan of Chandigarh does not please us, but Corbusier's architecture is so reverberant and impetuous that it involves and revolves the static external spaces. Niemeyer's architecture suffers, in Brasília, instead, of an inferiority complex; and does not redeem the plan.<sup>5</sup>

Brasília would remain an enlarged model, gigantic sketches in which 'effect prevails over substance'. Construction haste is evidenced in the plane, in architecture, and will continue thus, denouncing the artifice of its origins, incapable of being *humanised*.

In this aspect, authoritarian Brasília, a bureaucratic city, the power headquarters, the baroque urbanism and its processional axis reign supreme. The articles after his arrival in Brasília differ radically and exacerbate criticism. The comparison with Esposizione Universale Roma (EUR), already made before, is accentuated:<sup>6</sup> 'There is something that prevents us from identifying ourselves, enthusiastically joining the great adventure that sends so many other foreigners into rapture. "It's the EUR complex", we jokingly observe with our Italian friends.' However, faced with the great enterprise that became Brasília, and the detachment of 'pioneer' from Niemeyer and his collaborators, he considers:

We are about to give up and confess: 'Beautiful or ugly, Brasília is a great initiative. We want to help you without reservation. Posterity will judge.' But the 'EUR complex' is holding us back while issues are increasing.

And he declares:

'Brasília, is for many reasons, worse than we had anticipated and written.'<sup>7</sup>

In this sense, it seems relevant to remember the Brasília that Zevi sees. It's a city under construction, seven months from the inauguration, a huge open space that accentuates the immense scale of the plan and the buildings. Having seen Brasília on the spot, he must have mentally retraced the terrifying images of the EUR complex and its bleak landscape of incompleteness 'added to the misfortune of being permanent'. Thus, Brasília would present him with a first impression, emphasising what the critic seems to have been *conditioned* to see: 'Fascism has conditioned us psychologically: this series of representative buildings, this parade of future ministries, of which only structures are seen for the time being, gives us an instinctive sense of nausea.'<sup>8</sup> His experiences during the years of Fascism seem to have shaped his view of Brasília, and his arguments about the new capital are only understandable from this perspective – and by extension, the very construction of the discourse *towards an organic architecture*.

Also in *Storia dell'architettura moderna* – a 1950 book that gives continuity and extends the effort begun in 1945, represented by *Verso un'architettura organica* –, the critic alludes to the issue, this time tying it to the idea of organic architecture: '[the organic movement] struggles against totalitarian and bureaucratic dictatorships because man, in his life variety, in his freedom fullness, in his material, psychological and spiritual progress, is the religious end of this humanism.'<sup>9</sup>

For the critic, organic architecture introduces new poetics silently emerged from within the rationalist discourse, a 'humanising maturation'. It is set in a post-war revision movement born within modern rationalist architecture, from its inner necessity.

This passage of *Storia* clarifies in what organicism would contradict rationalism and, therefore, also its criticism to the new capital. We can read his Brasília criticism through this passage:

[The organic movement] proposes a psychological and spatial path. It states that in architecture and urbanism *pure volumes and surfaces* are not enough, interior space is what matters, voids are what truly determine houses and cities. It considers that it is necessary, therefore, to free itself from the *geometrical quadrangularisms*, from the prejudices of some forms and proportions *abstract beauty* and of all -isms ideologies. There is only one important proportion: the *human scale*; only one aim of the city and the modern house: the happiness of man. *The logical order, the cold-bloodedly traced diagram, the statistical table, and the calculus rule are not enough*. The problem today, in relation to the house and the city, consists in the *humanisation* of architecture.<sup>10</sup>

In his view – and if he speaks of the rationalism ‘crisis’ in the 1930s – Brazilian modern architecture would already be born irrevocably anachronistic, since it is moved by totally outdated sources.<sup>11</sup>

Someone should have already told the Brazilians, getting straight to the point, with no fear to be a party-pooper, breaking the enchantment of an architecture ‘orgiastically free, overflowing of vitality, incredibly fantastic,’ an extreme attempt to legitimise a poetics of the glass skyscrapers that have long lost the European and North American battle. Ten years ago, pointing to the famous Ministry of Education in Rio de Janeiro, international style seeks compensation in Brazil for its own failures.<sup>12</sup>

Such a historiographical construction does not omit its failures. In *Storia* he criticises the evolutionist bias that modern historiography recognisably made use:

[I]f Asplund or Aalto enrich Le Corbusier’s expressive vocabulary, they are accused of eluding hedonistically the problem of that time, they are classified as decadents. If Van de Velde or Poelzig or Perret did not die in 1914, this is a fact that only concerns the empirical biography; for history, they must have died by force on that date.<sup>13</sup>

The same, however, does not apply to Brazilian architecture. Zevi does not appreciate it as an *enrichment of Le Corbusier’s expressive vocabulary*. It is the well-known European ‘ruler’ used to measure other cultures and applied without distinction of *time* and *place*. In this case, the main issue lies in the fact that such Brazilian architecture does not reconcile with the historiographical construction of the Italian critic.

Thus, Brasília ends up becoming a condenser of several issues exposed and brought by the critic, elevated to symbolise rationalist architecture and its spatial conception crisis, and still, symbolise Brazilian architecture represented by Oscar Niemeyer at that moment. It is in this sense that Brasília ends up also reflecting the crisis that Niemeyer is going through, combining his architecture in the new capital with his well-known ‘architect’s self-criticism’<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the appreciation of Niemeyer’s works in Brasília may not be totally exempt from his look on the city. That does not mean that there were no previous criticisms, on the contrary. In ‘Incontro con Oscar Niemeyer’, Zevi portrays an elusive and frivolous Niemeyer, indifferent in justifying his own work;<sup>15</sup> emphasising the lack of social commitment from the communist architect whose fantasy and arbitrary design had already been harshly criticised in ‘La moda lecorbusieriana in Brasile’<sup>16</sup>

In São Paulo, ‘una città vera,’ the judgement on the architect’s works changes radically. The dense context gives it a characteristic of breakup, a creative freedom that is exalted:

Even the architecture of Oscar Niemeyer ... here takes on significance and function in the context of a complex construction dialectic. In the monotonous urban fabric of São Paulo, the two immense blocks that Niemeyer is constructing are in contrast with the urban landscape....<sup>17</sup>

This is what Zevi criticises, and his criticism is not unsubstantiated. Radically changing the context, Niemeyer continued to act indistinctly. And, although he found in Brazil an incomplete city, under construction, Brasília ready, alive, reiterates this condition, with problems of human scale, a limit of growth, all these inscribing monumental architectures, to be seen along the axes, as in a ‘landscape of objects’, as already described. Not forgetting the complexity that surrounds the satellite cities, and so many other contemporary problems that we will not enter here.

In Brasília, the context with which to oppose is kidnapped, architecture becomes a collection of colossal monuments; for Zevi, for that reason, gratuitous and, aggravating, that it reiterates the monumentalism and grandiloquence of the Pilot Plan and evokes the magnificence of the State. A Kafkaesque city, whose problem is not that it was born artificial (after all, Venice is also, as he would remember in his speech at the Congress), but the possibility of remaining parasitic, dependent on paternalistic actions... ‘There are two possibilities: Brasília, as has often happened, will be abandoned (which is unlikely) or, if it *comes to life*, will break the *static, symmetrical scheme* of a Pilot Plan that remained at the stage of its initial conception.’<sup>18</sup>

#### Notes

- 1 Lúcio Costa won the competition for the new Brazilian capital masterplan in 1957 and Oscar Niemeyer designed the main government buildings.
- 2 Anais do Congresso Internacional Extraordinário dos Críticos de Arte (São Paulo, Biblioteca do MASP, 1959, photocopied version), 20. All quotes within the text are presented freely translated by the author.
- 3 Anais do Congresso, 21.
- 4 Anais do Congresso, 21.
- 5 Bruno Zevi, ‘Inchiesta su Brasília,’ *L’architettura: Cronache e storia* 50 (January 1960), 615.
- 6 Reference to the 1942 neighbourhood Esposizione Universale Roma (EUR).
- 7 Bruno Zevi, ‘Brasilia e il complesso Eur. Kafka nel Mato Grosso’ (25 October 1959), in *Cronache di architettura. 3: Dall’Expo mondiale di Bruxelles all’inaugurazione di Brasilia: 1958/1960* (Bari: Laterza, 1971), 409.
- 8 Zevi, ‘Brasilia e il complesso Eur,’ 409.
- 9 Bruno Zevi, *História da arquitetura moderna* (Lisboa: Arcádia, 1970), 536.
- 10 Zevi, *História da arquitetura moderna*, 536, my italics.
- 11 Although Zevi considered the Ministry of Education and Health of 1937 – recognised ‘precursor’ of that school – a masterpiece, but practically isolated.
- 12 Bruno Zevi, ‘La moda lecorbusieriana in Brasile. Max Bill apostrofa Oscar

- Niemeyer' (2 November 1954), in *Cronache di architettura. 1: Da Wright sul canal grande alla chapelle de Ronchamp* (Bari: Laterza, 1971), 163.
- 13 Zevi, *História da arquitetura moderna*, 129.
- 14 Oscar Niemeyer, 'Depoimento,' *Revista Módulo* 9 (February 1958), 3–6.
- 15 Bruno Zevi, 'Incontro con Oscar Niemeyer. Nausea dell'abbondanza brasiliana' (26 April, 1955), in *Cronache di architettura. 1*, 352–5.
- 16 Zevi, 'La moda lecorbusieriana in Brasile.'
- 17 Bruno Zevi, 'San Paolo del Brasile. Una Biennale più aperta di quella veneziana' (1 November 1959), in *Cronache di architettura. 3*, 413. Zevi refers here, probably, to the construction of Copan and California Buildings.
- 18 Zevi, 'Inchiesta su Brasilia,' 611, my italics.

# The Impossibility of Reconstruction: The Latin American City as an Antithesis of the European One<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

We intend to demonstrate how the search for a substitute of the idea of the Reconstruction of the European city, Latin American architects had elaborate concepts and hybrid notions in the 1980s.

## Keywords

Reconstruction of the European city, figurative city, Latin American Architecture Seminar.

The development and dissemination of Italian studies on typo-morphology throughout continental Europe during the 1970s – in the midst of the criticism of modern movement – prompted the emergence of several architectural movements. In the crossing of various borders, the debate initiated in the Italian Peninsula had been transformed; new meanings were added and, incidentally, became condensed in the construct of *Leitmotifs*. Among these, the recurrence of the idea of Reconstruction can be observed, which, at the time, assumed a double meaning – appealing to the memory of the devastation of World War II, as well as opposing the urban renovations that were often based on bulldozer urbanism. Although this notion may have assumed different connotations in the contexts in which it was used – as, for example, in the plan for the historic centre of Bologna, in the Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA) Berlin of Josef Paul Kleihues, or in the reconstruction of Barcelona defended by Oriol Bohigas – the idea of an urban past and a practice to recover pervaded all of these. In this context, it can be understood that some events organised in the late 1970s around the idea of the Reconstruction of the European city – led by Maurice Culot and Léon Krier – had the capacity to bring together anglophone architects and speakers of Latin languages, and to establish alliances that, although transitory,<sup>2</sup> allowed for the diffusion of the debate to other continents.<sup>3</sup>

Without departing from this general rule, it can be seen that, despite its conception specific to the European context, the campaign for the Reconstruction of the European city featured editorial coverage similar to the space destined for Aldo Rossi in specialised Latin-American journals in the early 1980s.<sup>4</sup> Krier and Culot's critiques of urban interventions in modern architecture found significant resonance in regional architectural

culture. It should be noted that some professionals from the subcontinent – like Montés, René Davis, Rodrigo Pérez de Arce and the architects of the CEDLA group – participated directly in some of the events that led to the internationalisation of this movement: the *Rational Architecture* exhibition held in London in 1975 (its catalogue was published in 1978), and the colloquium ‘Reconstruction of the European City’ held in Brussels, in 1978, when the Brussels Declaration was signed. On the other hand, local critics – even those who were more skeptical to foreign resonances – were initially receptive to its concerns about public spaces and collective memory<sup>5</sup>, and to the engagement of the counterproposals from L’École de la Cambre and of the Atelier de Recherche d’Action Urbaine (ARAU) in urban struggles. Marina Waisman, for example, even though critical of the nostalgic orientation of these proposals, emphasised that they ‘permitted better arguments for the movements of citizens in opposition to large companies or state projects wishing to destroy their habitat’.<sup>6</sup>

This paper intends to demonstrate how the impossibility of reconstructing the European city in the Latin American context generated some concepts and hybrid notions in the 1980s, some of which are manifested partially in the debates of the Latin American Architecture Seminars (SAL) between its third and fifth edition (1987 and 1991, respectively). To do so, we will first address two preliminary theoretical constructs regarding the figurative city – one by the Argentine Miguel Roca and another by the Brazilian Carlos Eduardo Comas. Both of them were developed almost simultaneously in the early 1980s and demonstrate the initial repercussions of the debate on the reconstruction of the European city and, more specifically, the need to transcend it and translate it to the local context. Then, we will focus on the construction of two other notions, or analytical perspectives, from which the understanding of the Latin American city specificities was pursued and discussed in the SAL held between 1987 and 1991 – a period in which these events had broad influence on the architectural culture of the subcontinent.

As we have already shown on another occasion, Roca’s time working at Córdoba City Hall (1980–1), along with his first participation in the European exhibitions (the Paris Biennial of 1980 and a retrospective of his work in London in 1981), was accompanied by a change in his discourse – a certain distancing from his previously dominant references to Louis Kahn and a closer approximation to the debate concerning the recovery of traditional public spaces.<sup>7</sup> The transcription of his classes, which were taught between 1976 and 1982 at the National University of Cordoba, collected in the book *Hacer Ciudad* (1983) confirm this assertion. It is based on this publication that we retrieve his initial formulations, which sought to transcend the reconstruction debate. Roca’s figurative city is defined as much in its approach to the practice of urban art – which he recognised in the tradition of urbanism between the baroque and the nineteenth century – as in its

distancing from the practice of the city which he defines as ‘abstract’. Although Roca constructs his argument quoting Culot and Krier’s critiques of CIAM urbanism, he does not limit what he calls ‘abstract’ to this. The ‘abstract ideology’ would be manifest, for the Argentine architect, as much in image-rich approaches (such as that of the modern movement urbanism) as in those lacking in images, that is, in urban and territorial planning norms. Among the architects who, as he perceived, were responsible for the critical review of the urbanism practice, he put together figures as different as Louis Kahn, Robert Venturi and the Italian neo-rationalists. By combining elements of his American education with those originating from the debate on reconstruction and personal reflections of his own professional practice, Roca dissociates his critique from those of a European origin. His figurative city would be that which, more than simply seeking the traditional configuration of public spaces, would be composed of places/nodes and paths/routes, and would allow ‘the construction and recovery of the urban artifact as a place of history, where the destiny of our culture and civilisation is resolved’.<sup>8</sup>

It should be emphasised that although the figurativeness of urban spaces could have appeared in European texts discussing the need to revise the practice of urbanism from the perspective of the architect,<sup>9</sup> this was not in itself the main point of the argument. Across the Atlantic, however, the notion of the Figurative city became an alternative to the idea of the European city in the early 1980s; Roca was not alone in its construction. Not coincidentally, Comas would use the same expression when looking for an alternative to the European city in his text ‘Cidade Figurativa, Cidade Funcional: dois paradigmas em debate’ (Figurative city, functional city: two paradigms in debate) in 1985.<sup>10</sup>

On the one hand, echoing the debate on the reconstruction of the European city, Comas defines the figurative city as that ‘divided into neighbourhoods and structured through streets, squares and blocks bounded by continual aligned buildings of low height’.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, like the Argentine architect, Comas defines this notion from his opposition to what he calls a ‘functional paradigm’, which, similar to Roca’s ‘abstract ideology’, would be represented as much by the urbanism of CIAM, full of images, as by urban planning norms devoid of design. His argument, however, was not limited to the simple opposition between types of practices; he justifies the use of the notion of the Figurative city because it resembles ‘a set of voids ... circumscribed by a predominantly undifferentiated fabric’ and its components are ‘deprived of precise functional indications’.<sup>12</sup> More than a practice, Comas’ figurative city is said to be a ‘scheme open to multiple interpretations or individualised developments’,<sup>13</sup> allowing variations in different contexts, without corresponding, therefore, to a type of city, nor a specific regional or temporal context.

The perplexity in the face of the ‘European Enlightenment city as a model of universal validity’ would be, years later, reaffirmed by Comas,<sup>14</sup> on the

occasion of the fourth SAL, as one of the elements that would have enabled the rapprochement among architects of the subcontinent and the discussion about the singularity of its urban spaces. In fact, during these events in the mid-1980s and early 1990s, the opposition between the European city and the Latin American city was frequently called upon to affirm a regional identity as well as the impossibility of the transcription of instruments and debates elaborated for another context.<sup>15</sup> In the early seminars, the representations of Latin American cities, and their accelerated growth, were only an element to nuance the debate and a way to affirm the need to think about local specificities. Between the third and fourth SAL, however, these would become the focus of specific thematic sessions and would consolidate into two distinct perspectives: one on the historical centres and the other on the urban periphery. The representation of the regional specificities by means of these two extremes was taking shape over the course of these events to the point that, by the time the fifth SAL was being prepared, it was presented by Jorge Moscato as the basis of an urban theory on the Latin American city.<sup>16</sup>

Since some of the architects who were involved in the creation of these events had already been interested in the question of heritage protection whether in the academic or professional sphere – such as Mariano Arana and Ramón Gutierrez, for example –, it is not surprising that the question of historical centres permeated various discussions following the first of these events. They would, however, only become the subject of a specific thematic session at the fourth SAL. But if, in the beginning of the 1980s, both the Bologna Plan and ARAU actions by means of counter-projects seemed to be alternatives for many of the architects involved in this debate,<sup>17</sup> by the end of the decade, the search for recognition of local specificities and an escape from the ‘recipes of intervention experiences in European historical centres’ was evident.<sup>18</sup> In this sense, Gutierrez highlighted, among others, the impoverishment of historical centres and its intense use by street vendors.<sup>19</sup> On the basis of this distinction, he identified the core of Latin American identity in these urban fabrics and asserted that the heritage protection actions should take into account socio-cultural aspects and social housing policies. Waisman, on the other hand, was hesitant to acknowledge the existence of a regional identity close to the historical centre and sought to analyse the effects on those of the centrifugal expansion and the continuous structuring and restructuring of the existing fabric that had been taking place since the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

Unlike those who participated session about historical centres, the architects that were organised around the sessions on the urban periphery – which took place in the third and fourth SAL – seemed more cohesive. It was stated as a principle that, if the European examples could serve as a reference for the regional historical centres, the same could not occur for the urban peripheries; there were no theories formulated for these urban

spaces.<sup>21</sup> Regional identity and specificity would seem therefore condensed into these places. From a perspective of a regional intellectual autonomy, those architects would frequently highlight in numbers the large portion of Latin American cities whose escaped existing theories. Curiously, in doing so, they seemed to evoke again the assertions Francis Violich had made, in *Cities of Latin America* (1944), four decades earlier by pointing out that two-thirds of Latin American cities were neighbourhoods of ill-housing. In seeking an alternative to the architect’s work in these spaces, these architects amalgamated debates from the preceding decades – such as John Turner’s contributions on the *barriadas* and the idea of dependent urbanisation from Manuel Castells – with the defence of a recognition of the typo-morphological patterns of urban peripheries and even an attempt to transcribe the principles of the European neighbourhood defined by Léon Krier to Latin American neighbourhoods.<sup>22</sup>

From this brief narrative, it can be seen that in the search for a substitute for the idea of the reconstruction of the European city, local architects reviewed the old cultural debates and constructs, recombining them with elements from the European debate on typo-morphology, and, in this way, formed notions that were generally disclosed as a result of a reflection on the uniqueness of Latin American cities. Therefore, the opposition between the Latin American and European city in the 1980s played a fundamental role not only in the context of the work of translating ideas, but also in the assumption of a regional identity.

### Notes

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- 4 Gisela Barcellos de Souza, ‘Tessituras híbridas ou o duplo regresso: Encontros latino-americanos e traduções culturais do debate sobre o Retorno à Cidade’ (PhD diss., São Paulo University, 2013), 267.
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- 9 See, e.g., Manuel de Solà-Morales, *L’art de ben establir. Curs d’urbanística* (Barcelona: ESAB/Laboratori d’Urbanisme, 1984).
- 10 The version we analyse here is the closest one to the first version, but as a manuscript, we cannot uncover its date precisely. It was first presented at the I Jornada de Desenho Urbano in Porto Alegre, in 1985, and, between mid-1980s and 1993, has received several versions – see Rogério de Castro Oliveira, *Arquiteturas Normativas, Arquiteturas*

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  - 13 Carlos Eduardo Comas, 3.
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  - 20 Marina Waisman, 'La recuperación de la Sociedad Urbana. La recuperación y renovación de la ciudad histórica' (paper presented at the Fourth Latin American Architecture Seminar, Tlaxcala, México, 21–23 May 1989).
  - 21 See Jorge Moscato, 'Arquitectura de la periferia,' and Huberto Eliash, 'Dimensión Arquitectónica de la periferia urbana,' (papers presented at the Third Latin American Architecture Seminar, Manizales, Colombia, 9–11 April 1987).
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# Modern Architectural Culture in Formation: The Principle of Function. European Architects in Rio de Janeiro<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This paper describes the contribution of European architects to the shaping of modern architectural culture and the urban environment of the city of Rio de Janeiro in the first four decades of the twentieth century. It presents an overview of the urban transformations and the formation of technical and cultural Euro-American networks in Rio, highlighting the relevant presence of foreign professionals in the definition of the new landscape in the city. Theoretical aspects of the Beaux-Arts and Julien Guadet's theory of elements' principles were introduced through architectural programs and buildings designed by Joseph Gire, Robert Prentice and Henri Sajous – all contributing to the later development of the modern Brazilian concept of rationalisation and function in architecture.

## Keywords

Julien Guadet, Joseph Gire, Robert Prentice, Henri Sajous

At the time of the Proclamation of the Republic in Brazil (1889), Rio de Janeiro had a population of about 500,000 people. By 1920, the population reached 1,100,000 – a number that shows the dimension of the growth process in the city. The bases for the modernisation and the infrastructure of Brazil's capital were formed during the First Republic (1889–1930). The three first decades of the twentieth century were times of intense urban transformations: the expansion of the city, rising of the construction industry, urban densification and the beginning of building verticalisation. The city went through intense transformations, from the opening of Avenida Central (1905) to the construction of Avenida Presidente Vargas (1944). The goal was to create the image of a modern city – an adjective whose meaning has also been constantly reinterpreted throughout history.

Many foreign professionals, mostly Europeans, famous or unknown, took part in this construction spree in the city, a city which had a shortage of specialised and graduated workforces capable of attending the demands of this society in its early modernisation stages. The first decades of the twentieth century were a period of special affluence, as a result of the

immigrations caused by the previous European wars and conflicts, attracted by the urban expansion of Rio de Janeiro. In addition to this, the lack of regulation for the architectural profession, which only occurred in 1929<sup>2</sup>, and the reduced number of professionals who graduated from Escola Nacional de Belas Artes<sup>3</sup> – only three, between 1890 and 1900 – also eased the inclusion of foreign designers in the new constructions.

*The History of Architecture of Rio de Janeiro* highlighted those considered as more important presences, such as the Italian architect Marcello Piacentini (1881–1960), who developed the plan and project for the campus of University of Brazil; French architect Alfred Agache (1875–1959), who designed an urbanistic plan for Rio between 1927 and 1930; and French-Swiss architect Le Corbusier (1887–1965), who developed another project for the university town and was an important reference for the modern Brazilian architects.

However, there are presently only a few studies about other designers, technical staff, builders and craftsmen of various nationalities and skills, who applied their knowledge on civil construction. Those professionals were connected to others and to groups of economic and political interests, who worked on the city construction through many urbanisation cycles. Their pervasiveness is directly linked to a number of incremental changes in urban policies.

The circulation of financial capital and the technical knowledge is a key part of many networks (of transports, of production, of knowledge, of socialisation etc.), which followed the industrialisation process. In the first decades of the past century, the urbanisation and development efforts offered a series of opportunities for companies and professionals who circulated between continents. The changes in the economical nature of Rio de Janeiro and its gradual characterisation as a seaside resort demanded effort and investment, which benefited from the symbolic character of architecture. A new city was born: the Marvelous City, with its embellished facades, its exuberant nature and the construction of a new cultural landscape, gathering all these qualities. The selection of the present research points to the importance of the foreign contribution for building the image of Rio de Janeiro inside and outside the country.

In the field of architecture and urbanism, the foreign presence defined the conceptual, morphologic and tectonic aspects of Rio. It also defined the scope of the work and the very definition of the profession of the first Brazilian architects, since the first school to educate architects in the country, the Academia Imperial de Belas Artes (Imperial Fine Arts Academy), founded after the arrival of the so-called French Artistic Mission in the nineteenth century, followed the French model from the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. The architecture produced in the French Beaux-Arts system can be understood as a universal cultural reference. It was adopted by other European countries, exported to countries in North and South America and shaped the nineteenth-century artistic and architectonic culture.

In the current bibliography about the history of the architecture of Rio de Janeiro, including the architecture guides of Rio de Janeiro edited by Jorge Czajkowski (2000), it is possible to notice a greater presence of foreign architects in the beginning of the twentieth century, until the 1930s.<sup>4</sup> Some of those names have already been the subject of dissertations, theses and articles, such as Antônio Virzi, Henri Sajous, Jacques Pilon, Alexandre Altberg, Alexander Buddeus, Robert Prentice and Antônio Januzzi, just to mention some of the most recent among so many other works.

Our initial encouragement was the realisation that architects of minor prestige developed works of great quantity and quality here. Many of them produced works in more than one Brazilian city and in other South American countries as well, indicating a rich mobility of the architects at that time. Important Latin American studies also contemplate other professionals different from the ones presented here, pointing to the need of integration among the researches about the continent.<sup>5</sup> This is the case of French architect Joseph Gire, who designed three buildings that changed the urban profile of Rio de Janeiro: Copacabana Palace Hotel (1923), Edifício Praia do Flamengo (1923) and Edifício A Noite (1929), the first skyscraper in the city, with its innovative structure of reinforced concrete.

#### **Fundamentals of the Universal Modern Culture**

The content exposed here considers the relevance of the architectonic culture, in order to define the new expectations as part of a Western European universal culture. Also, in order to better analyse the poetics of a foreign architect, it is necessary to understand the logic conducting his conception, to examine the historicity of the categories and concepts employed. More than stylistic principles, there is a series of other principles in effect at the beginning of the century, which set the bases and categories employed in modernity.

English historian Tony Judt identifies the bases for the twentieth century during the collapse of religious beliefs after the middle of the nineteenth century, with emerging new liberals coming from a world that acknowledges no faith, and with no aprioristic foundations. These are intellectuals who thought of society as a set of secular problems and tried to build it on new philosophical methods.<sup>6</sup>

According to Judt, the continuity of Marxism for over a century is due to the precedent presence of its sentimental roots among intellectuals, workers, politicians and activists. Marxism is different from other radical theories because of its promise that history was on its side, moving towards progress. Based on this premise, this system becomes one of the main ideological paradigms of modernity.

Just like Marxism, the psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud influenced a generation of Central European thinkers. The Viennese psychology also offers ‘a way to demystify the world, to identify a

comprehensive narrative, with which one can interpret behavior and decisions according to a universal pattern<sup>7</sup>. This contributes to the setting up of an ambitious way to change the world, through the change of the individual.

By the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, this high universal and capitalist culture was accessible to ethnic minorities. It was spread among European cities such as Budapest and Prague, but especially in Vienna, Paris and London, pioneer cities in creating networks of transport, power, capital and, above all, ideas.

Paris concentrated the attributes of this high culture and the ills of capitalism: it had been the western artistic culture centre since the eighteenth century; it was the pioneer of the luxury industry, resulting from aristocratic habits, which became accessible to the high bourgeoisie; it produced a model of an unprecedented urban renovation, copied in many parts of the western countries.

The *École nationale et spéciale des Beaux-Arts* (EnBA), located at the urban epicenter of the universal culture from the middle of the nineteenth century, produced theories and an education model, which also became widely spread. However, during the whole century, the protagonists at EnBA did not enunciate their principles and pure theory was not seen favorably by the ateliers' managers. Julien Guadet (1834–1908) was the head of the official atelier after 1871, and taught architectural theory from 1894 to 1908. The function of the theory teacher at that time was, above all, to design the project programs given to students. Guadet wrote a didactic book about the subject he taught, *Éléments et théorie de l'architecture*<sup>8</sup>, when the school was at its peak. This is not a book about the general composition of the buildings, such as the previous treatises, and that is what makes it unique. It does not provide architectonic types, nor guidelines or devices for their composition, following EnBA's trend of not clearly explicating the principles of architectural composition, but it became a reference beyond the walls of the Beaux-Arts for its didactic character.

According to architectural historian Jacques Lucan, Guadet follows the principles already applied at the Beaux-Arts ateliers, especially using the symmetry and apprehension of the object from a single point of view. Lucan also argued that Guadet has never been considered a hero among modern European architects, for his strong affiliation with the Beaux-Arts. Many Americans have declared themselves as his heirs, though, and we can notice affiliations to Guadet's theory in Rio de Janeiro as well.<sup>9</sup>

As opposed to previous treatises, which started with public, religious and important buildings, *Éléments* starts approaching housing, with private and domestic buildings. Guadet resumed the Jacques-François Blondel treaty (*L'Architecture française*, published between 1752 and 1756), as he reaffirmed that modern housing was born in the eighteenth century, when architects replaced the old organisation of linearly connected rooms

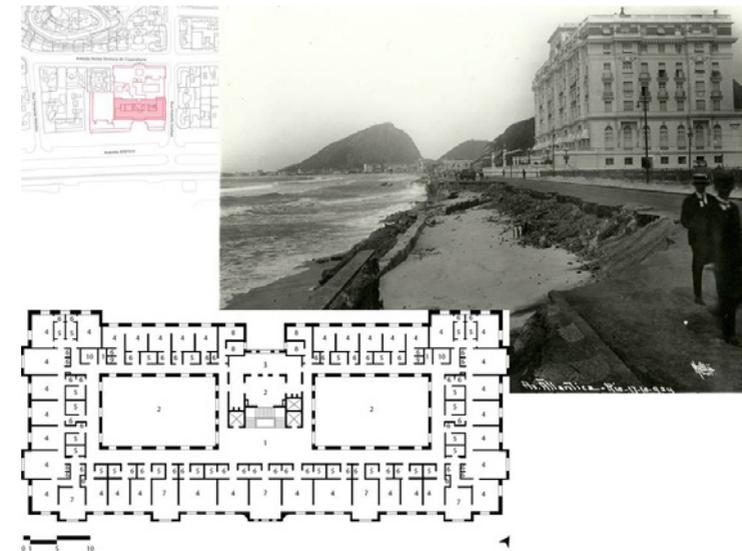


Figure 1. Copacabana Palace Hotel (1923) at Copacabana Beach, designed by Joseph Gire. Source: Architectural plans by Laboratory of Urban Analysis and Digital Representation (LAURD/PROURB/FAU/UFRJ), historical photograph by Augusto Malta at Copacabana Palace Hotel Archive.



Figure 2. Raldia, Castelo and Nilomex Buildings (1930) designed by Robert Prentice. Source: Architectural plans by Laboratory of Urban Analysis and Digital Representation (LAURD/PROURB/FAU/UFRJ), photograph by João Magnus.



Figure 3. Tabor Loreto Building (1942) designed by Henri Sajous.  
 Source: Architectural plans by Laboratory of Urban Analysis and Digital Representation (LAURD/PROURB/FAU/UFRJ), photograph by João Magnus.

for independent rooms. This independence means that each room can be autonomous, thanks to circulation devices, which allows access to a room without having to go through another one. For Guadet, as well as for Blondel, the distribution must be the first concern of an architect.

The importance attributed to distribution is related to the importance given to the plan. The decoration totally depends on the plan. The independent room allows that a specific 'function' (a term not yet employed) could be attributed to it. The specialisation of rooms led Guadet to propose the 'composition element' as something necessary, and whose characteristics should be defined. He distinguishes the two complementary parts: the useful surfaces (rooms) and the circulations.

Lucan stresses that distribution and arrangement are two different things for Guadet. The arrangement is a synonym for composition, a generic term related to the architectural conception. For Guadet, the classic ideal was linked to the static balance, and not to antiquity or a style.<sup>10</sup> This has to do with an invariable principle related to reason, logic and method. He states the preeminence of the universal reason over particular iterations, as he shows examples from different periods.

The elements' theory by Julien Guadet differentiates architecture elements (walls, ceilings, windows) and composition elements (rooms, hallways, circulations, stairs). The first ones set up an initial grammar, and

they are considered as an educational object. The second ones, at a superior level of articulation, could not be taught, but only seized from professional experience.

In each type of program, he distinguishes a main element (room), establishing a hierarchy among the others. He dedicates to study the constitutive elements of the program, since some are in constant change, like hospitals and schools. He identifies the general elements (gantries, hallways, yards, galleries etc.), through which the architect can reveal himself as an artist and is free to provide the solution. The combination of circulations is often the core of the compositions, as they are called 'neutral or banal surfaces' or the 'composition arteries'.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the refusal of the Europeans to accept the importance of Guadet, it is possible to identify the tradition that goes through Blondel, Guadet, Auguste Perret, Tony Garnier all the way to Le Corbusier. The predominance of the program and the function is one of the aspects, but not the only one, that will remain in the corollary of modern architecture. In the works of foreign architects, especially those who studied at EnBA, it is possible to observe these compositional methods in action. We verify that the works of Joseph Gire (Figure 1), Robert Prentice (Figure 2) and Henri Sajous (Figure 3) all have similarity to Guadet's design method. These buildings, among others designed by foreign architects, represented functional, programmatic and spatial innovations that instructed the foundations of the modern movement in Rio de Janeiro.

### Notes

- 1 This paper is supported by Fundação Carlos Chagas Filho de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (FAPERJ) and Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq).
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