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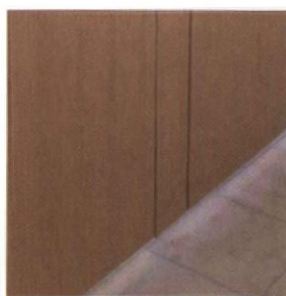
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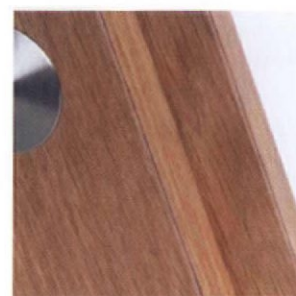
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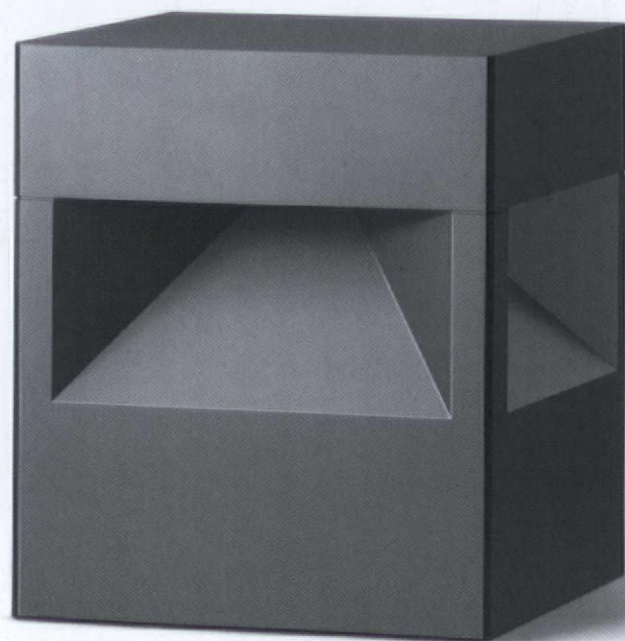
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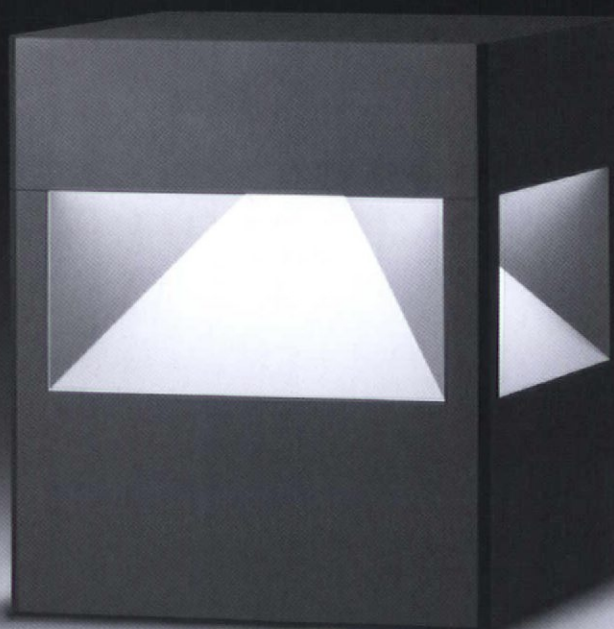


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Architectural theory celebrates the importance of being earnest

Another paradigm shift is upon us with the publication of the first volume of Patrik Schumacher's *The Autopoiesis of Architecture*, in which he proposes, at length, a new unified theory of architecture. In the 30 years or so since my generation was avidly devouring Charles Jencks' *The Language of Postmodern Architecture*, architectural theory seems to have become more impenetrable, often merely for the sake of it, like much architecture, in fact.

But even if the prospect of reading almost 500 pages of Schumacher's densely argued prose, relieved by a mere 18 illustrations seems a bit on the arid side, clearly his endeavours merit wider discussion. So we set Peter Buchanan on the case, and his pensive exegesis of the *Autopoiesis* inaugurates the AR's newly revived Theory section. This aims to furnish readers with insightful and provocative critiques of the latest currents of architectural thought.

Over its long history, the AR has marked many call-to-arms moments in architectural thinking, from Colin Rowe's essay on 'The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa' in 1947, to E.M. Farrelly's 1986 issue dedicated to 'The New Spirit', which rammed a stake through the heart of postmodernism's painted corpse. Both these and many other articles can be sampled in our expanding digital archive at www.architectural-review.com.

In adding to this distinguished continuum, we see it as a gentle riposte to the prevailing culture of transience and shallowness. Architecture is a serious profession, and there is still a need for cerebral engagement and theoretical food for thought.

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WORLD WIDE WEAVE





ONE HYDE PARK, LONDON

London's most expensive address redefines mansion block life for the super rich

WILL HUNTER

'The pressure on us as architects to find a way of mediating between the public's expectation and those who have spent hundreds of millions purchasing a site is intense,' explains Graham Stirk, perhaps a little defensively, about the design that he has led for Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners (RSH) at One Hyde Park. The media has given the architects – who have been known to make socialist noises – a rather a rough ride for completing what is reputed to be the world's most expensive residential address in their own capital city.

Financed by a company owned by the Qatari prime minister, the luxury developer Candy & Candy approached the practice to create the scheme during the economic uplands of the mid-noughties. One global economic meltdown later, the grand opening of the 86 apartment development in Knightsbridge finally took place at the end of January. On the day of the celebrity-studded launch party, publicists chirping about

achieving the world-record price of more than £6,000 per square foot struck a dissonance with the news that 20 per cent of young people in Britain are currently unemployed. Described by Rogers concisely but vaguely as 'a 21st-century monument', the building was read more critically and symbolically by the *Guardian* columnist Alexander Chancellor as 'a monument to the ever-widening gap between rich and poor and to the unique ability of the very wealthy to ride out the recession unscathed'.

Perhaps this is true. But, in a sense, what's new? If the scheme is such a monument, it would hardly be an innovation for a site gazing north across Hyde Park. And indeed it used to be much worse: in previous centuries the 'public' was even excluded from the 'public space' itself. As one Captain Gronow remarked in his *Reminiscences* of 1863, you did not see 'any of the lower or middle classes of London intruding themselves in regions which, with a sort of

tacit understanding, were then given up exclusively to persons of rank and fashion.' Many buildings that run along the park's southern edge were born of and long-commemorate this aristocratic milieu.

Of these, the scheme is equidistant between two examples that appear as particular points of reference. On the park's east corner is Robert Adam's Apsley House (1771–78), the former home to the Duke of Wellington; the ultimate forebear for opulence, status and significance, the Grade I-listed mansion has for centuries been known as 'No. 1, London' – a sobriquet that surely influenced those who named One Hyde Park. To the west, of more typological interest, are the Albert Hall Mansions designed by Richard Norman Shaw (1880–87).

These started to sell the idea of apartments to the English upper classes, who had always associated such arrangements with either poor people or, worse, continental foreigners.

NICK ROCHOWSKI/VIEW



Indeed, for inspiration, Shaw visited Paris in 1879, bringing back the city's ideas about communal areas – grand lobbies and graduated staircases – and mixing them in his design with apartments more like a traditional London town house. This allowed the familiarity of split-level living, but it was still a fairly radical proposition, and the developer opted to build it in stages. The mansions as a whole are composed of three separate blocks, each in plan centred on a light well and two staircases: one large and open for the residents; the other small and hidden for the servants.

Essentially, what RSH has done is to invert this plan and to scale it up. Instead of designing long facades hiding light-voids and stairwells, the practice has created four separate 'pavilions', the floorplates of which flare in plan to maximise apartments' floor areas and park views. The vertical circulation has been displaced into five glazed cores, connected up at ground level

with a gently curving spine corridor. There are two residential and three service passages, all treated identically in proportion and detail (how about that for socialist principles?), but mirrored in plan so that the goods lifts face the local rag-trade and the residents the park.

Although RSH is *au fait* with the process of inverting a diagram – they practically invented this concept with the Centre Pompidou and the Lloyd's building – it was less comfortable with scaling up a model. As Stirk admits, 'We didn't know how to fill in the planning drawings with these apartment sizes: we even scaled the beds up.'

And it wasn't simply the extremities of scale that proved challenging, but the breadth of the shifts required to achieve them. 'Apartments range from a generous one-bedroom flat, all the way up to 27,000 square foot,' says Stirk. 'That's bigger than our office – what residential

morphology can you think of that would deal with that?'

The closest real precedent is, of course, an office itself, and in their sheer size and adaptability, the large floors and sparse structure are indeed like parts of an office. Where the architect begins to rebuff the comparison lies in the property's details. 'There are bedrooms twice the size of the house I live in: that's not a punched hole for a window,' Stirk strikes back. 'No one bedroom is the same size and we needed the verticality of the facade to allow all this fine-tuning.'

The pavilions are of course glazed floor to ceiling, but this is wrapped in a veil of bronze privacy screens, which funnel views towards the park and, as the widening of apartments toward the cores forces an almost neighbourly proximity, hide the super rich from each other.

'Rather than doing slick glazing, which in big residential projects is a nightmare since you can't control what blinds people

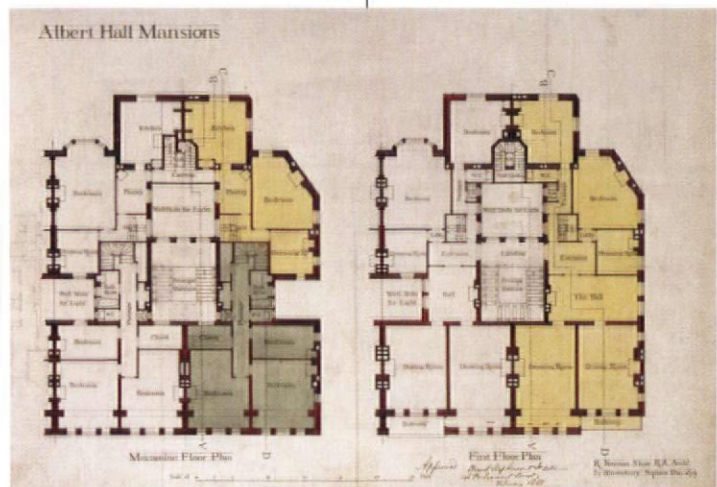
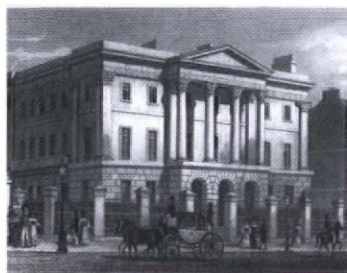
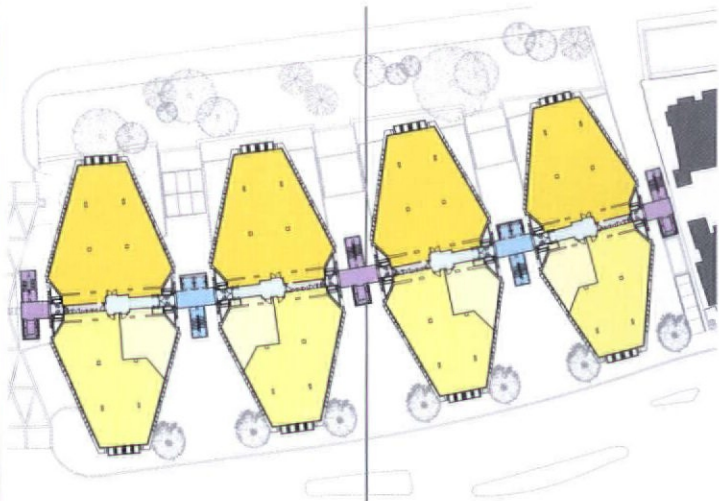
will have, you've got to create something robust enough to allow people to be exuberant in terms of what they want to be,' says Stirk.

In taking this view, he touches on the project's crucial dilemma – that between fantasy and rationality. This duality is no more clearly expressed than in the building's relationship with the adjacent luxury hotel, the Mandarin Oriental, an Edwardian version of a French château, with two floors wedged between each band of stone, coursing in an attempt to make the building's proportions hold.

Even though the context is dotted with a number of more high-rise buildings, RSH has set out their project's massing using the Mandarin eaves line and attempted to strike a companionable dialogue by picking up the strong horizontals every two floors. In mediating the relationship between the building and the street, the practice has created a couple of gardens that will give access to the three ground-floor shops.

This green space is more than most private apartment blocks offer, while also giving glimpses of the park skyline through the glass cores. On the one hand, the project is looking to placate the planners and the public, whereas on the other – well, the other hand must tease and titillate the fantasies of the billionaires.

These fantasies, as the interior reveals, can be pretty extreme and disquieting. If at one time hotels mimicked stately homes so that rich people felt comfortable in them, now the international super rich demand their apartments look and feel like hotels. The Candy brothers clearly understand and cater for this shift. Alongside the constant availability of room service via an underground



Previous page_
One Hyde Park
addresses
Knightsbridge,
with little to
suggest its
residential
function
Left_ The Hyde
Park elevation
trumpets location
and exclusivity
Top_ Typical
floor plan. The
widening of the
apartments at lift
cores forces a
neighbourly
proximity

Middle, left_
Apsley House
by Robert Adam,
former residence
of the Duke of
Wellington, which
became known
as 'No. 1 London'
Middle, right_
Albert Hall
Mansions by
Richard Norman
Shaw, which
attracted the
upper classes to
apartment living
Above Plans
of Albert Hall
Mansions

passage, their intent is confirmed through their fit-out's five-star friskiness. Once you cross the threshold, you enter a world where reality feels familiar but strangely filtered. The scene calls to mind Sigmund Freud canoodling Rocce Forte, shot by Robert Mapplethorpe.

At first you arrive in a double-height hotel lobby, with copious staff yet no other guests. You see a 'library' that does not appear to have any books; a grand piano playing without a pianist. Then a schism emerges. Candy & Candy produced the interiors with RSH only doing shell and core, and nowhere is that put to more deranging effect than in the spine corridor, which abruptly alternates between detailed high-tech transparency and the frothy cappuccino of polished plaster – from the start of the curving route, it looks like this small schizophrenic episode might go on forever.

Inside the enclosure of the show flat – which amazingly covers the entire floorplate – the Candy treatment is on a surer footing, and it is this that Stirk credits with the scale of the record sales figures. 'When you walk into one of those apartments that hasn't been finished by [Candy & Candy] you look at it and think, it's really nice, but would it command the sales figures they're talking about?' he says. 'But when you walk into one where they've positioned everything, you think it probably would. The whole way this thing is secretly guarded. We don't know one person who's bought one.'

There's a paradox here between publicity and privacy, the media fizz at odds with the desire for anonymity. This suggests that the enterprise's immediate financial success depends as much on perception as on reality. With prices

claimed to be £6.75 million for a one-bed flat and to reach up to £135 million for a penthouse, you wonder whether a residence here will prove such a good long-term investment once the hype has died down.

In a recent essay in *AD* on Typological Urbanism, academic Peter Carl observes that: 'Dwelling, properly understood, is more profound than the efficient or attractive accommodation of a lifestyle – it comprises orientation in reality.' One Hyde Park steers clear of a reality that almost anyone can relate to. Applying mega-scale to the mansion block has the effect of removing its local and national context: Albert Hall Mansions were mostly for people rooted in the English countryside who wanted pied-à-terre; One Hyde Park is for global billionaires with perhaps no real links to Britain.

I have no problem with that, but – combined with such things as car lifts that mean residents never have to step on a pavement – this certainly alienates them from London's larger story. The architecture is a well-conceived, finely detailed private apartment block, but it is not a monument in any sense of the word, since it deliberately avoids any emotional engagement with the wider city or its inhabitants.

Of the Napoleon-trouncing Duke of Wellington's former residence No. 1 London, historian Edwin Beresford Chancellor eulogises in *The Private Palaces of London* (1908): 'For Englishmen it represents, crystallised in stone, more fully perhaps than other dwelling in the country, an idea, a sentiment... consecrated to the memory of one who may justly be termed the saviour of our country.' Now that's an architectural monument. One Hyde Park doesn't even come close.

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The empowering spirit of jugaad as antidote to hubris

MARK LAMSTER

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It's been more than a century since the great Chicago architect and urbanist Daniel Burnham advised, 'make no little plans, for they have no magic to stir men's blood.' Today, big plans of the architectural sort have a way of stirring the blood, but for reasons contrary to Burnham's intention: how often do we hear objections to hubristic modern projects that are too big, too expensive, too inhumane, too paternalistic and too impractical? In our postcolonial age, architecture's utopian impulse has been humbled by a guilty conscience and a heady dose of pragmatism.

This new modesty was the undisguised theme of Small Scale, Big Change, the bellwether Museum of Modern Art's recent international survey of socially engaged design (AR November 2010), and it is likewise the subject of Jugaad Urbanism: Resourceful Strategies for Indian Cities, which opened last month at New York's Center for Architecture. If the premise of the two shows is similar, the projects of 'Jugaad Urbanism,' ably curated by Kanu Agrawal, are at once less glamorous and more geographically focused.

They are also more varied in scale, ranging as they do from a small stove to a community centre, a solar-electric rickshaw

to a plan for bus rapid transit in a city of millions.

It is a sensibility of creative resourcefulness, or jugaad, that brings these diverse projects together. Although there is no precise English translation of the Hindi term, 'make do' or 'improvised' come close. Even the exhibition itself, divided into four sections – land, water, energy and transportation – and wedged into a pair of small galleries on separate floors, has a jugaad quality to it.

Some of the projects that are on display are as inspiring, in their own way, as any of Daniel Burnham's grand visions. A composting toilet, for instance, which can be inexpensively fabricated from locally found materials, could give essential dignity to the two-thirds of the Indian population that still defecates in public.

At the same time, using such a composting toilet would prevent the kind of groundwater contamination that is responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths each year. The toilet is a project of the Sulabh International Social Service Organisation, and many are already in use.

Or take the Envirofit Biomass Stove, an efficient cooking unit that dramatically cuts down on the deadly toxic emissions that emanate from the



Top_ Chandelier fabricated from discarded bottles epitomises the improvisational spirit of jugaad
Above_ Prototype solar-electric powered rickshaw that could be a solution to new demands for sustainable transport

biomass stoves that populate the developing world.

More likely to be found on a design magazine cover is Jugaad New Delhi, a photogenic canopy created from 945 discarded tin cooking oil containers. The arching form was devised by Sanjeev Shankar as a shaded public space for the community of Rajokri, and built with their collaboration – they scavenged the tin cans, and painted them in deep fuschia (AR March 2009).

There is a clear suggestion that the lessons of the show apply beyond the subcontinent, that you should leave it feeling emboldened to confront your own world with a new, jugaad attitude. It is an empowering idea, and I will admit that I walked away heartened, but also a bit wistful for the past. A composting toilet may be a good thing, but it's not Chicago.

RAJESH VORA: FLEXTON

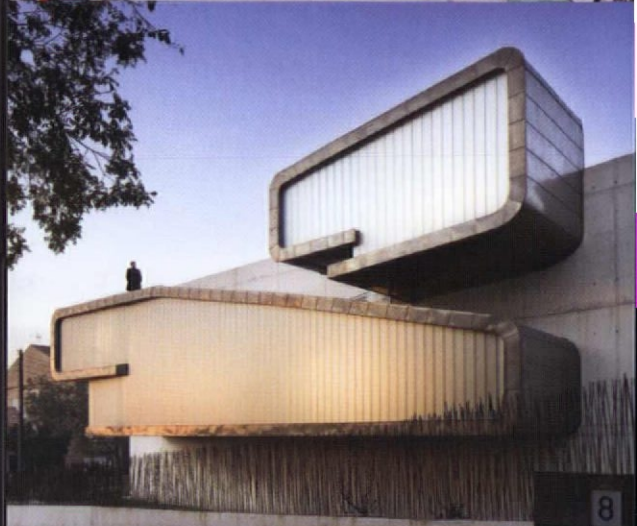
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Below: Spoof propaganda poster by artists Inuk Silis Høegh and Asmund Havsteen-Mikkelsen which formed part of their 'Melting Barricades' installation

In 2007, a Russian bathyscaphe in the Arctic Ocean descended 4,250m underneath the North Pole and planted a Russian flag made of titanium on the seabed. Though officially described as a scientific mission, it was widely seen as the first salvo in the race to lay claim to the Arctic's vast and as yet unexploited petroleum reserves.

At present, no single country holds sovereignty over the Arctic region. The five nations bordering the Arctic Ocean – Russia, Norway, Canada, USA (via Alaska) and Denmark (through Greenland) – are each limited to a 320km economic zone around their coastlines. However, the receding polar ice cap is now opening up shipping lanes and trade routes, raising the prospect of a dash for Arctic oil and gas, and increased colonisation of hitherto remote and ecologically pristine territories at the top of the world.

'How does the region cope with such stress?' asked Gisle Lokken of Norwegian architectural practice 70°N Arkitektur, and co-organiser of Landscapes in Change, a recent conference held in Tromsø, in the extreme north of Norway. Participants drawn from Arctic nations considered the potential impact of this stress in terms of a transversal debate embracing landscape, geopolitics, urbanism economics and architecture.

Already emblematic of the effects of climate change,

INUK SILIS HØEGH/ASMUND HAVSTEEN-MIKKELSEN

Greenland is now also confronting an industrial revolution. Lokken described how a proposed aluminium smelter, in Maniitsoq on Greenland's south-west coast, will bring in 3,000 workers, swamping a town of 2,800 people, and transforming a natural landscape into an industrial one.

Klaus Dodds, a professor of geopolitics based at Royal Holloway, University of London, explored what he called 'our fears and fantasies of empty spaces, the Arctic as both tempting yet unnerving', and how promises of economic progress and renewal are intimately bound up with a rugged and usually masculine sense of national identity built around taming and exploiting wilderness areas.

From studies of indigenous Cree communities in northern Quebec, Alessandra Ponte from the University of Montreal discussed the problems of planning settlements that are situated in physically remote and climatically challenging locales. In particular, she looked at how 'states within states', such as Québec's hydroelectric industry, are transforming previously unmapped territories into landscapes.

However, 'trueness to ecology is a fiction to start with', asserted Daniel Williams, an American specialist in forestry, environmental psychology and human geography. 'We may like to define the natural world as a stable, self-regulating historic fidelity, but humans always interfere, creating constant dynamism and change,' he said.

Berit Kristoffersen from Norway, who is involved with critiquing strategies for petroleum development in Arctic territories in the context of human and environmental

security, spoke of a rising sense of 'opportunistic adaptation' as a consequence of climate change in the region.

Swedish environmental scientist Annika Nilsson described the shifts in the physical, social and political landscape of the Arctic over the last half century and the current imperative to acknowledge the complexity and interconnections across a range of disciplines, from geopolitics to architecture, as the region prepares to confront heightened industrial and human intervention.

Greenlander Sara Olsvig, an anthropologist and a member of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, who specialises in human-rights issues, is at the sharp end of the debate about the region's industrial development.

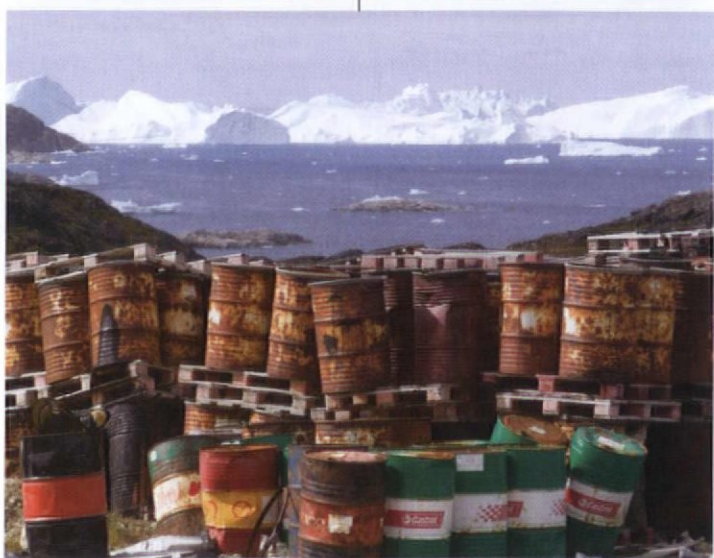
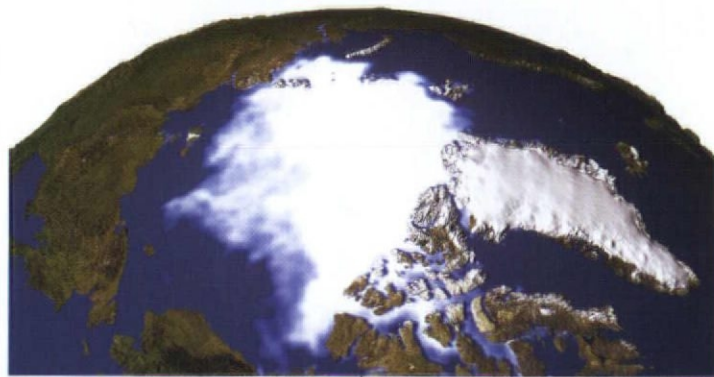
Although in Greenlandic the word 'development' literally means 'moving towards the end', many local people are in favour of capitalising on Greenland's mineral resources – the country has plentiful reserves of iron, uranium and increasingly sought-after rare earth metals.

'We need to reconsider how we conceive our homeland,' said Olsvig, showing excerpts from *Melting Barricades*, an art project staged in Copenhagen some years ago by Greenlandic artist Inuk Silis Høegh and Dane Asmund Havsteen-Mikkelsen, in which the Greenlandic 'army' 'invaded' Denmark, with dog sleds converted into military vehicles.

What emerged from the Tromsø debate was a sense of a remote and beautiful part of the world at a crucial tipping point. But its future is still just about in our hands. However, the US Navy is apparently engaged in serious strategic planning for a time in the not-so-distant future when (not if) the Arctic's sea ice has melted completely.

Finally, on a more lyrical note, British writer, film-maker and researcher Roger Connagh perhaps best summed up this sense of the Arctic being on the cusp. 'The Land That is Not is about to be penetrated,' he remarked, in a short meditative film or 'archimation' to the surreal accompaniment of The Beatles' *I Am the Walrus*.

Below_ Despite environmental anxieties, the receding Arctic ice cap will open up the region to development
Middle_ A typical settlement in Greenland
Bottom_ Rusting oil drums in the Arctic landscape



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Procedure

2-phase, anonymous competition: Phase I: urban development spatial structure, free space and landscape design on a conceptual basis; Phase II: planning, urban development and architecture including associated land utilisation assignment.

Open to

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Further information is available at: www.anderstatt-swissalps.ch/project/planning and architectural competition

Schedule

Application for Phase I: www.anderstatt-swissalps.ch/project/planning and architectural competition	28 Feb. – 14 Mar. 2011
Submission of concepts, Phase I	18 Apr. 2011
Start of Phase II	9 Jun. 2011
Submission of concepts, Phase II	15 Aug. 2011
Submission of model bases, Phase II	29 Aug. 2011
Jury's decision	30 Sep. 2011
Publication and exhibition	7 Nov. – 21 Nov. 2011

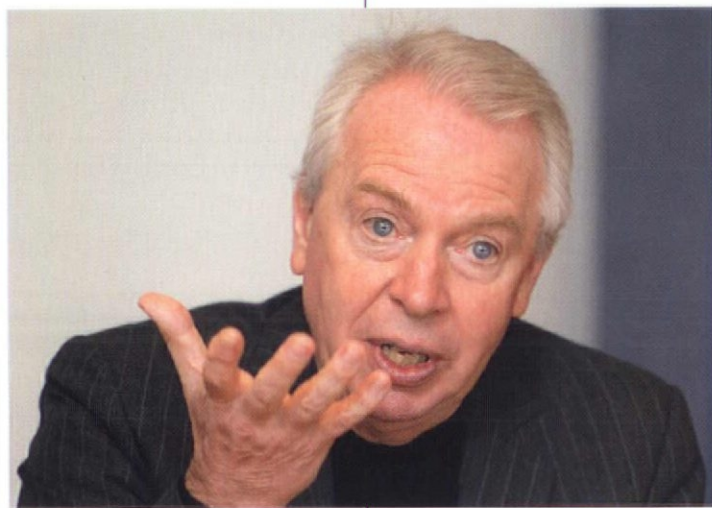
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LONDON, UK

RIBA Gold Medal winner David Chipperfield on style wars and the English condition

ROB GREGORY



As an outspoken critic of the state of British architecture, David Chipperfield rarely misses an opportunity to advocate a better way of doing things. In the press build-up to his award of the 2011 RIBA Royal Gold Medal, most interviews focused on Chipperfield's self-declared status as an outsider among his British peers and on his well-known frustration about the lack of sophistication he feels pervades Britain's current architectural culture. Taken together, these articles paint a gloomy picture and tend to portray Chipperfield, inaccurately, as a weary and

pessimistic character. When the AR met him in his London home on the eve of the Gold Medal presentation ceremony last month, it sought a more positive conversation, in which the architect would unpick what, if anything, he cherishes about British architecture.

Chipperfield's peripheral relationship to mainstream British practice goes back to the time of his graduation from the Architectural Association in 1977. When he was asked about his divergence from the predominant pursuit of British high-tech that gripped many of those, who like him spent extended periods in the offices

of Norman Foster and Richard Rogers, Chipperfield began by recounting the period's turbulent mood.

'There was a distinct moment when everyone was once again looking at the 19th century at a very different set of heroes,' he remembers. 'Instead of Mies and Corb, all of a sudden, Asplund, Leverentz and Lutyens became much more significant to us.'

He was referring to the period punctuated by the AA's Beaux Arts Week, a conference held in May 1978, when a series of lectures and discussions gave a clear and final execution to something dying in the public opinion and intellectual circles: modernism. 'We saw that the modern movement had run out of steam, emotionally, socially, intellectually.'

This led on to the 1980s, dominated by postmodernism on one side and high-tech on the other. 'It was a confusing time and there was a big vacuum,' Chipperfield recalls. 'I remember going to Amsterdam to give a lecture just when I started the office. There were 10 British architects invited. John Pawson, John Outram, Nick Grimshaw and others all went before me, and as the last to arrive, they said, "what the hell is going on over there? Every week another guy turns up with a completely different idea." At that time England seemed very eccentric, with everyone fighting their own battle, trying to work out what they thought architecture was.'

Somewhere beyond the central postmodern/high-tech battleground lay the quieter territory occupied by Chipperfield and his allies. 'Tony Fretton and even John Pawson of my generation, Caruso St John and Sergison Bates who are younger – we all

share some things in common, which is a certain take on modernism; a postmodernist take in a way,' he says. This 'other take' was influenced by experience gained from the 9H Gallery in Marylebone that Chipperfield established in collaboration with Wilfried Wang and Ricky Burdett and refined through exposure to the work of Álvaro Siza, Rafael Moneo, Luigi Snozzi and Mario Botta – architects who, as Chipperfield explains, few people in this country had considered before.

'Suddenly you saw that it didn't have to be in one camp or the other, but that there was a way of modern architecture dealing with place and history and materiality; the things that modern architects seemed to have lost,' he reflects.

These influences continued to steer Chipperfield's trajectory. After finishing three small buildings in Japan, he returned to London to set up his practice. His first major completed British project, the River and Rowing Museum in Henley-on-Thames, powerfully illustrated 'the other take', with a building that for the first time since the Smithsons' Architecture Faculty at the University of Bath, showed that it was acceptable for a modern architect in Britain to produce a contemporary public building with a pitched roof.

This building was clearly different to the output of Foster and Rogers and when asked if time spent in their offices was at odds with the formation of his own architectural preoccupations, Chipperfield was quick to assert their significance. Then, he somewhat surprisingly went on to identify another architect that few people would naturally place on Chipperfield's radar

BRITTA PEDERSEN/EPA/CORBIS



Previous page_
David Chipperfield
is still critical of
the level of public
engagement with
and mediation of
architectural
projects in the UK
Left_ The Turner
Contemporary on
the Margate
seafront will open
later this year

– Piers Gough, the witty and observant founder of CZWG.

‘We must remember that Norman Foster and Richard Rogers had extreme ideologies and ambitions. The Centre Pompidou for me remains one of the most radical buildings of the 21st century. Not as famous as the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao perhaps, but you can’t say Bilbao was radical – amazing, extraordinary and spectacular, yes, but not radical,’ he elaborates. ‘Pompidou went for the jugular, a hippy project full of ideology. The Willis-Faber and Dumas building, by Foster, is a radical structure, taking the existing expectations of an office and giving back something different. That was clever stuff.’

When asked about the significance of character in his architecture and whether or not strong characteristics endure better than subtle ones, Chipperfield agrees, saying, ‘Yes, I think that is frighteningly true, but there is a real danger in that. A lot of modernism doesn’t have character and if [an architect] is too self-conscious or too cautious, the danger is that character is bought in at the expense of quality, in a gesture that is quite thin.’

‘Thick’ gestures, on the other hand, are more interesting, and having rediscovered one of its projects in London’s Docklands, Chipperfield has come to appreciate the ‘thicker’, more authentic gestures of CZWG. ‘I looked at it and thought it stood up in a funny way, and in 20 years, you’ll say, “that’s nice” without knowing where it is from. Piers Gough will become a rediscovered hero at some point.’

He is using his Gold Medal lecture to talk about the New Entrance Building on Berlin’s Museum Island. In focusing on this project, he hopes to advocate greater public engagement in architecture, a dimension that he feels is well established in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Uncharacteristically steering clear of criticising the British condition, he draws on Spain to illustrate frustrating times, saying how much he struggled when working on the City of Justice in Barcelona, not only due to its scale, but also because of its political aspects.

‘We are old-fashioned architects more used to working for a person on a building that is less than five storeys tall, and in that sort of dialogue you can’t go that wrong,’ he says.

‘But as soon as you get into a more complex political situation, the discussion gets complicated. Barcelona was faceless and, if I am quite honest, I don’t know who we built it for. I quite like the projects we have done in America because they were thoroughly mediated with the general public. The Anchorage Museum and Des Moines Library have become a key part of the community infrastructure in a very powerful way. Forget architecture for a minute, but simply as a tool in the city fabric.’

He concludes by revealing some reservations about the English condition. ‘I think it’s a missing dimension here. In places like Zurich or Berlin the processes are so procedural that mediation is guaranteed. In America, it’s the opposite, there is no public structure, but there is accountability, so everyone is trying to demonstrate to trustees that all the money is being spent properly,’ he explains.

‘In England we neither have one nor the other, so you find for something like Wakefield, it will be finished, but will anyone in Wakefield know much about it beforehand? No probably not, and it will probably be a little bit of a shock for them.

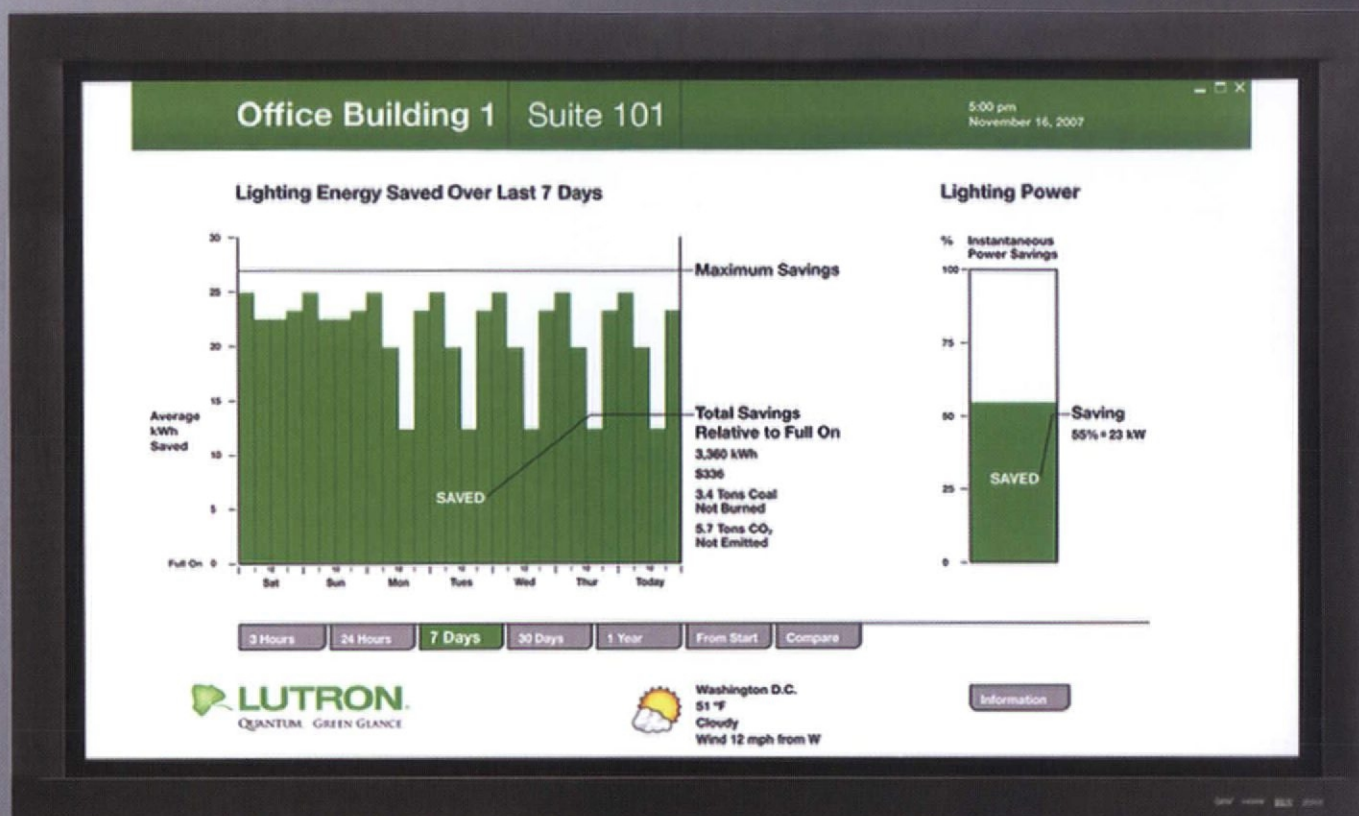
But, hopefully the heart transplant will not be rejected.’

Many eyes will also be focused on Waterloo, where Chipperfield is working for Chelsfield and London & Regional Properties on a major redevelopment of the Elizabeth House site, which will include a significant new public space between Waterloo Station and the South Bank.

As for the future? ‘Well, at the beginning of your career you’re trying to get one or two good buildings built, and that’s the most important thing. Then after a few years your concern is to get better at doing it. And then you start working towards something that requires a different type of thought process, and you have to find the way to grow as an office that is capable of maintaining a continuous output of work,’ he says.

‘For our office, this is the challenge we face. I would like to prove that it is not a choice between [leading] a charming, highly talented but disorganised practice or a commercial smooth machine.’ Like his architecture then, it’s not a case of being one thing or another, modern or postmodern. It seems he very much prefers being both.

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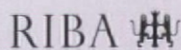
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LONDON, UK

Home-working – the new peasantry or a regenerative impetus for cities?

CLARE MELHUIH

www.theworkhome.com

In the UK, the number of people who are living and working from home, whether on a full-time or part-time, employed or self-employed basis, has risen dramatically.

These include not just creative types – the so-called ‘bedroom boys’ of digital visualisation, or writers based in garden sheds – but also employees of large corporations and people on benefits struggling to make ends meet by working for cash at home. For instance, British Telecom has increased its level of efficiency by reducing

the size of its buildings and the rates of sick leave among workers as a result of its home-working economy.

The various dimensions of this trend, which is unsettling the fundamental home-office separation that has characterised the organisation of modern society and its cities, were surveyed and discussed in a seminar led by Frances Holliss, Director of the Workhome Project at London Metropolitan University. Between 1991 and 2001, the number of people working ‘mainly at home’

doubled, so what are the spatial and design implications?

Recognising the trend, the Coalition Government has approved a change in policy to allow social tenants to work from home – a shift away from existing planning and fiscal frameworks that set limits on home-working across the board.

Holliss and her team are to survey tenants of Newlon Housing Trust in Hackney, as part of a Connected Communities grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, to discover how many social housing occupants already work from home. In particular, the team is analysing how Newlon’s hard-to-let housing stock might be refurbished to accommodate home-working practices in a visible and positive way.

But the research underlines the fundamental issue for home-workers: space. As Holliss observes, home-working only actually works for middle-class people with extra space. Housing allocation policies in the public sector, and minimum space standards in UK new-build housing, do not allow for home-working – at least not without high levels of stress and discomfort.

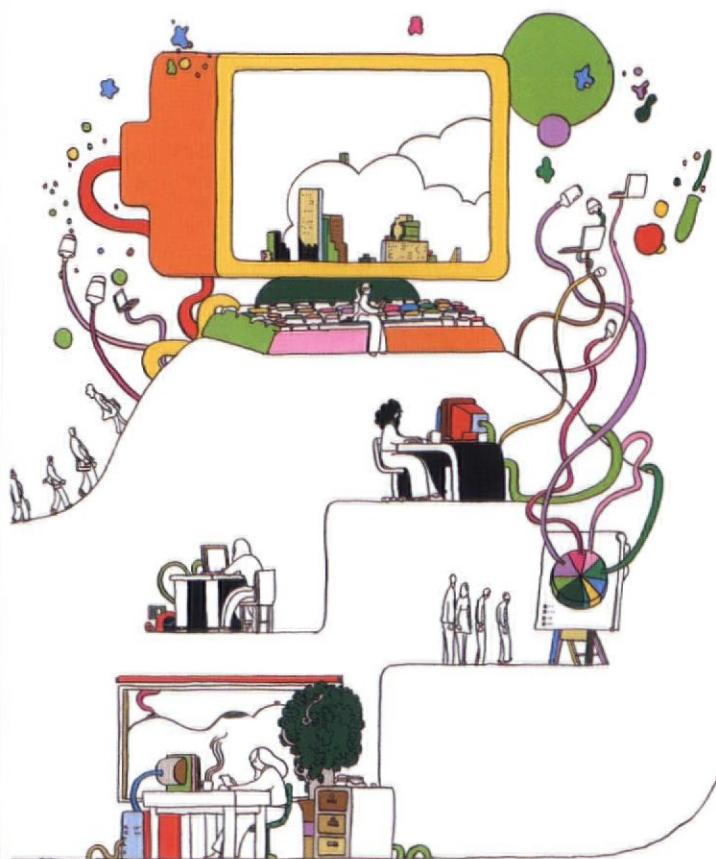
The Workhome Project is motivated by the conviction that home-working should be encouraged for environmental and work-life reasons. To encourage a reconsideration

of the standard approaches to housing design in the UK and to facilitate home-working, it has produced a web-based system of types and design patterns as a resource for developers, builders and architects.

But the urban and social dimensions of home-working also need attention; it is not enough simply to lift restrictions on use. As Lucy Musgrave (Director of Publica) and Graeme Evans (Director of the Cities Institute, London Met) point out, home-based work has potentially significant implications for the social and economic revitalisation of neighbourhoods, particularly suburban areas, by keeping people in them, interacting and carrying out transactions locally, during the day.

Yet without consideration of appropriate mechanisms for promoting those interactions, we may, as Robert Mull (Head of Architecture and Spatial Design, London Met) puts it succinctly, end up with a more ‘divided, local and impotent’ society of isolated individuals locked behind closed doors. Rather than a driver of regeneration, this move would be ‘a new form of peasantry tied to electronic cottages’ – home-working out of desperation due to lack of other employment opportunities, rather than choice.

Workhome Symposium, London Metropolitan University, 16 February 2011





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PRINGIERS HOUSE

LOCATION MIRISSA, SRI LANKA

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This adventurous new house
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dramatically exploits its
stunning clifftop setting

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DIE BESORGER OFFICES

LOCATION STEYR, AUSTRIA

ARCHITECT HERTL ARCHITEKTEN

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THE LONG ROOM HUB

LOCATION DUBLIN, IRELAND

ARCHITECT MCCULLOUGH
MULVIN ARCHITECTS

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TESHIMA ART MUSEUM

LOCATION TESHIMA ISLAND,
JAPAN

ARCHITECT RYUE NISHIZAWA

An enigmatic concrete
bubble houses an equally
enigmatic art installation

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TESHIMA ART MUSEUM

LOCATION

TESHIMA ISLAND,
JAPAN

ARCHITECT

RYUE NISHIZAWA

WRITER

DANA BUNTROCK

PHOTOGRAPHY

IWAN BAAN

Get on a plane.

Go. Soon. If you are reading this in English, it's unlikely that you are in Japan – if you are, you already know that an important little bubble of a building is awaiting you in the middle of the Inland Sea. Which airport? Doesn't matter; international flights don't arrive anywhere near your destination. You'll need to cover many miles by road. Or rail. And then take a ferry.

When you arrive at Teshima Island's pocket-sized ports – there are slightly more than a thousand people living on the whole island, spread across five tiny towns – you might discover, as I did, that the lazy local bus schedule means that your best option is to rent a motorised bicycle for the hills. Yet incredibly, 11,000 people made the trip to Teshima Art Museum in the first two weeks after it opened last October. And for what? Almost nothing.

More precisely, 'Almost nothing' translates the idea of *Beinahe Nichts*, which we associate with Mies van der Rohe, the son of a stonemason. —





THE ART MUSEUM IS WORTH THE EFFORT IT TAKES TO ARRIVE AT THESE GREEN SLOPES THAT OVERLOOK THE INLAND SEA

Mies believed that the best materials to achieve airy emptiness are translucent glass and slender steel. Others today erect open structures in acrylic and aluminium, or even forge environments out of ethereal fog. Concrete surely never suggests itself to most as the best media to accomplish 'almost nothing', to inspire awe with empty, open space. But SANAA's Ryue Nishizawa, who with Kazuyo Sejima received the Pritzker Architecture Prize last year, is known for audaciously ignoring the obvious.

In 2004, Nishizawa, working with the acclaimed structural engineer Mutsuro Sasaki, was invited to propose a structure for a site on nearby Naoshima, where there were already a handful of popular art museums designed by Tadao Ando. Sasaki had earlier explored softly swelling undulations in concrete in the 1996 Nagaoka Lyric Hall, designed with Toyo Ito, a trajectory that continued in a set of small, curvaceous concrete structures peppering Ito's 2005

Island City Park and in the elegant 2006 Forest of Meditation.

Sasaki was also working on a flatter, sprawling topographic slab with SANAA, the architectural partnership that Nishizawa simultaneously maintains while also managing his independent practice. The Rolex Learning Centre at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne was awarded to SANAA in a 2004 competition and ultimately completed last year (AR May 2010).

But unlike these examples, Nishizawa's initial proposal for the isolated art museum was coolly autonomous and object-like, with the pregnant, rounded shape of a water droplet poised lightly on a sheet of glass. The curve was unlikely to be constructible until engineers were able to fine-tune the form into infinite numbers of analytic iterations, and contractors could accurately and cheaply set out 3,500 points for an unusual and non-orthogonal profile.

Nishizawa faced other challenges at the Rolex Learning Centre: —

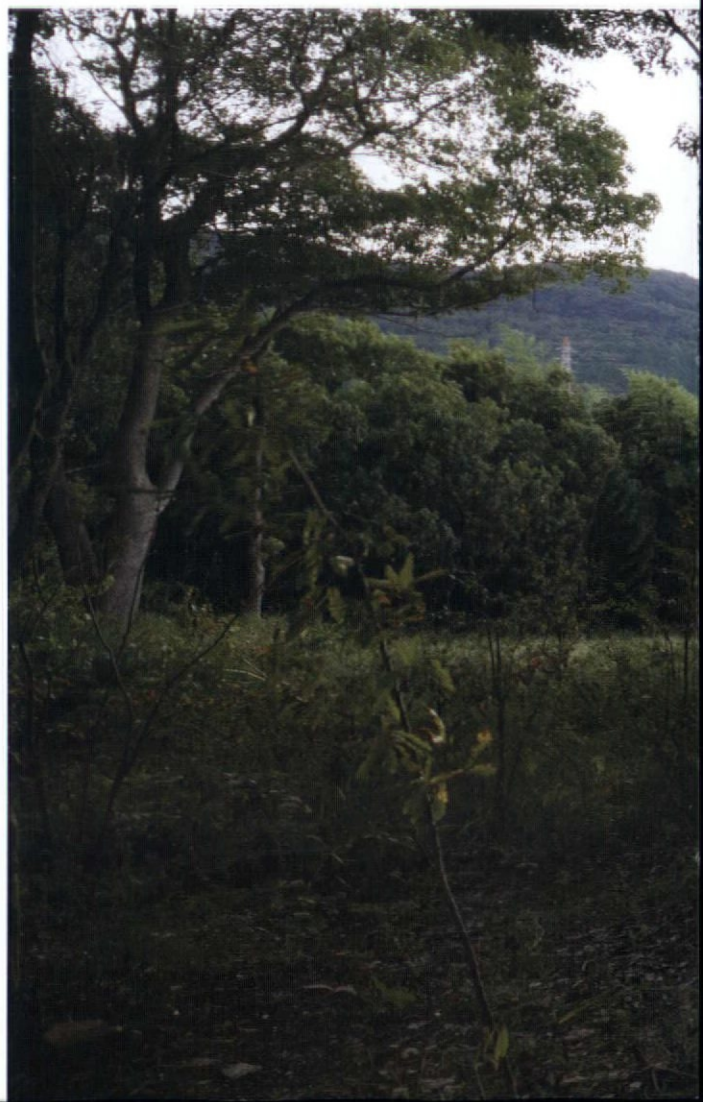
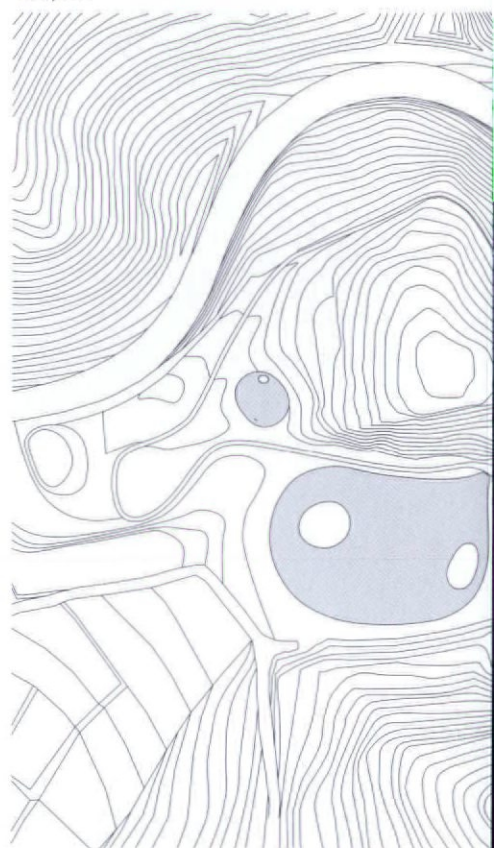
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From the air, the concrete curl of the museum resembles a giant water droplet

Right_ The concrete undulations merge with the surrounding topography

Below_ The building seems barely there

site plan






PEOPLE POOL UNDERNEATH THE OVAL OPENINGS, LAUGHING LIGHTLY AS SILVERY WATER SLIPS ACROSS THE FLOOR

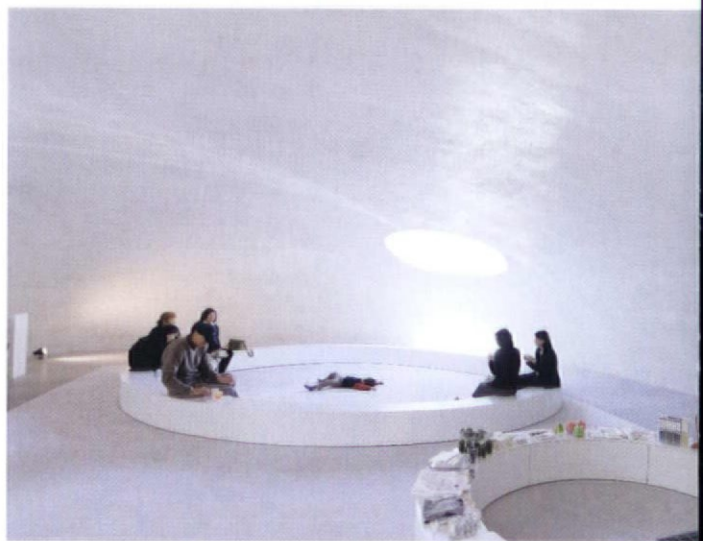
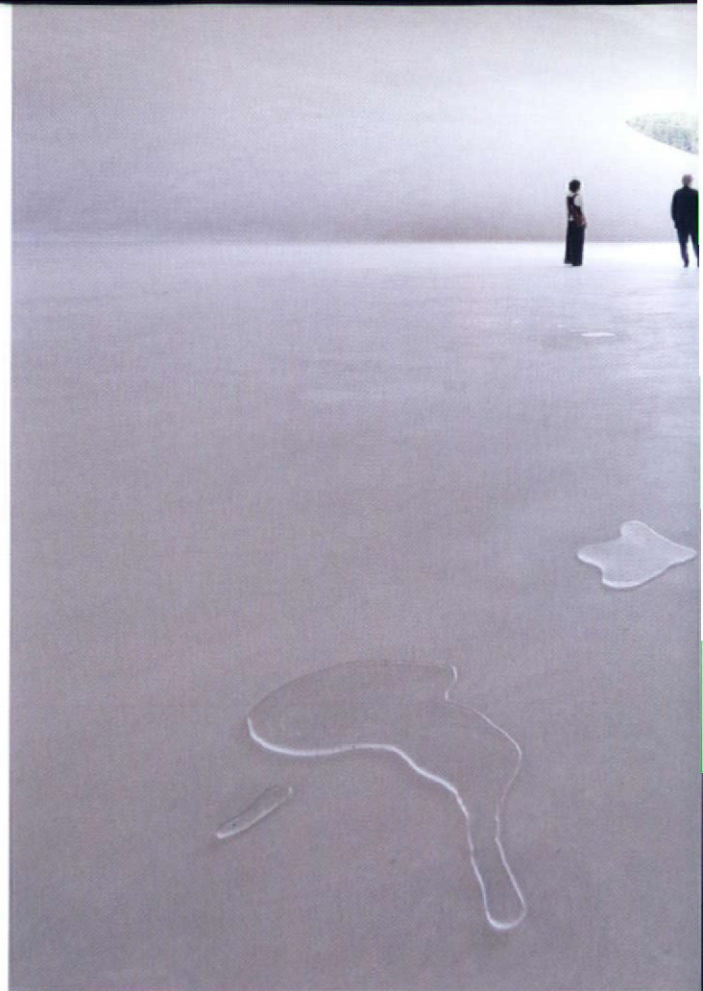
how to smoothly incorporate hard-edged architectural elements, such as windows, doors or handrails. At Teshima, he simply eschewed them, thanks to his relationship with a cooperative client: the Fukutake Art Museum Foundation, which has been developing Naoshima, and more recently, Inujima and Teshima, into international art centres. Edges, he also knew, would be an issue at the building stage. There are none: the concrete shell was poured continuously over 22 hours, set on a mortar-finished earth formwork, the corner between floor and wall concealed in a curl.

Even though the museum's initial intent had been to create a flexible space that could accommodate a range of artworks, it ended up housing a single, sublimely subtle installation by the artist Rei Naito, inspired by Nishizawa's architecture. Beads of water percolate here and there through pinholes in the floor, and then skim along its imperceptibly sloping surface. Droplets absorb droplets and puddles pick up speed,

racing one way or another until suddenly popping down a different hole. That's it. The scene is unbelievably engaging.

The landscape is also awfully forgiving. Two unglazed oval openings, both about 7m across on the long axis, introduce wind and rain within. They are the only source of light in the uninterrupted 1,958m² space. People pool underneath the oval openings, laughing lightly as silvery water slips snake-like across the floor. Enthralled, many simply sit at a dry spot, dotting the shoes-off surface.

Minimalism may at times be austere and off-puttingly erudite, but Nishizawa's 250mm thick slab of white cement arcs 4.5m high over a sensual, softly lit space that is winningly engaging, all the more surprising in its understated simplicity and small sense of scale. The museum is the best building that Japan has seen in many years and worth the effort it takes to arrive at these green slopes that overlook the Inland Sea, a long, long way from anywhere. 

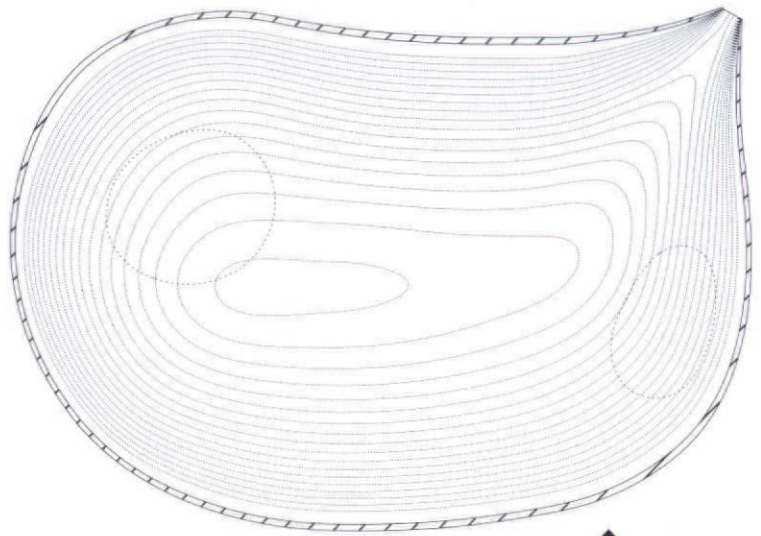


Top_ The museum is dedicated to Rei Naito's enigmatic installation. Water emerges from holes in the floor, gathers in small pools and then drains away
Above_ A secondary dome contains a shop and office
Right_ The curved concrete slab is a mere 250mm thick

ARCHITECT
SANAA
PROJECT TEAM
Ryue Nishizawa,
Kazuyo Sejima
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
Mutsuro Sasaki



long sections



ground floor plan



211

THE LONG ROOM HUB

LOCATION

DUBLIN, IRELAND

ARCHITECT

MCCULLOUGH MULVIN
ARCHITECTS

WRITER

CATHERINE SLESSOR

PHOTOGRAPHY

CHRISTIAN RICHTERS

The Long Room Hub is a tall, oblong casket of pierced stone that takes its place within the centuries old precincts of Trinity College Dublin. Inside the casket is a walnut-lined cabinet of spaces designed to inculcate a clubby, contemplative haven of study and refuge for humanities scholars. The area is an incubator of ideas and interaction for latter-day St Jeromes, who can retreat to the eyrie-like library or shoot the intellectual breeze in a series of elegantly appointed common rooms. Although this might appear to reinforce the familiar routines and atmospheres of academic self-containment and introspection, McCullough Mulvin Architects' thoughtful new building also connects both physically and experientially with the eclectic chessboard of the wider campus.

'It's a place of encounter for people who don't like to meet,' says Valerie Mulvin of McCullough Mulvin. But the nature of this encounter is not only personal and cerebral, it is also architectural, between a collection of buildings across different eras. McCullough Mulvin's offices are a stone's throw away from Trinity, and when the practice secured the commission to

design the Long Room Hub, it already had experience of adding to the college's historic continuum with the completion of the Ussher Library in 2003. The Ussher lies next to ABK's seminal 1967 Berkeley Library, and is just one fragment of dialogue in a complex articulation of epochal architectural and academic ambitions that have shaped the townscape around the green quad of Fellows Square. Occupying a site on the south-west corner of the square, the new Long Room Hub is the latest addition to a historically resonant sum of parts.

The original Long Room forms part of the Thomas Burgh Library, a solid and rhythmic Georgian range that presides, with paternalistic propriety, over the northern edge of Fellows Square. Among the Library's assets is the fabled Book of Kells, while the Long Room itself is one of Dublin's finest interiors, a space of imperious, Gormenghast grandeur stuffed with busts and bookcases. Redefining the idea of what a library should be in these changing digital times, McCullough Mulvin's Long Room Hub is an abstract, modern coda to centuries of acquisition and tradition. Part of its remit involves providing space for a team involved

in digitising the Library's collections of manuscripts and early printed books. It also contains research facilities for post-doctoral students, offices for visiting international fellows, seminar rooms, and spaces to host a regular flow of lectures, conferences, symposia and colloquia.

Tightly compacted within the civic nucleus of Dublin, Trinity has limited space for expansion. It's the familiar dilemma of historic city centre institutions. And while the college has proved an energetic patron of modern architecture, its new buildings must be able to finesse the demands of constrained sites and contextual mindfulness, yet still be able to speak of their time.

Armoured in a carapace of pale Galician granite, the Long Room Hub forms a four-storey bar on the northern edge of Fellows Square. Its exquisitely chiselled facades confront the cascading profile of ABK's 1978 Arts Building, while simultaneously bookending the squat, jewel-box volume of the octagonal 1937 Reading Room. The building 'sits riding sidesaddle', as Valerie Mulvin puts it, with its short end and piano nobile entrance addressing the edge of Fellows Square. Here, a popular pedestrian thoroughfare cuts through the college precincts, so the site is animated by the perpetual thrum of people coming and going.

Although the massive, honeycombed granite walls evoke the immemorial solidity of cliffs and towers, their geological heft is actually illusory. The building is held up by a bridge-like steel truss spanning 34m and supported on two concrete piers, one at each end of the plan. Employing a steelwork armature expedited and simplified construction; the building took a mere eight months to complete, with the stone and glass panels simply clipped on to the supporting frame.

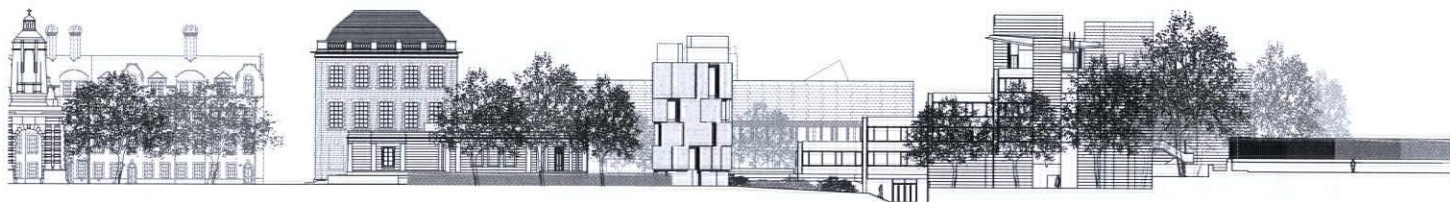
A sense of this deft sleight of structural hand can be apprehended in the way in which the syncopated stone panels, based on a modified Fibonacci sequence, float above —



**ARMOURED IN A CARAPACE OF
PALE GALICIAN GRANITE, THE
BUILDING IS A FOUR-STOREY
BAR ON FELLOWS SQUARE**

Previous page_
The new Long Room
Hub adds to the
historic continuum
of Trinity College
Opposite, top_
The building sits
sidesaddle to
Fellows Square
Opposite, bottom_
The cliff-like wall
bookends the
octagonal
Reading Room
Far right_
The building is a
casket of stone
pierced by light

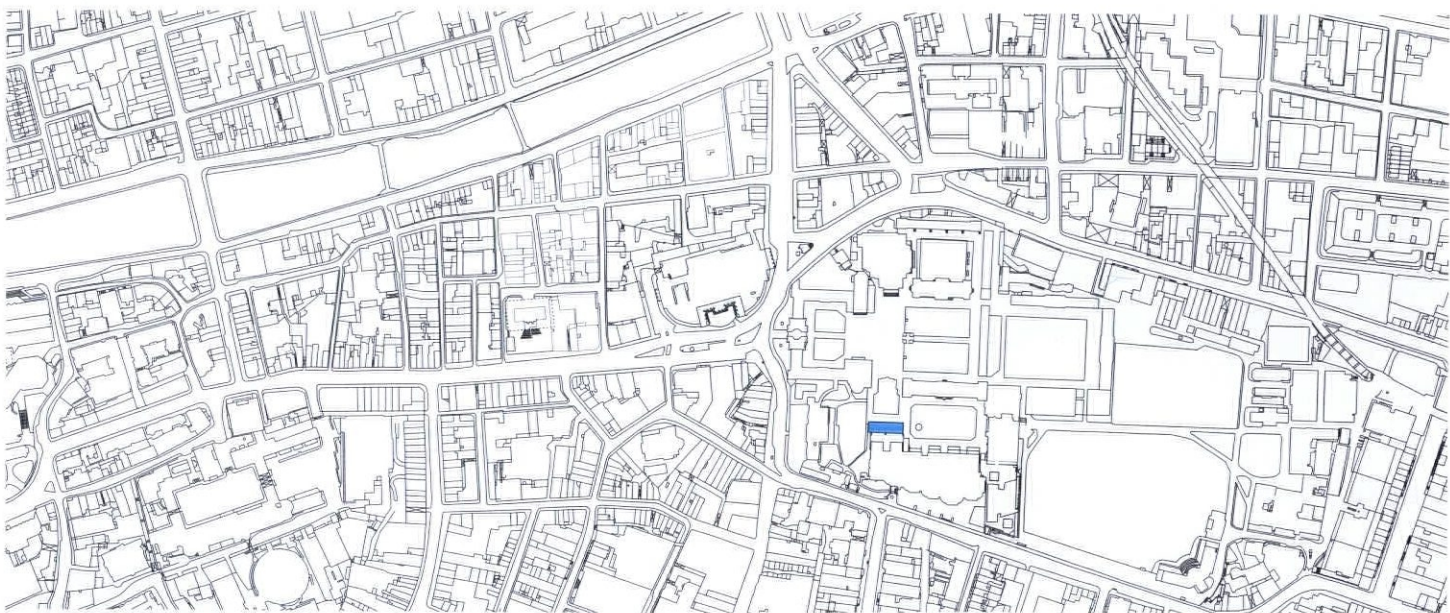
north-south site section



east-west site section

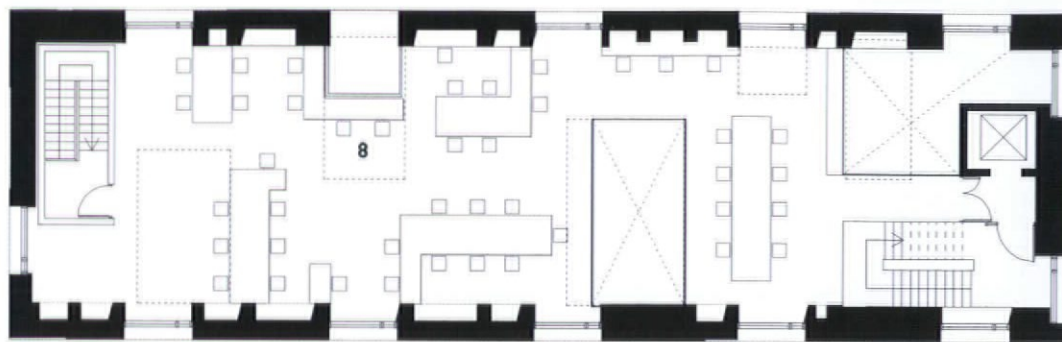


location plan

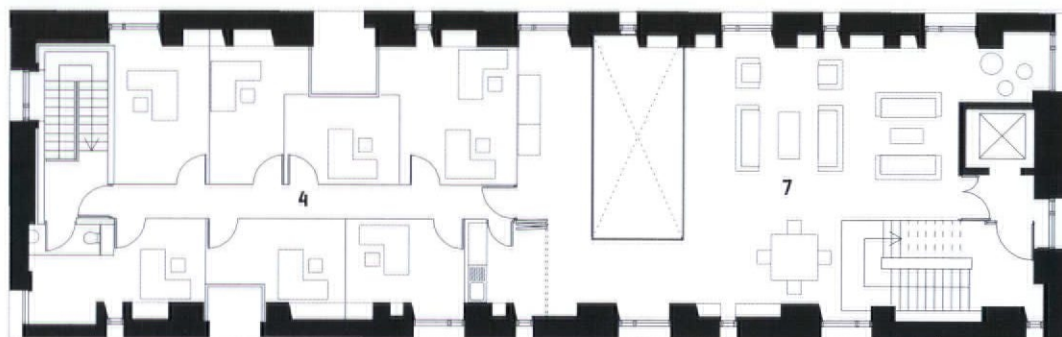




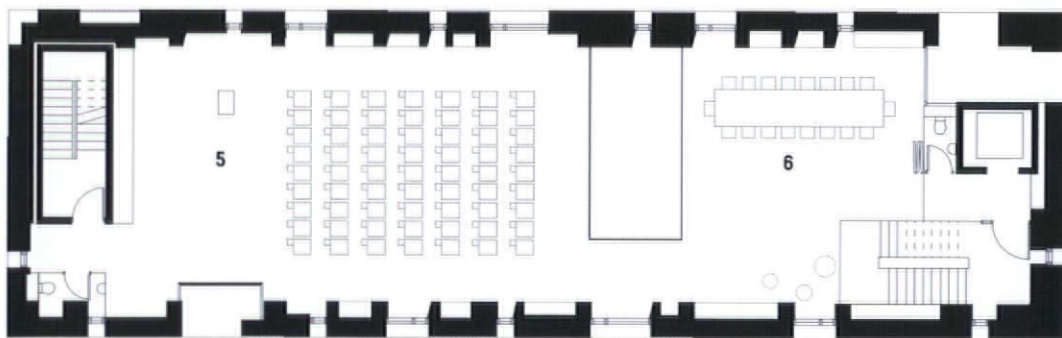
third-floor plan



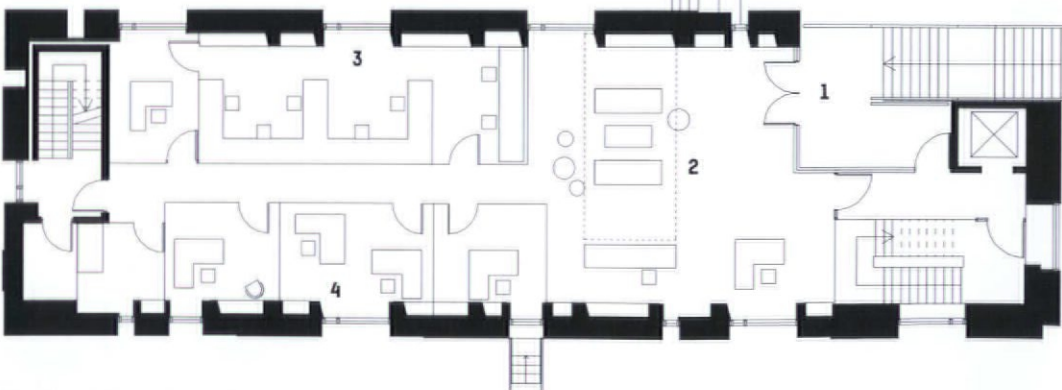
second-floor plan



first-floor plan

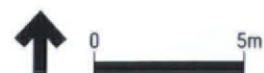


ground-floor plan

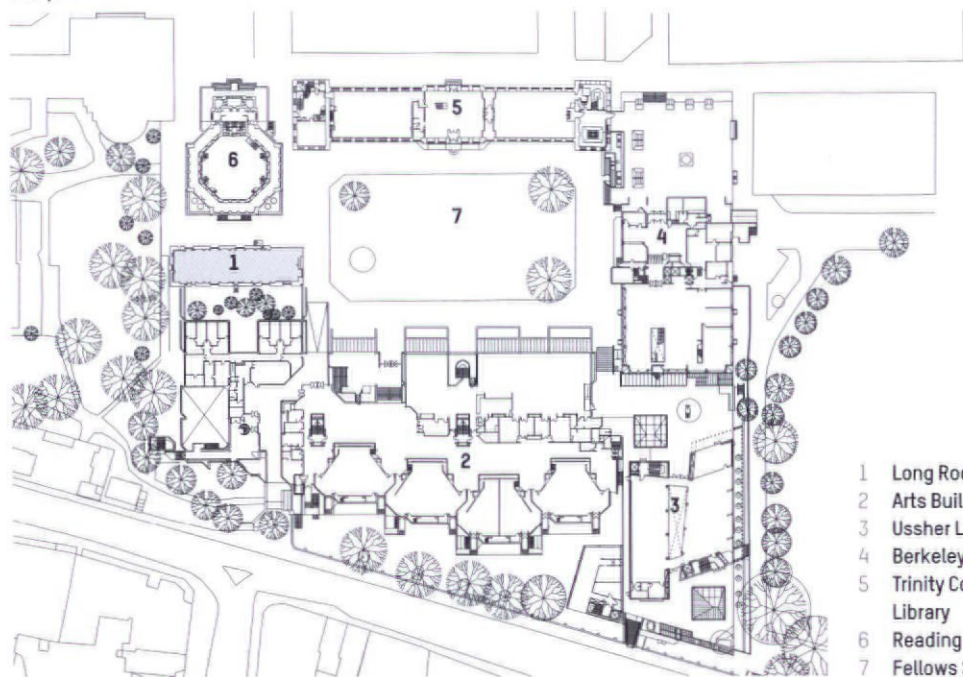


Opposite_ Although the building derives its presence from a sense of chiselled weight, this is illusory, since it is supported by a giant steel truss spanning 34m and supported on a massive pair of concrete piers

- 1 entrance
- 2 foyer
- 3 digitisation
- 4 offices
- 5 lecture theatre
- 6 seminar room
- 7 lounge
- 8 library

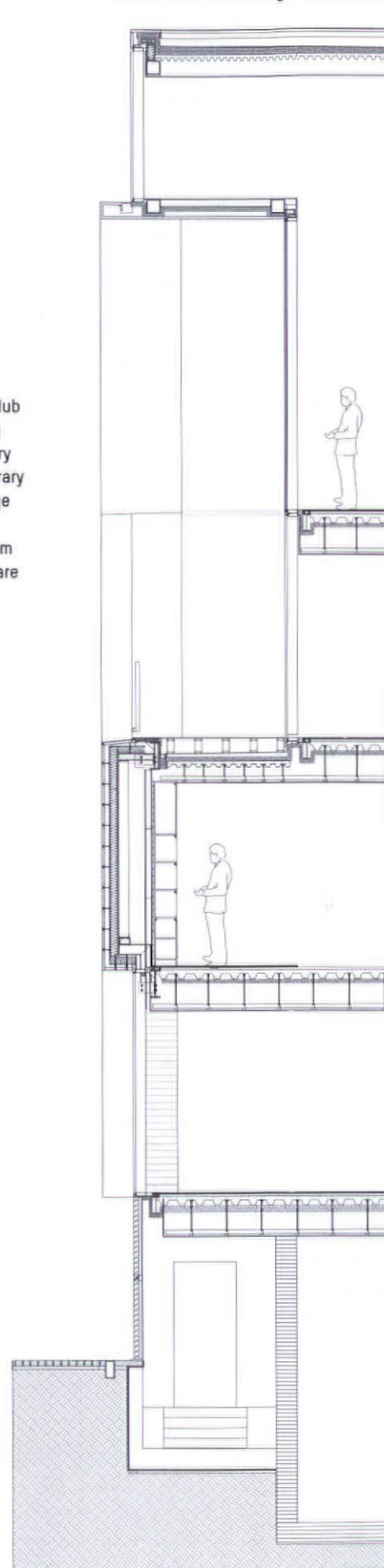


site plan



- 1 Long Room Hub
- 2 Arts Building
- 3 Ussher Library
- 4 Berkeley Library
- 5 Trinity College Library
- 6 Reading Room
- 7 Fellows Square

detailed section through external wall



**THE LONG ROOM HUB IS A
PARADOX: DARK YET LIGHT,
HERMETIC YET PERMEABLE,
RATIONAL YET ROMANTIC**


Right_ The library occupies a privileged eyrie on the topmost floor
Below, left_ Despite its hermetic external appearance, from inside the building feels rooted and connected with its surroundings
Below, right_ Fissures of light theatrically fracture the building's dark, walnut-lined interior



the entrance, as well as through odd internal glimpses of the steel guts popping out in places, like a ship's superstructure. Elegantly crafted balconies, shelves and seating are set within the depths of the thickened 'tower house' walls, so the external edge become used and inhabited.

For all the building's structural guile, the pervading impression is still that of a lyrical synthesis of mass and light, 'the weight and rude force of natural rock, hewn, fractured, a cliff split through with light holes,' as Valerie Mulvin describes it. Floorplates slide and shift, forming irregular fissures throughout the interior. Funnelling columns of light from a quasi-Venetian roofscape of cupolas, gazebos and chimneys, the fissures 'disturb expectations and create zones and double heights for work and research,' says Mulvin.

The insistent vertical penetration of such a relatively thin plan enhances spatial and social connections, making occupants acutely aware of what's going on elsewhere. Spaces vary enormously in size and type, from the monk-like office cells, to more gregarious lounges, seminar rooms, a lecture theatre and library. Exalted at the top of the building, the library is a lofty, honorific cockpit for scholars with fatally distracting views across the jumbled Dublin skyline.

The Long Room Hub is a compelling paradox: dark yet light, hermetic yet permeable, rational yet romantic. In adding another layer to Trinity's rich palimpsest it restates the relationship between town and gown while also drawing on the wider tradition of the Irish meeting house: an austere, classically derived building type where people came together for intellectual enlightenment or spiritual solace. Historically, the sobriety of the architecture mirrored a sense of collective purpose and this enquiring civic mindedness finds renewed expression in McCullough Mulvin's quietly intense drama of geometric geology fractured by light. 

ARCHITECT

McCullough Mulvin
Architects, Dublin

PROJECT TEAM

Valerie Mulvin, Niall
McCullough, Ruth
O'Herlihy, Coran O'Connor,
Declan Scullion, Jill
McGovern, Salah Affifi,
Des Cooper, Stuart Hart,
T. J. Hartnett, Leona
Roche, Maria Tarasouli

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

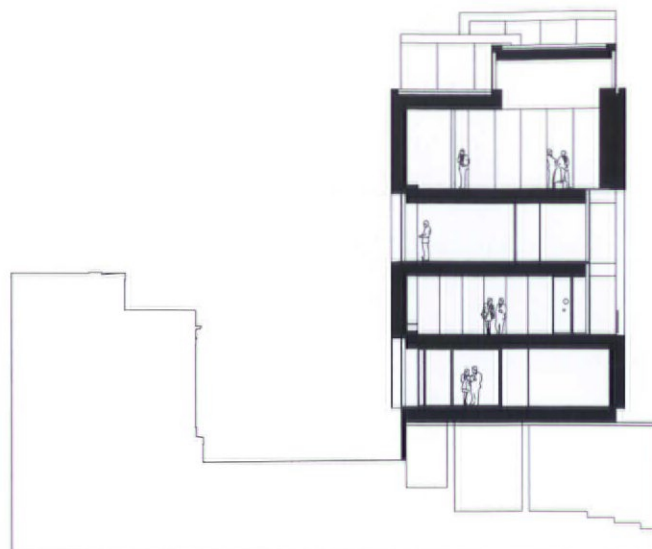
Punch Consulting

SERVICES ENGINEER

J. V. Tierney

FACADE CONTRACTOR

Duggan Systems



cross section



cross section



long section

212

DIE BESORGER OFFICES

LOCATION

STEYR, AUSTRIA

ARCHITECT

HERTL ARCHITEKTEN

WRITER

CATHERINE SLESSOR

PHOTOGRAPHY

PAUL OTT



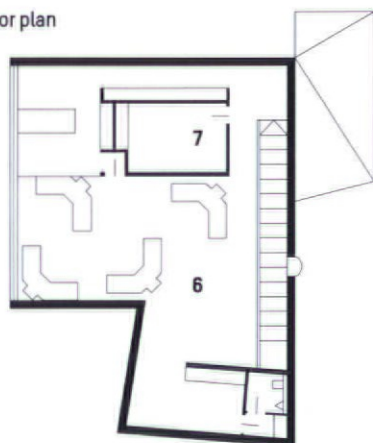


THE TOPOGRAPHIC PLANES OF BLACK RUBBER ADD A FRISSON TO THE MORE CONVENTIONAL TOWNSCAPE OF PITCHED ROOFS

Previous page_
The black rubber
clad roofscape is
studded with
globular rooflights
Above_ The hermetic
street presence
gives little clues as
to the building's
function
Below_ A ravine-like
stair leads up to
the open plan studio
on the first floor



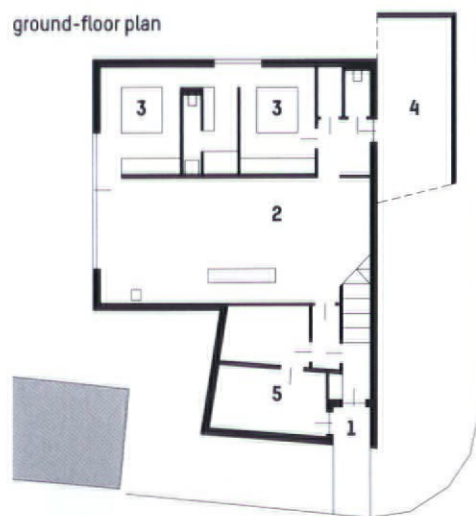
first-floor plan



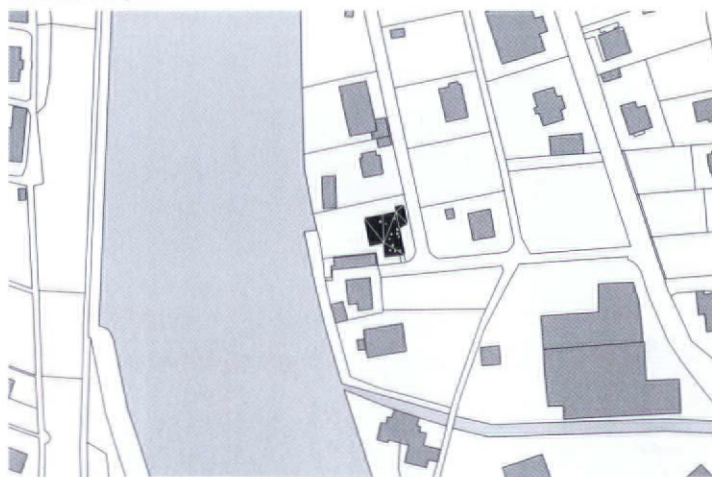
- 1 main entrance
- 2 living/dining/
kitchen
- 3 bedroom
- 4 car port
- 5 technical/
storage rooms
- 6 design studio
- 7 meeting room



ground-floor plan

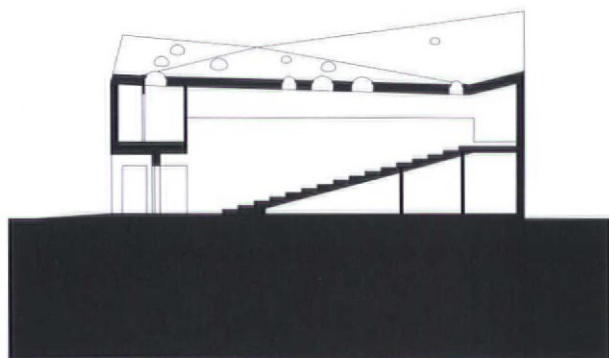


site/location plan

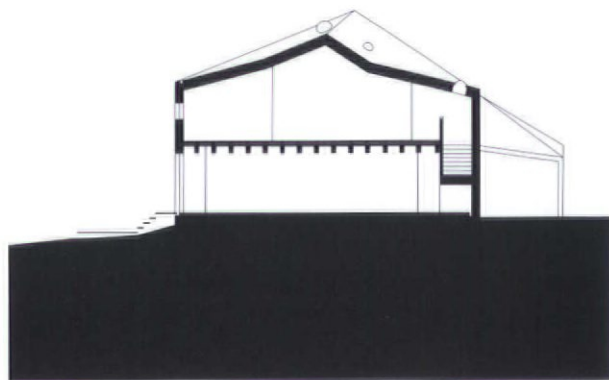




long section



cross section



Stealth bomber architecture comes to small town Austria in the form of a new office and apartment for Die Besorger, a design agency based in Steyr, Austria. Local practice Hertl Architekten wraps an angular assemblage of low-rise volumes in a homogenous skin of studded black rubber, dissolving boundaries between roof and walls to fashion an enigmatic, bunker-like addition to an ordinary residential neighbourhood.


The site lies on the bucolic edge of the Enns River, which winds languidly through the centre of Steyr. On its private western side, the building is gashed with glazing to take advantage of views through an old orchard down to the sedate sweep of the river. On the more public street facades, the black epidermis gives little away, pulled tightly around the crisply chiselled forms. Light percolates through a scattering of translucent domes of different sizes; the architects liken them to water droplets skidding over the impervious rubber surface.

Local planning regulations restricted the building volume to one-and-a-half storeys, so the roof

acts as a giant loft containing the design studio, with the apartment at ground level. The geometry of the roof gently twists and contorts in response to the height constraints, enclosing a dynamic, open-plan space softly illuminated by globular rooflights. Studded with fixing points like some kind of fetish upholstery, the topographic planes of black rubber add a contemporary frisson to the more conventional townscape of pitched roofs.

From the corner entrance on the ground floor, a narrow, ravine-like stair leads up to the design office. This moment of temporary compression climaxes in a sudden release as you arrive at the luminous loft of the studio. White walls and polished concrete floors reflect the light and underscore the pervasive aesthetic of elegant austerity.

Although the studio is essentially a single space, it is loosely structured by an enclosed box, which functions as a meeting room and a discussion area. The interior and exterior of the box are painted in a virulent lime green, which establishes a powerful visual focus and a physical anchoring point in the open-plan studio. 'Our architecture is atmospheric, fluctuating, fluent, logical and continuous,' says founding partner Gernot Hertl. 'We are concerned not merely with function, but with the mood and atmosphere of space.'

Occupied by one of the design agency's directors, the ground-level apartment is planned around a single living, dining and kitchen space. This connects with a large garden that slopes down to the riverside edge. Bedrooms are arranged along the north wall, with a technical room and storage compacted along the blind, south-facing street side. Altogether, the result is a deft and modern exercise in the sometimes tricky coupling of the live/work space. But the building also exhibits an undemonstrative lyricism in its approach to materials, response to context and handling of light. 

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PRINGIERS HOUSE

LOCATION

MIRISSA, SRI LANKA

ARCHITECT

TADAO ANDO ARCHITECTS

WRITER

ROB GREGORY

PHOTOGRAPHY

EDMUND SUMNER



Recent works by Japanese architect Tadao Ando featured in the AR showed something of a departure from his signature use of exposed concrete, with two projects of irregular form, cloaked in sheet steel (AR November 2005 and August 2007). Designed concurrently but finished a number of years later, this project for a house in Sri Lanka returns to a more familiar language of pristine exposed concrete, arranged to contain a series of protected courtyards and voids.

In an urban setting Ando would typically build a wall around the site to control and bring distinction to the relationship of inner and outer

realms, using tension between found and imposed geometries to create dynamically lit spaces. On this site, however, fewer constraints existed so the architect was free to compose a form that responded to key views and aspects of orientation.

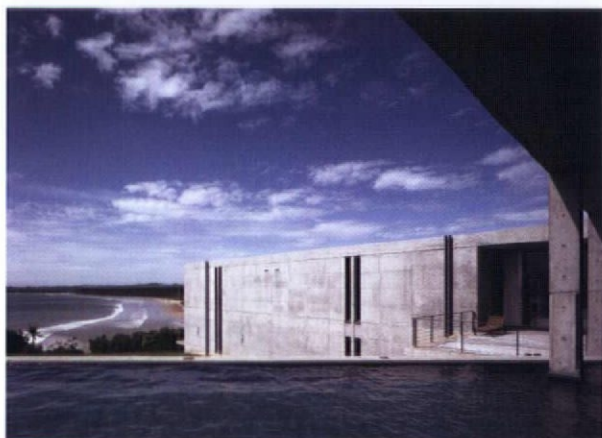
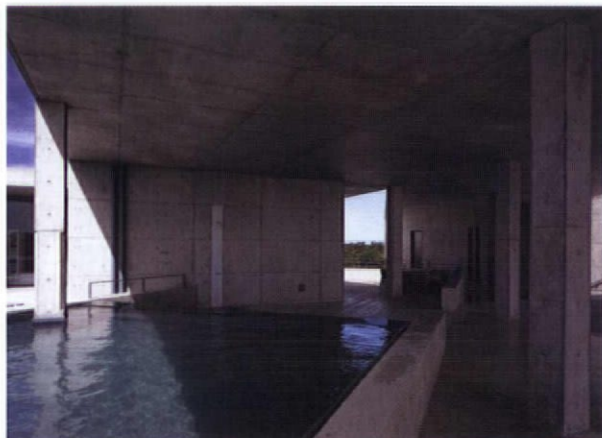
Remarkably, Ando never visited the site before construction and has not been there since its completion. He relied instead on the coordination skills of two long-term Japanese collaborators, Kiyoshi Aoki and Yukio Tanaka, who liaised with local firm PWA Architects. Ando describes his envoys as being of 'around retirement age', but 'still fit' and 'wanting to put their experience to good use'.

They teamed up with PWA founder Philip Weeraratne and his associate Ravindu Karunanayake, to ensure Ando's exacting standards were maintained, while also, according to Weeraratne, 'developing a partiality for Sri Lankan curry'. Checking progress and enjoying local cuisine, they made many trips to the remote coastal site. Described as one of the country's most spectacular places, it perches on cliffs above Mirrisa Beach on the southern tip of Sri Lanka, with panoramic views of the Indian Ocean.

The site was acquired by Belgian entrepreneur Pierre Pringiers, who came to Sri Lanka as a traveller, on which he got work in a local —



**YOU MAY ASK, PRECISELY HOW
ACCURATE DO YOU NEED TO BE
WHEN WORKING WITH SUCH
A STUNNING PANORAMA**



Previous page_
Poised on a wooded
cliff, the house
exploits its
commanding setting
Left_ Ando's precise
geometry is grafted
on to the landscape
Far left, top_ A long
pool penetrates
the interior
Far left, bottom_
Stupendous views
animate every turn
Bottom_ The house
resembles an ocean
liner, with an airy
promenade deck

factory. After a while, he started his own factory, manufacturing solid rubber tyres. The fruits of his enterprise are clear to see in the scale and quality of this home. But he is also known to be generous with his wealth and time. Described by Weeraratne as a philanthropist, he has made a significant contribution to the local economy by leading the post-Asian tsunami recovery initiative in 2004.

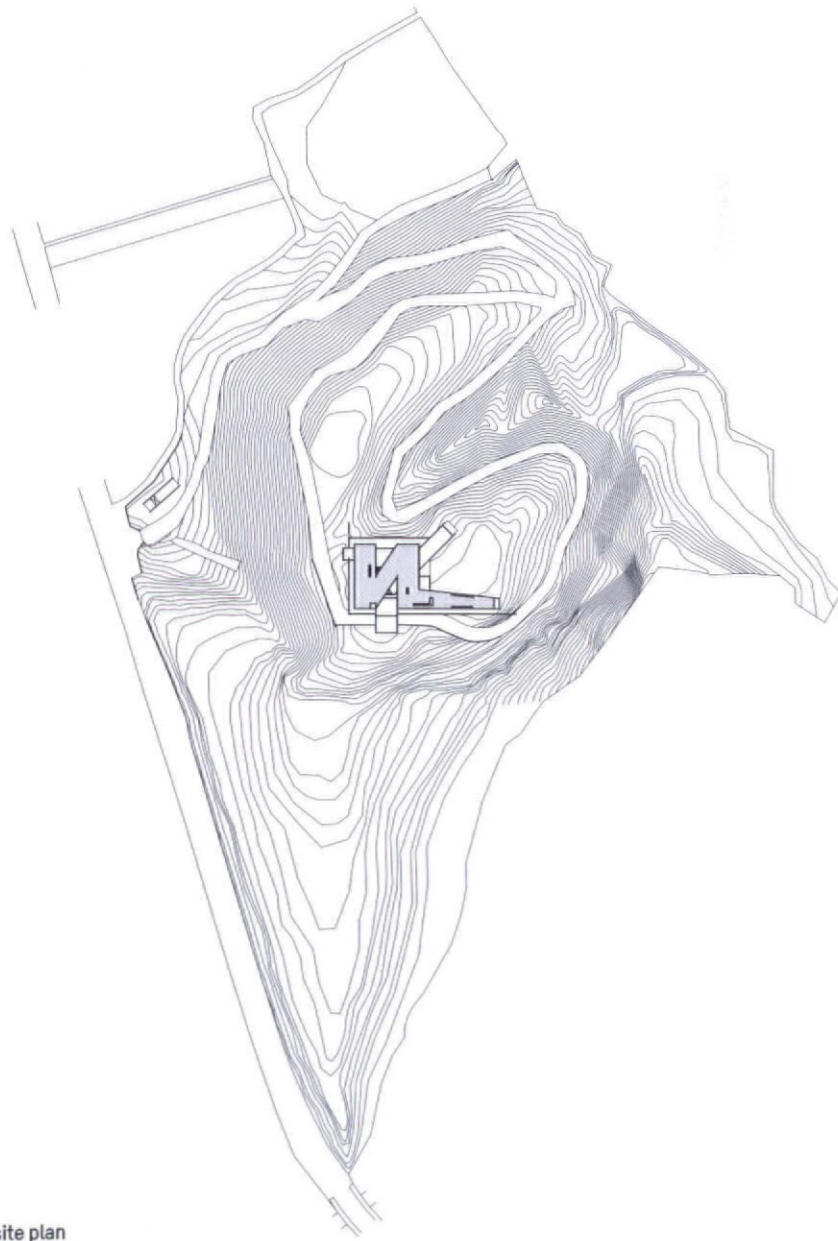
He has launched programmes such as the Building a Future Foundation, which develops the practical skills of local workers, training them in boat-building crafts for tourism and fishing-related

activities. The house was a gift to his wife Saskia Pintelon, a respected artist, who chose Ando as her preferred architect shortly before the natural disaster struck.

The impact of the Asian tsunami and the subsequent civil unrest is thought to account for Ando's reluctance to visit the country. Instead, Weeraratne and his team, including representatives from the concrete subcontractor, who had to produce mock-ups before being awarded the contract, all travelled to Japan to experience Ando's work. After this meeting, the Japanese office issued a simple set of drawings, before the Sri Lankan team set about

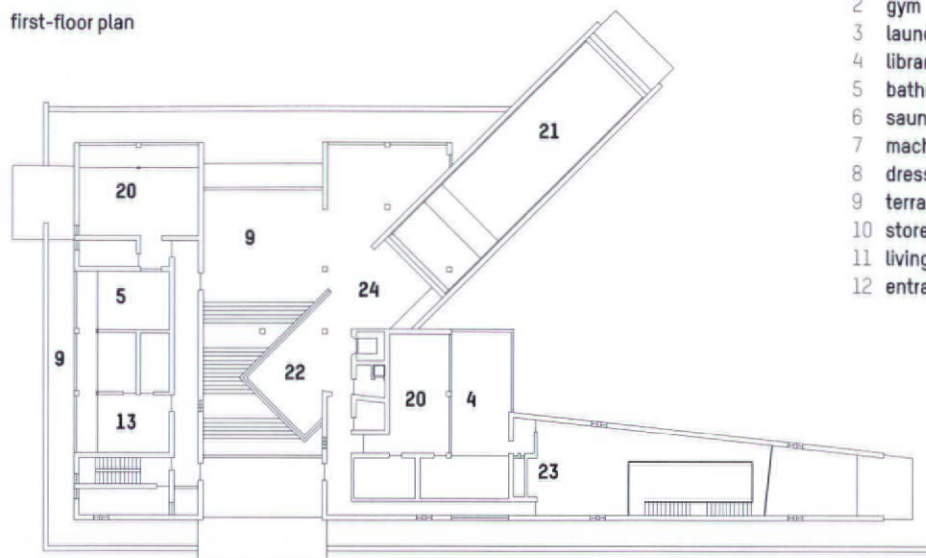
producing nearly all the detailed drawings for construction. Being only in their early thirties when the project began, they learnt a huge amount. Weeraratne describes the design process as the equivalent to 'doing a doctorate', taking him out of his comfort zone by re-establishing geometrical proportions and exacting standards of detail as key priorities. 'Ando was a hero of mine,' he recalls. 'As a student I would have done anything to work with him, so this was the fulfilment of my foolish teenage dreams.'

Accommodation is arranged into three wings that lock into a central courtyard and a grand stair. —



site plan

first-floor plan

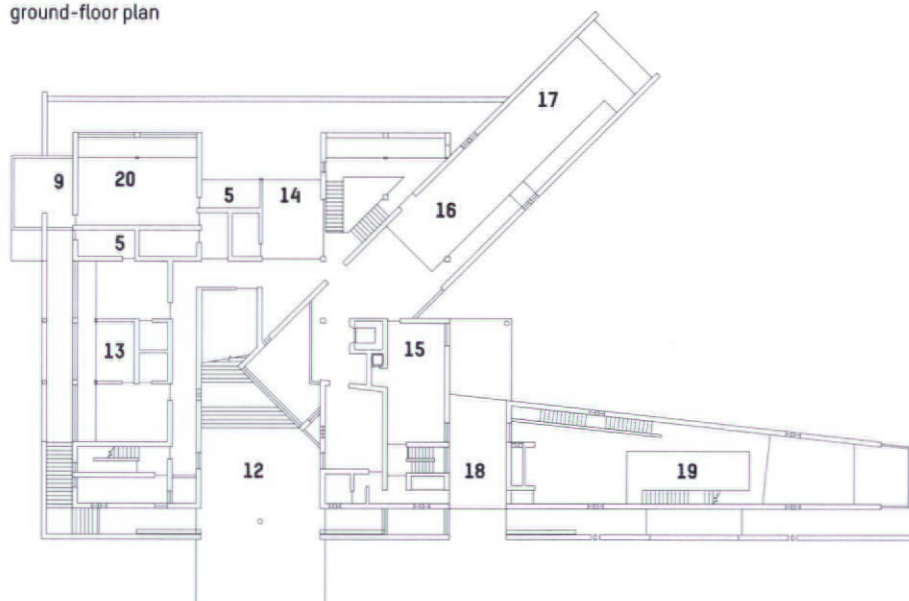


- 1 staff quarters
- 2 gym
- 3 laundry
- 4 library
- 5 bathroom
- 6 sauna
- 7 machine room
- 8 dressing room
- 9 terrace
- 10 store
- 11 living room
- 12 entrance court

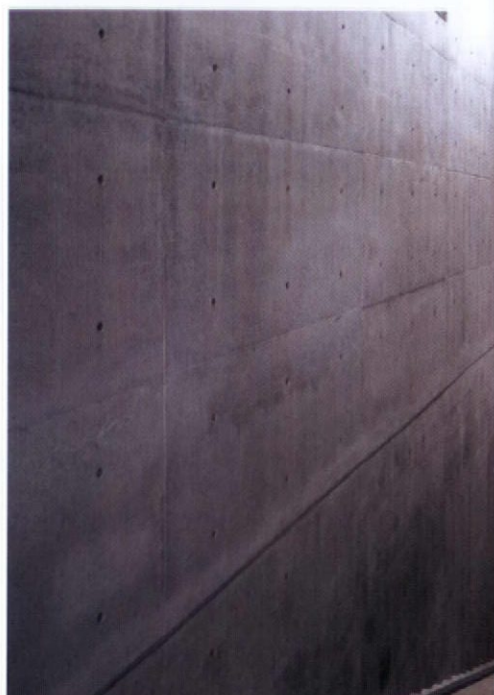
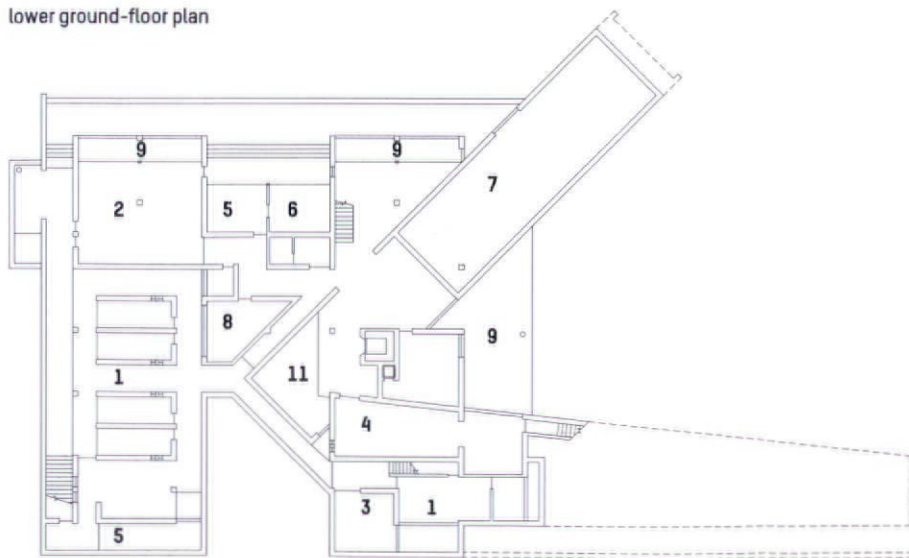
- 13 guest quarters
- 14 study
- 15 kitchen
- 16 lounge
- 17 dining room
- 18 service entrance
- 19 studio
- 20 bedroom
- 21 pool
- 22 pool deck
- 23 gallery
- 24 shower

Below_ Detail of concrete walls in the artist's studio
Bottom_ Natural light washes down the bare walls
Bottom right_ The level of construction and detailing reflects Ando's exacting standards

ground-floor plan



lower ground-floor plan



ARCHITECT

Tadao Ando Architects
& Associates, Osaka

PROJECT TEAM

Kiyoshi Aoki,
Yukio Tanaka

ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS

Philip Weeraratne &
Ravindu Karunanayake,
PWA Architects

Rising up to the piano nobile, to the left of the stair is a bedroom wing. To the right, at 90° is the studio and gallery wing that tapers as it extends into the surrounding landscape. And cutting across, at 45° is a lower two-storey wing, which contains a double-height living and dining room, complete with rooftop swimming pool and cantilevered terrace, which looks back over the stair.


In the knuckle between the studio and the living rooms is a service core that holds the kitchen and ancillary spaces. This area includes a master suite on the upper level and a service entrance that

separates the artist's studio from the domestic quarters that occupy the ground floor.

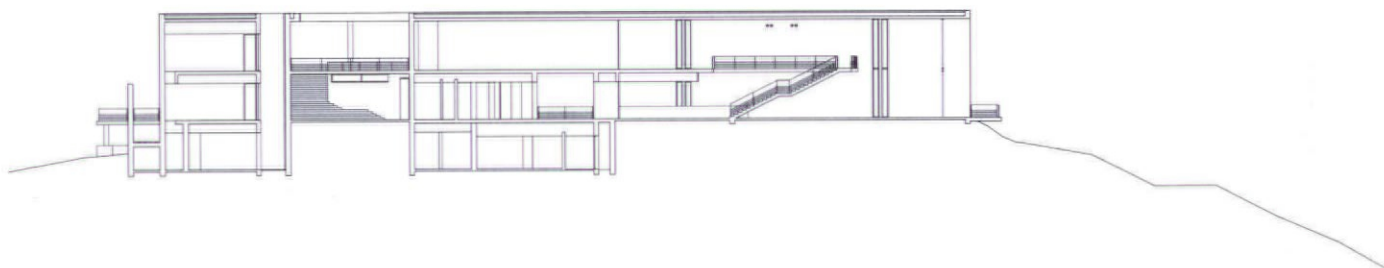
The studio is described by Weeraratne as the grandest of all spaces, being the most 'characteristic of Ando's use of light on plane'. He could not avoid mentioning the gadget, which takes the form of the 6m x 6m window at the end of the dining room that smoothly drops down into the basement void below to open up the interiors to one of Ando's framed views.

Weeraratne applauds Ando's ability to capture the scenery so well, stating that 'what amazed me most was what a true master Ando was.

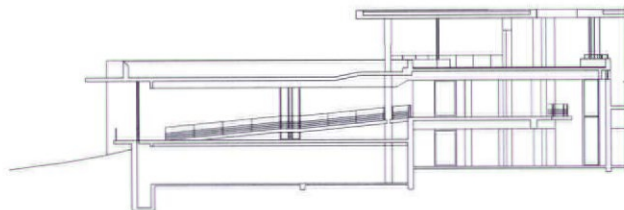
He had not even visited the site, yet was able to be so precise with positioning views. That is the evidence of years of practice.' Taking a more objective stance, however, you may ask, precisely how accurate do you need to be when working with such a stunning panorama.

Nevertheless, Weeraratne's respect for his master is palpable, and the experience has been rewarding for all. When asked if this project has influenced later work, he concedes that 'not everyone can afford to spend five times the normal price on a home, but what this process has given us is a proven reputation for being able to produce high-quality work'. 

long section



cross section



214

ANNA SEGHERS SCHOOL

LOCATION

BERLIN, GERMANY

ARCHITECT

AFF ARCHITEKTEN

WRITER

SEBASTIAN REDECKE

PHOTOGRAPHY

HANS-CHRISTIAN SCHINK

Passers-by probably have no idea that behind the ornate brick facade of the Anna Seghers School in Berlin's Adlershof district lies a modern architectural jewel. Even when seen from the school's internal courtyard, this addition by AFF Architekten merges discreetly into its surroundings. The building was required by the comprehensive school to accommodate all classes up to the *Abitur* level (German final school certificate), but architecturally it has little to do with the more imposing original complex.

In its modest, two-storey scale, the building has more in common with the school's heterogeneous surroundings: rows of small houses, workshops, sheds and summer houses. With its elongated form, the addition resembles a narrow alley leading to the north of the site. To the east, a well-sheltered courtyard opens out to nearby allotment gardens.

Only on a second glance do you notice that at the back of the spacious

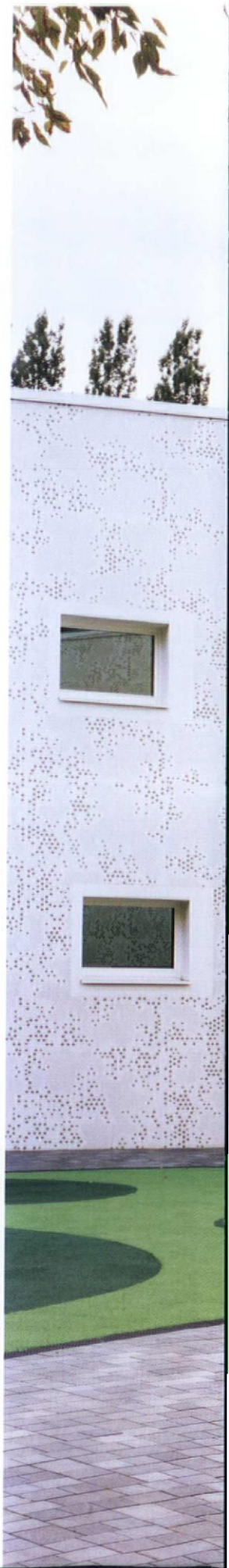
schoolyard is a large cantilevered part of the extension with a huge window on to the teachers' staffroom. This serves as a cockpit or a lookout platform, from where the routes around the school buildings and playground can all be surveyed. The cantilever protects the main entrance tucked underneath.

Inside the new building a totally different world exists. From floor to ceiling, a bright, almost fluorescent yellow suffuses the space. Minimal black details catch the eye, along with graphic animal symbols designed for the classroom doors. Break-time benches of fixed seating and double handrails on the staircases are also picked out in black. Everything else is finished in yellow and, after a while, your eyes become surprisingly used to this dazzling, monochrome environment. The children certainly seem to relish the space.

The internal planning is simple, with a series of rooms contained in the two-cornered building form,

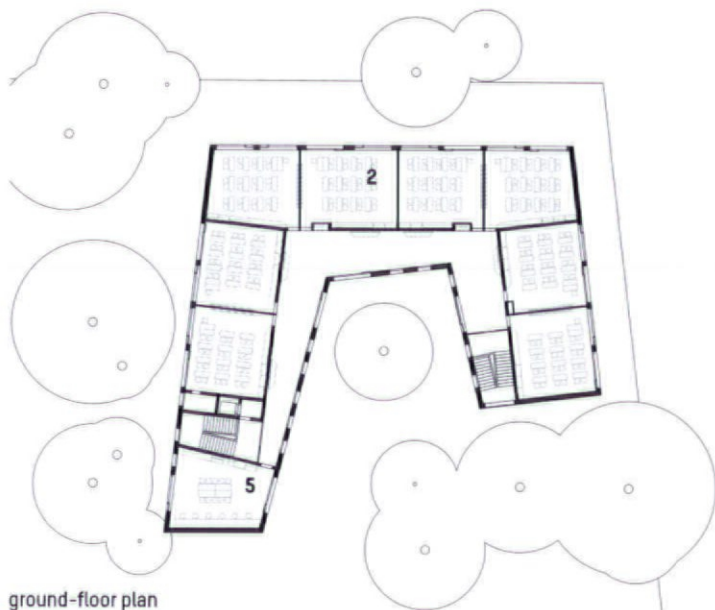
which tapers at both ends. Almost all the classrooms are square, defined by two types of large windows with fixed glazing and narrow frames, set into the external wall to provide generous internal sills. These two window types form a ribbon on the north facade. Side ventilation louvres are enclosed by external panels of decoratively perforated metal cladding. The facade is also articulated by an array of smaller openings set at alternating heights for adults or children.

The yellow extends into the upstairs corridors and individual classroom cloakrooms. Curtains across these cloakroom areas are made of washable Tyvek plastic. The architects first discovered this material during a trip to Sweden, where it is more commonly used as a camouflage for military vehicles in snow. They were impressed by its robust structure, which also fulfils fire-protection requirements, so decided to use it in the school. —

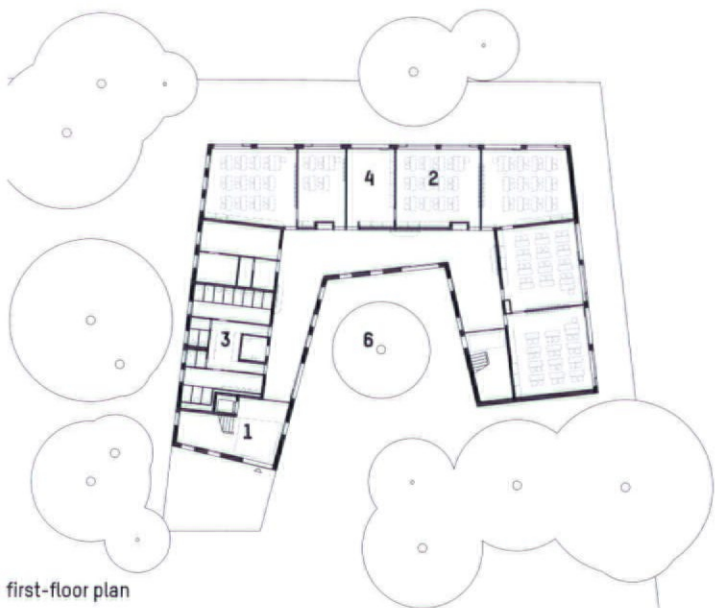




THE SURFACE ANIMATION GIVES THIS BUILDING A SENSE OF BEING WRAPPED IN A DELICATE, PERFORATED CARAPACE



ground-floor plan




first-floor plan

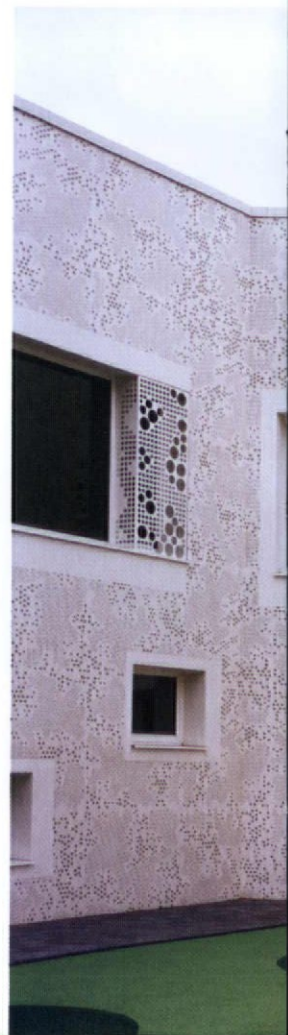
- 1 entrance
- 2 classrooms
- 3 washrooms
- 4 library
- 5 computer room
- 6 play courtyard



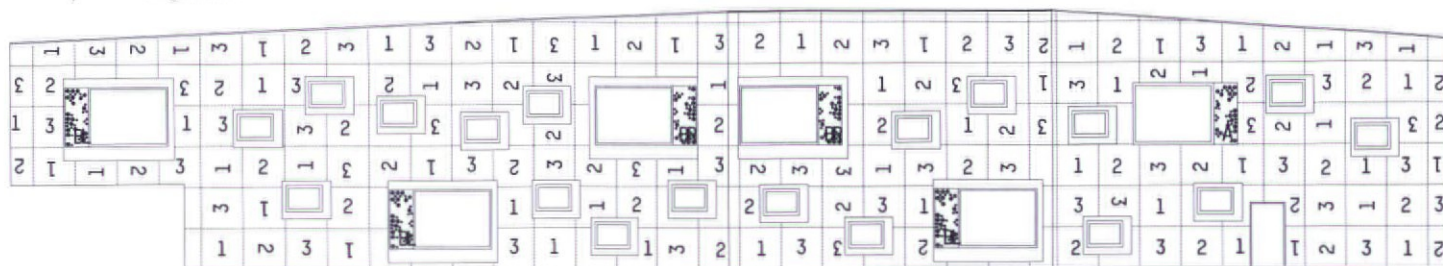
The moiré effect on the curtain is the result of overlapping two spot patterns of different diameters: the larger pattern is perforated and the smaller one printed. The surface animation is carried through to the external facade and gives this building a sense of being wrapped in a delicate, perforated carapace.

Templates were used to spray colour directly on to the cheap plaster finish of the insulation-clad walls. By carefully varying the abstract pattern across the walls, a unified whole has been achieved, bringing a lightness and playfulness to the architecture, which suits its young users. The theme of percolation also extends to the ceilings in the corridors.

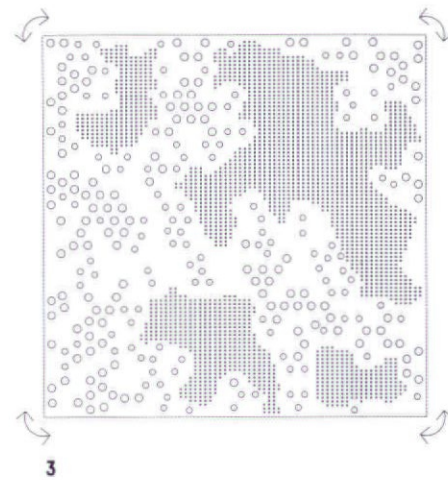
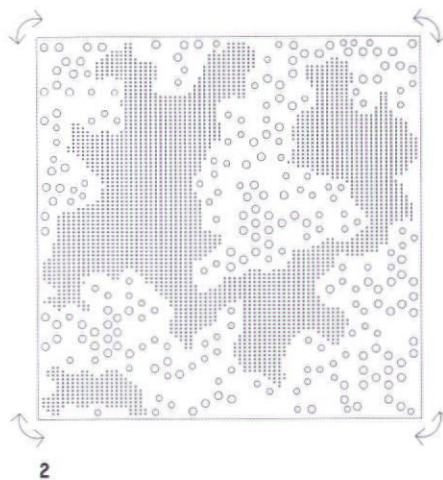
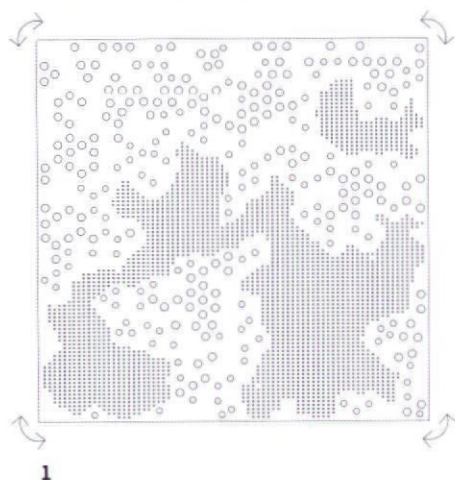
The children identify with the strong character of the building's design, in which there is always something fresh to discover. All this has been achieved at a budget of €2.9 million, satisfying all energy-saving building regulations. 



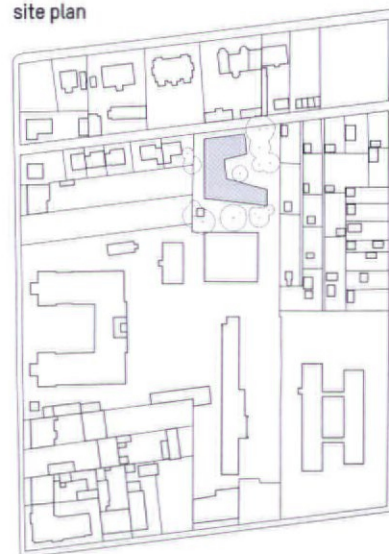
facade panel arrangement



detail of facade panel types



site plan



Previous page_
The school's two
wedge-shaped
wings enclose a
central play area
Left, top_ The new
building sits in a

bucolic, suburban
landscape of
allotments
Left_ Three type of
perforated panels
create the delicately
patterned facade

**INSIDE A DIFFERENT WORLD
EXISTS. A BRIGHT, ALMOST
FLUORESCENT YELLOW
SUFFUSES THE SPACE**





Far left_ Cloakroom
curtains are made
from Tyvek plastic,
more usually
employed as Arctic
military camouflage
Left_ Circulation
spaces are drenched
in a zinging yellow
Below_ Typical
classroom

ARCHITECT

AFF Architekten

INTERIOR LIGHTING

Trilux

WASHROOM FITTING

Grohe

DOOR FITTINGS

FSB



215

**HOUSING FOR
THE ELDERLY**

LOCATION

**ALCÁÇER DO SAL,
PORTUGAL**

ARCHITECT

AIRES MATEUS

WRITER

MATTHEW BARAC

PHOTOGRAPHY

FERNANDO GUERRA



■ We are not as young as we used to be, on average, and we are getting older still. Medical advances and increasingly cautious lifestyles mean that we all live longer and in better health than previous generations. Life expectancies have improved dramatically – in Portugal by some eight years since the 1980s, and over half of babies born today in Europe will live to 100 or more. These demographic transformations are placing unprecedented demands on society, on the economy, and on the supply of housing. Aspirations are rising too. Conventionally limited to a choice of options depending on needs and resources, between sheltered accommodation, retirement bungalows, or an old people's home, the existing housing model for this sector feels outdated.

Designed by architects Aires Mateus for charity Santa Casa da Misericórdia, a Portuguese national organisation with a 500-year history, this residence for older people with moderate care needs in the rural town of Alcácer do Sal, 95 km south of Lisbon, draws on the well-established Christian practice of good works, but in the context of the emerging 'grey generation'.

The proportional rise of the elderly has been accompanied by other profound social changes. Many of us are no longer willing (or able) to care for our ageing relatives, even in the countryside where the integrity of the extended family is less under siege than in urban areas. Traditional rural communities lose many in their twenties to the bright lights of the city, only to be replaced by weekenders and tourists who see village life as a diversion. The agenda for social intervention is thus not just about providing housing, but also about fostering mutual support and respect at the scale of the wider neighbourhood.

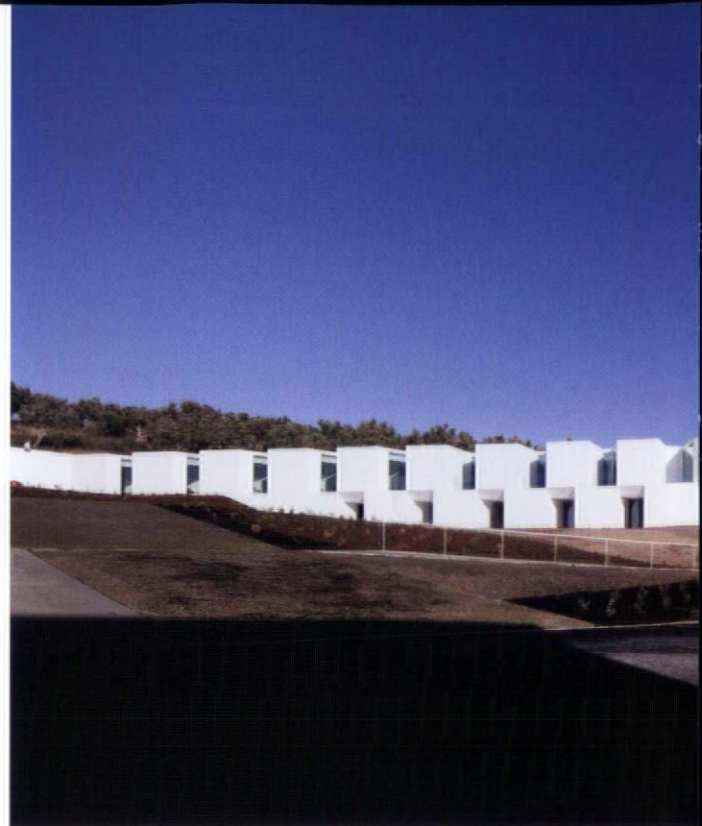
Appreciating the role of community networks is a vital precondition to producing satisfactory housing for this age group, especially for those who are

socially vulnerable as well as old. Effective local connections, and access to services and transport, are vital to keeping isolation at bay. Many older people experience loneliness as a matter of routine, often feeling confined at home. If housing can reassert their role in society, and respect their wish to participate in everyday activities, it will contribute to their wellbeing.

This building is nothing if not assertive. Its blinding whiteness and sharp-edged modernity stand proud against the rustic charm of Alcácer do Sal, a medieval settlement topped by a Moorish castle built on the ruins of sixth-century Roman fortifications. A bend in the Sado River pins the town down between south-facing hills to the north and east, and flat plains to the south. Less than 10 minutes' walk up the rise, Aires Mateus has strung 38 bedrooms together to form a geometric serpent coiled against the slope, apparently emerging from the hillside. The powerful cuboid forms and rhythms have echoes of an earlier and subsequently unbuilt project for a hotel in Dublin (AR April 2005), but clearly this is designed for a very different clientele.

Adding to a piecemeal group of charity and healthcare facilities including a medical centre, the building delineates a protected shared landscape between them. In so doing it organises the entire site, yet it avoids turning the existing loose-fit cluster into a campus. The attenuated new architecture is so clearly different that its scale does not compete with its neighbours. Instead, it acts as a backdrop to the life of the complex, just as it hogs centre stage.

Rising three storeys high at its west-facing head, the building zigzags its way into the scrubby topography with the flat roof forming a hillside patio at its tail. In contrast to the jaunty plan, the elevations are governed by strict right angles. White rendered rooms are stacked unevenly, like balanced sugar cubes (or —



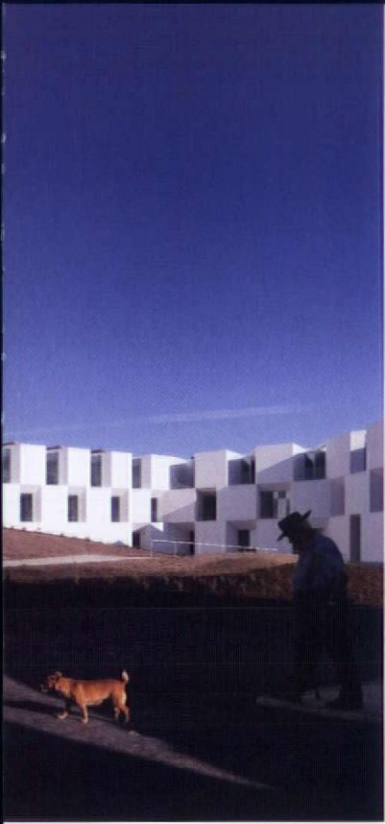
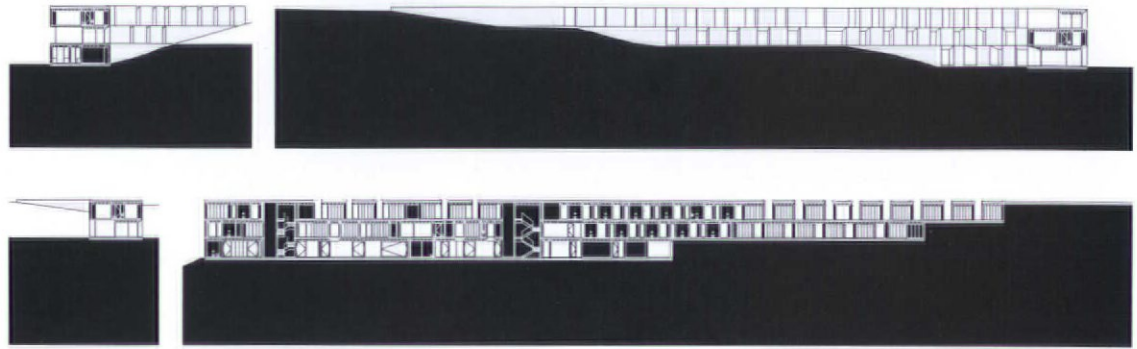
site plan

Previous page_ White rendered rooms are unevenly stacked like sugar cubes
Above_ The geometric serpent in the landscape

Right_ The new building is a powerful abstraction of the solidity, simplicity and whiteness of traditional Iberian architecture

**ITS BLINDING WHITENESS AND
SHARP-EDGED MODERNITY STAND
PROUD AGAINST THE RUSTIC
CHARM OF ALCÁCER DO SAL**

long sections



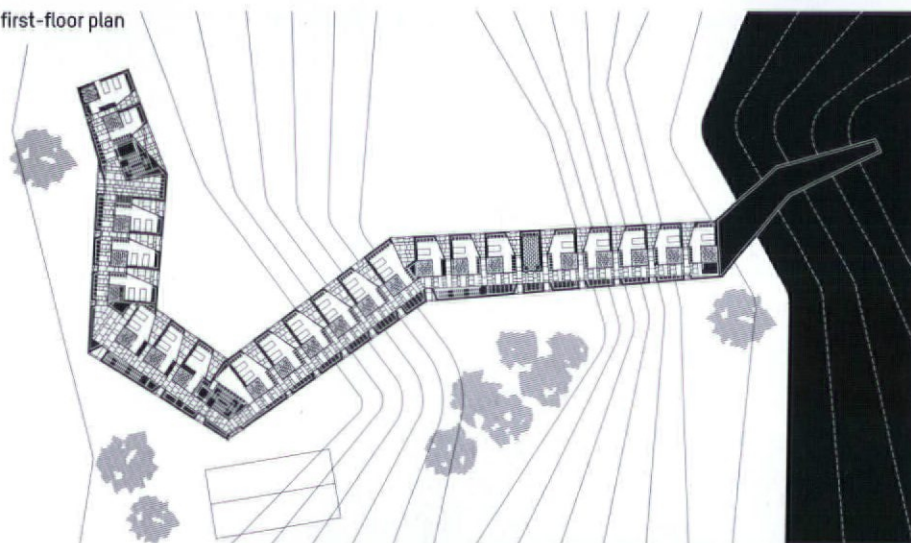
squared-off salt crystals, recalling the age-old salt production that accounts for the 'sal' in the name of the town). Wedge-shaped recessed balconies between the rooms extend the interior into welcome shade. Each balcony reads as a gap, creating a 'grandma's teeth' effect in the rhythmic facade. The generous gesture of associating this much semi-enclosed outdoor space with each bedroom will combat any sense of being trapped by the limitations that come with age.

The entire ground floor is given over to communal rooms: a dining room, a lounge and an atelier that can be used for group activities or meetings. Large, some of them dramatically large, hinged glass doors swing out through deeply recessed openings on to the shared landscape, enhancing the reading of the building as an inhabited wall. Skilfully manipulated shadows animate the rectilinear composition, throwing grey diagonals across the elevations. Sloping soffits at openings and oblique bedroom balcony walls combine to create a false perspective that heightens the theatricality of the architecture.

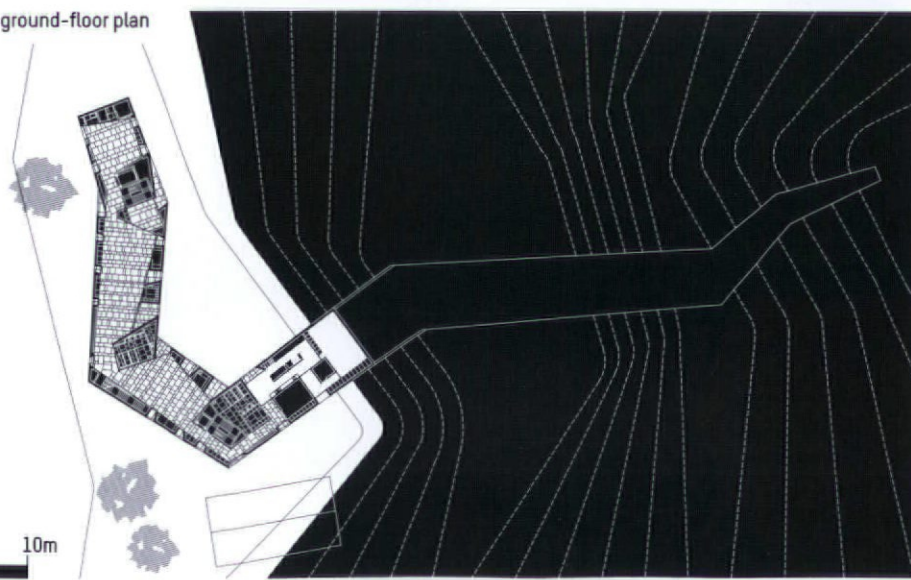
The matter-of-fact interior continues the playful monotone palette, bringing light into the plan through pockets of double-height space, pale veined marble floors and speckled acoustic ceilings. Widening at intervals to form impromptu living areas, the upper-level corridors are punctuated by full-height windows that provide a visual cadence to movement. The effect slows everything down to an unhurried tempo, in keeping with the lifestyles of the residents. This subdued pace, together with the insistent whiteness of everything, reinforce the institutional sensibility of the building, yet it is an appropriately dignified sensibility. Rather than attempting to reproduce the diverse ways that individuals make and shape their own homes, Aires Mateus has reinterpreted the home as a collective endeavour.



first-floor plan



ground-floor plan

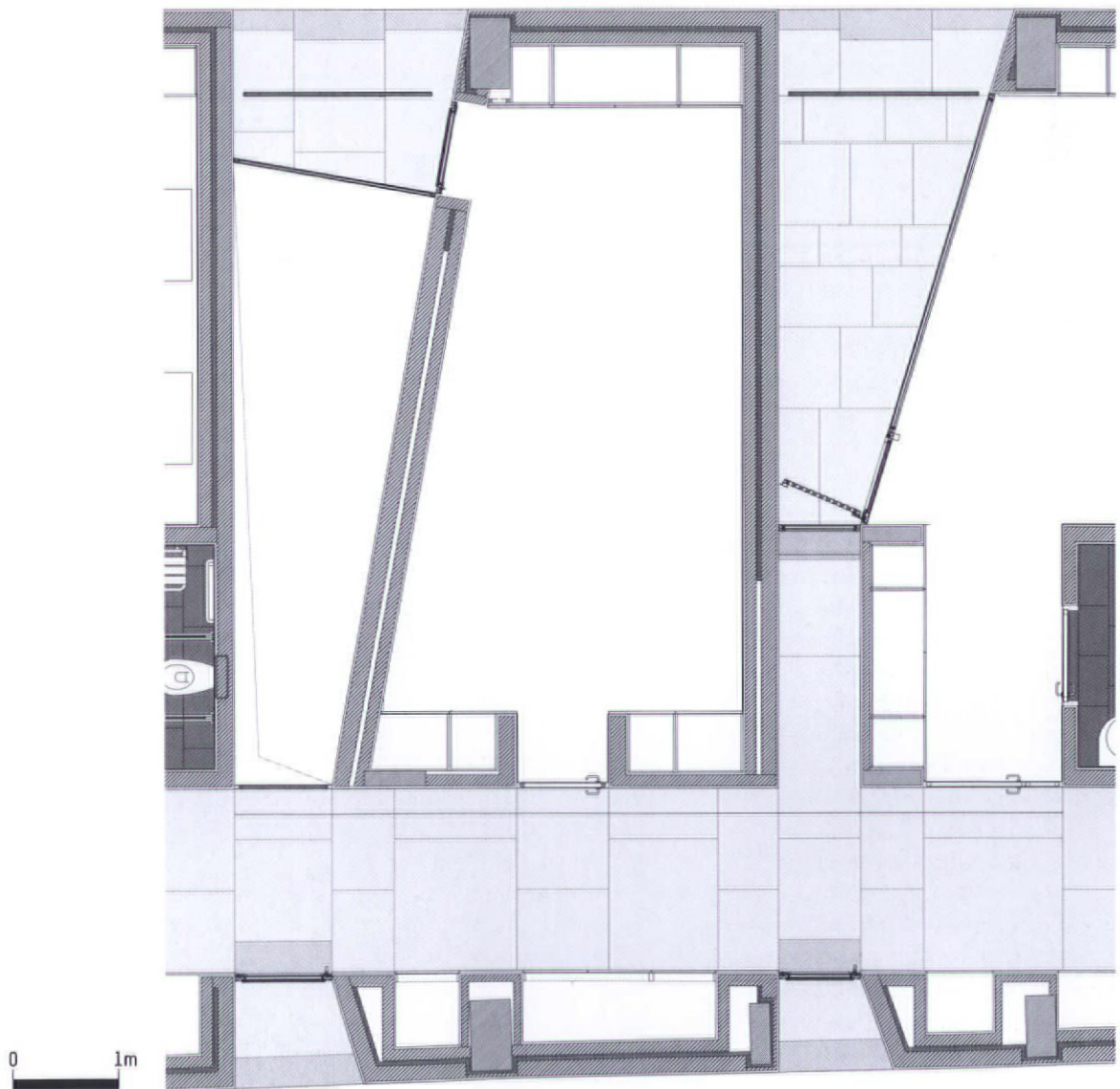


THE INTERIOR CONTINUES THE
PLAYFUL MONOTONE PALETTE,
BRINGING LIGHT INTO THE PLAN
THROUGH POCKETS OF SPACE



detailed plan

Above left_ Pale
veined marble floors
and speckled
acoustics ceilings
dominate the
internal palette
Above right_ Pockets
of double-height
space amplify
natural light



THEORY

IN THE AUTOPOIESIS OF ARCHITECTURE, PATRIK SCHUMACHER INTRODUCES A NEW UNIFYING THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE. PETER BUCHANAN DECODES, DISSECTS AND WEIGHS UP SCHUMACHER'S ARGUMENTS

Patrik Schumacher combines teaching and theorising with practice. A PhD who studied philosophy as well as architecture, he is a director of the Architectural Association's (AA's) Design Research Laboratory, which is a hothouse of computer-generated design exploration that he co-founded. He is also a key partner at Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA), now a large and busy international practice (which according to a recent report almost tripled its profits last year). Yet besides these two demanding roles he still finds time for visiting professorships and writing articles. Now he has published this tome (478 pages and 18 illustrations), the first of two volumes. He is clearly a man of formidable energy and drive, as well as intelligence.

The book is the product of considerable work and hubristic ambition, as is demanded by the confused state of architectural culture and education, and our changing and challenging times. Launching the book at the AA, Schumacher speculated that its impact would eclipse anything since Le Corbusier's *Vers Une Architecture*. Basically, it applies to architecture

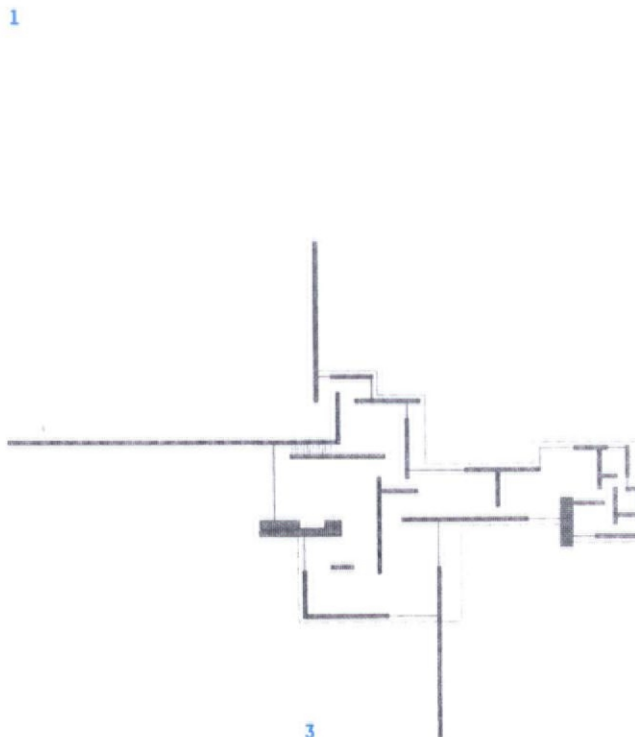
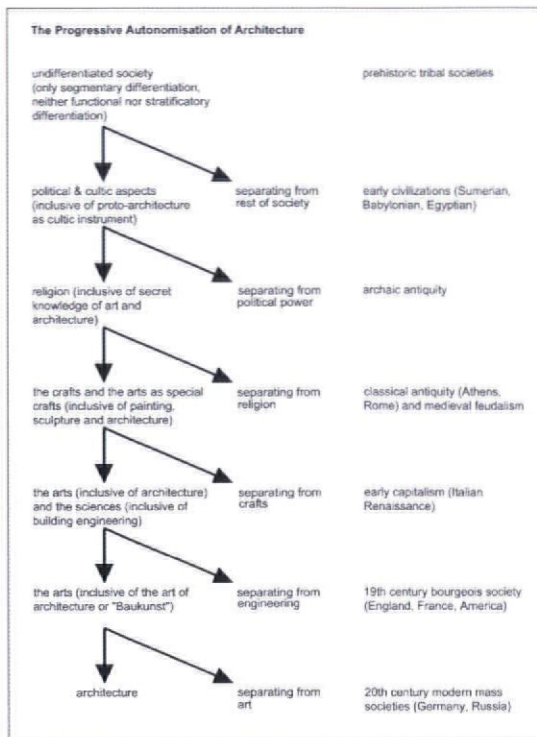
the concepts and methods of German sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1927–1998) in its attempt to present an all-embracing, unified theory of architecture. Driving this theorising is the notion that 'Parametricism' (a style of curving biomorphic or angular crystalline forms computer-generated with parametric software – as exemplified in the work of ZHA) is the inevitable long-term stylistic successor to modern architecture.

Luhmann's many books analyse modern society as a set of autonomous functional systems, including law, economics and politics. This horizontal differentiation into functional systems distinguishes modern society from the previous era of vertical stratification into social classes, the vestiges of which persist. Each functional system constitutes a separate system of communications and is autopoietic in nature. Autopoiesis, still a somewhat controversial concept, is a term coined by Chilean evolutionary biologists Humberto Maturana and Francesco Varela in 1972, and means self-generating. Here it refers to the evolving dynamic of these functional systems, the

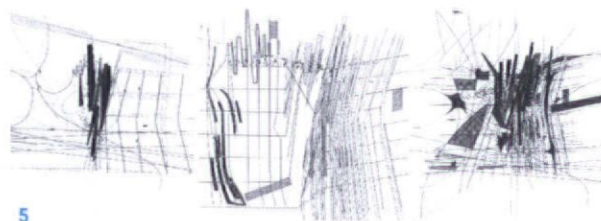
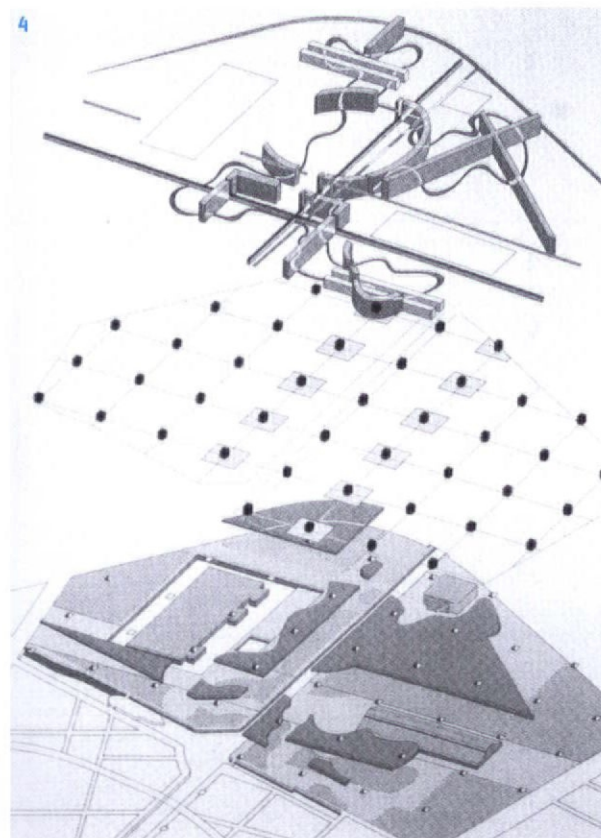
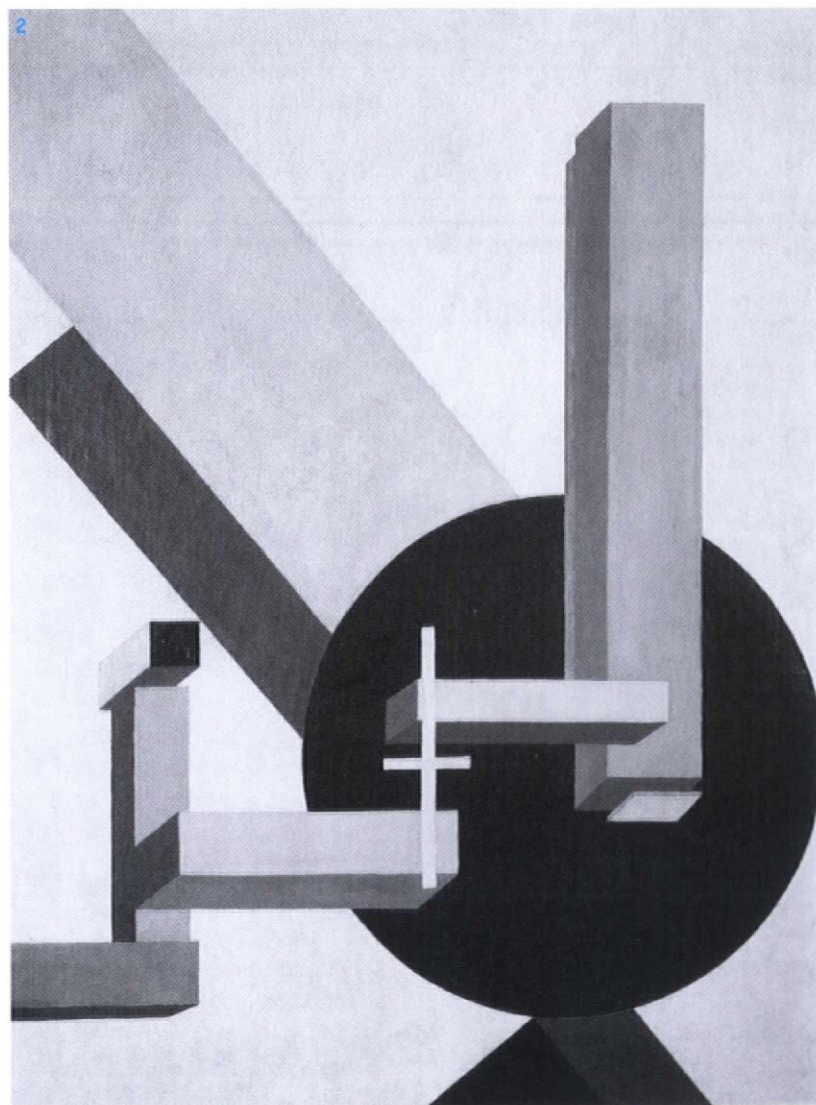
autonomy of each of which, in line with the concept of autopoiesis, helps keep them evolving.

Architecture for Luhmann was part of a functional system: the arts system. Schumacher rightly insists that architecture is an independent functional system, while acknowledging that it was only in the 1920s that it fully disengaged with visual art (sculpture and painting), from which the abstract language of modern architecture was derived. Following Luhmann's systems approach, he defines architecture as a system of communications. This has the major advantage of bringing all aspects of architecture under a single umbrella, not only physical buildings and their construction, but also practice along with design and dealing with clients and consultants. Furthermore, it includes the reception of architecture by critics and media, along with other aspects of architectural culture, discourse and education. Yet there are downsides to this definition: it is a sociologist's view, and so is partial and reductionist, not least in omitting the cultural dimensions that would concern anthropologists. Among the many other crucial dimensions of architecture it neglects is the physicality of buildings, their materiality and presence, and structural and constructional logic.

Much of the book thus explicates Luhmann's conceptual system while applying it to architecture. Although the book is clearly written and easily understood, these parts are repetitive, making the same points countless times. Yet in a few places elsewhere the opposite pertains: untenable assumptions appear in a single sentence, without the full explanation they demand. 'The theory of architectural autopoiesis is trying to think through the implications that follow when all the above mentioned options are rejected in order to embark upon a consistently **anti-humanist, systemic and radically Constructivist** re-description and forward projection of architecture,' —



- 1_ The Progressive Autonomisation of Society: historical sequence of differentiation
- 2_ El Lissitzky, *Proun*, 1919
- 3_ Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Brick House*
- 4_ Bernard Tschumi, *Parc de La Villette* Competition, axonometric, 1983
- 5_ Ubiquitous Urbanism, Studio Hadid/Schumacher, Columbia University, 1993, layering process: inflection/interarticulation

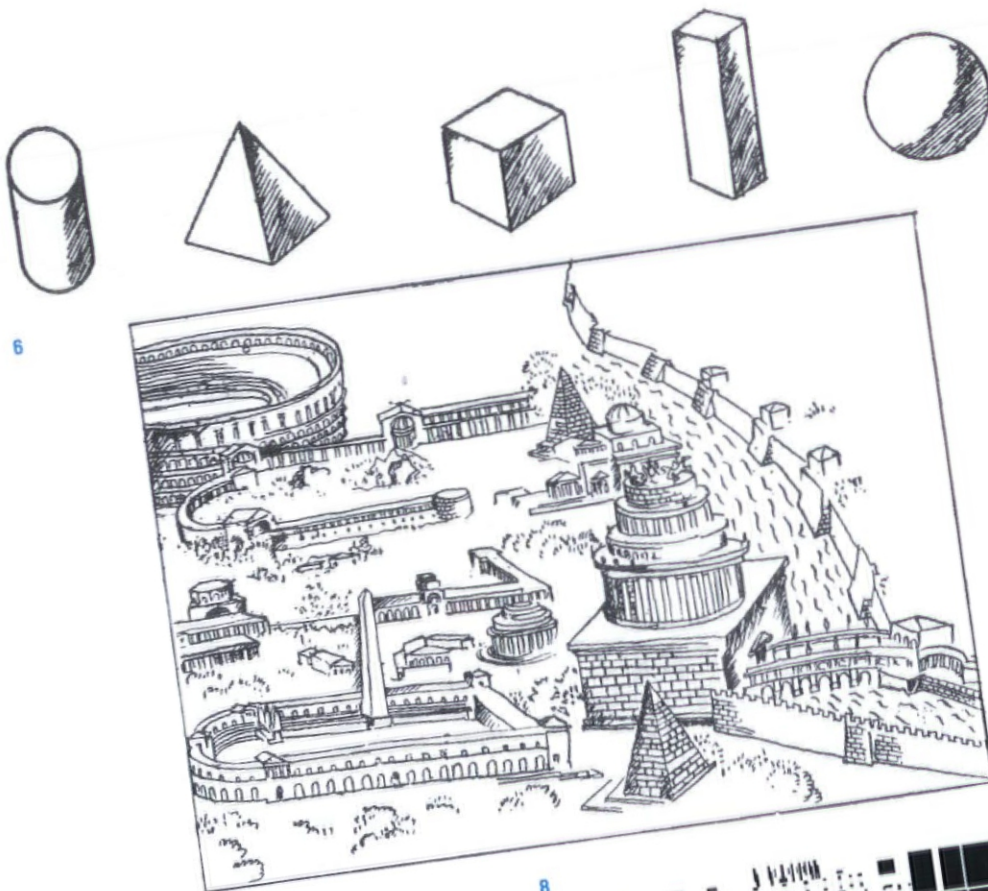


FOR ARCHITECTURE, SCHUMACHER ASSERTS AS THE KEY BINARY PAIR, THE LEAD DISTINCTION, WHAT HE TERMS AS 'FORM VERSUS FUNCTION'

6_ Le Corbusier,
The Lesson of
Rome, in *Vers
une architecture*,
Paris, 1923

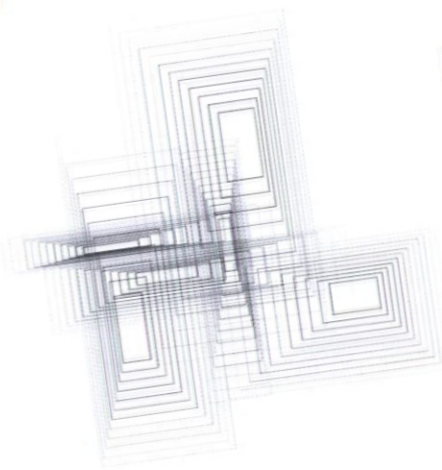
7_ Overlapping
fuzzy domains
generating emergent
subdomains

8_ Object
crystallisation from
interpenetrating
point-grids

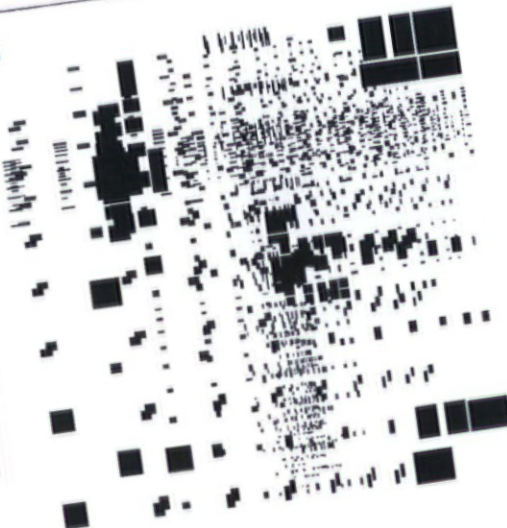


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7



8



writes Schumacher. (Bold italics are in the original text.) Huh? Where does that come from?

In other sections, particularly when discussing avant-garde and parametric approaches, terms are used that only a few initiates would understand. Much of what is asserted in these parts would be more convincing if illustrated with examples, as should perhaps be included in Volume 2. As it is, the impression given is that the author knows he is skating on thin ice and cannot put his case with the surety of his paraphrases of Luhmann. These contrasts make for an unbalanced book, as if the theory of autopoiesis is for even dim architects and other parts for only an inner circle. Why do so many books today seem to lack the guiding attention of an informed editor?

Nevertheless parts of the book, for instance those filling in historic background, are written with admirable clarity and conciseness. Good too is the convincing discussion of the virtues of style, which runs contrary to much current dogma, and, when it arrives after 370 pages, that of the purpose of architecture as the framing of social interaction (drawing on the work of social psychologist Erwin Goffman). Yet until then readers, or at least this one was, may well be asking themselves: how can a theory of architecture omit discussing its purpose? And how can the long-term successor to modern architecture be asserted so confidently without a prior critique of its predecessor's shortcomings? To equate modernism with homogenising Fordism and later styles, climaxing in Parametricism, with the increasing heterogeneity of Post-Fordism, contains more than a germ of truth, but is also quite inadequate as an explanation.

Key to Luhmann's system is the identification of binary pairs whose interaction defines and drives each functional system. For architecture, Schumacher selects as the key binary pair, the lead distinction, what he

terms through much of the book as 'form versus function', which closely relates to another key pair, 'utility and beauty'. This expression of form and function as oppositional is confusing to architects for whom they are mutually dependent; what is meant is later clarified by analogy with theory and evidence in science, or price and value in economics. Yet this is still reductionist and even more so is defining beauty merely in terms of well-resolved form.

Probably most ludicrous to architects is the assertion that the medium of architecture is the drawing. This idea has been around awhile among the avant-garde, for some of whom the drawing is the real work of architecture and the building its clumsy, compromised copy – an excuse for the unresolved dog's breakfast that results when some of them build. Later in the book this is acceptably revised to the medium of design being the drawing. But the medium of architecture is axiomatically the physical building, with all its complexities of space and atmosphere, materials and construction. It is the mastery of a difficult and relatively intractable medium that results in works that transcend novelty and whizzy form-making to speak deeply to us.

For Schumacher, an important binary pair is avant-garde versus mainstream, the former driving the evolution of architecture through its formal researches and theorising. Responding to external 'irritations' (Luhmann's term adopted by Schumacher) or 'peturbations' (Maturana and Varela) in the form of social change, its role in biological terms is to create mutations. At the heart not the margins of architecture, the avant-garde often anticipates and is active participant in social change. Its ideas are then tested, selected and consolidated by the mainstream that depends passively on the avant-garde for innovation and to retain functional relevance. Such ideas are simply delusional: architects look to accomplished

architects dealing with all the complexities and constraints of architecture for ideas and inspiration, not to a self-indulgent avant-garde.

Many will be startled by Schumacher's claim that architecture started in the Renaissance. Discounting everything before as mere building may seem crazy, but it is consistent with his understanding of architecture as dependent on written theory and constant innovation. Although the Gothic had its own theory and innovated, this does start with Alberti in what is now ascribed as the early modern era. Modernity was born of a series of crucial shifts, including from prioritising reason over faith (Medievalism) and positing an objective reality independent of us and understood through measurement and detached observation. Important too was the discovery of perspective, resulting (so art historians tell us) in objects separating out from their backgrounds, and so a loss of unity.

Another rupture in a previously organic unity was the division of a world view commonly referred to as the Great Chain (or Nest) of Being for the three separate realms of the good (ethics and culture), the true (science and nature) and the beautiful (psyche and art). This distinction had been made before, but it was the differentiation and then progressive dissociation of these three realms that gave modernity its power to analyse and develop the world (along with its illusions of control). These three progressively fragmented into the array of modern functional systems charted by Luhmann.

This fragmentation has now brought us to the brink of catastrophe, as these autonomous functional systems fail to respond quickly and adequately to tsunamis of 'irritation' and 'peturbation'. Of these, global warming, to which the products of architects and planners are the greatest contributors, is only the symptomatic fever of more extensive systemic collapse. This

includes that of our voraciously destructive corporatist economic system originating in the royal charters first issued in the early 1400s at the birth of modernity.

To offer, as this book does, a supposedly comprehensive architectural theory to supplant modernism without a single mention of sustainability, the challenge of our times, beggars belief. Sustainability is the 'overarching discourse' Schumacher claims contemporary society lacks. Yet even architects tackling sustainability have not fully grasped the challenges it raises. Their approach is objective, technological and ecological, ignoring the cultural and psychological dimensions, thus exemplifying modernity's limiting paradigm. Yet, as Einstein commented, a problem cannot be solved with the same level of thinking as created it. Unsustainability is utterly endemic to modernity for reasons too numerous, pervasive and obvious to be elaborated on here.

To provide some perspective ask yourself: what is our uniquely human attribute? Consciousness? Language? Culture? Use of tools? Equivalents of all these and others are found in other creatures. Perhaps our unique attribute is harnessing energy to power things other than our own bodies. But this power has expanded unchecked by an equivalent development of consciousness and culture. We use more energy and other resources, such as water, than ever before, but with little awareness. The hearth, the fountain and the well were all foci of social and spiritual life, and symbolic too. Modernity's denial of consciousness in the non-human world has rendered us unconscious too – or at least dimmed our consciousness. Sustainability can only be achieved through reassessment and rebirth of a radically transformed culture and the reversal of millennia of seemingly inevitable developments, in what will be a major pivotal reorientation.

Among modernity's most damaging features is the trivialising of —

TO BE RELEVANT TO OUR TIMES, ANY ARCHITECTURAL THEORY WOULD NEED TO INCLUDE A WIDER RANGE OF WAYS OF THINKING

culture. Discarding the iconography and fripperies of culture (columns and porticoes, architraves and ornament) at first seemed to liberate us from mumbo jumbo and the clogingly obsolete. A modern building was a functional device, a machine for living in, setting us free by adopting a subservient role. By contrast, historic architecture had shaped cultural artefacts that, instead of being subservient, mediated between us and the much larger world encompassed by culture, which even included our relationship to nature. Furthermore, as cultural artefacts they gave us cues as to how to conduct ourselves in our multiple webs of relationship that modernity downplayed or severed.

Modern buildings hold value in the moment and lose this when rendered functionally obsolete, as is consistent with modernity's destructive short-termism. Buildings as cultural artefacts root us in the long-term, connecting us back to history and our ancestors, and projecting us forwards to the future and our descendants. This is another reason that sustainability calls for the recovery and rethinking of culture, one of the many vital issues

any contemporary architectural theory must deal with that goes unmentioned in this book. Such issues would be raised by an anthropological approach, say, not that this would be better than a sociological one. But to be relevant to our times, any comprehensive architectural theory would need to include this wider range of ways of thinking.

Curiously and unexpectedly, reading this book brought to mind various expressions and ideas of Marshall McLuhan. To explain our unawareness of how media of communication shape us, he would say, 'whoever discovered water it wasn't the fish'. Something similar applies to architecture, so that, as this book demonstrates, even architects grasp or focus on only limited aspects of it. The view offered by this book is as if looking at water, the habitat of the fish, from above the surface – once again a detached, modern and limiting perspective. Any relevant theory now has to enter the water as well as perceive what is around, as if through the eyes of a highly aware fish.

Another McLuhan aphorism was 'we see life in the rear-view mirror',

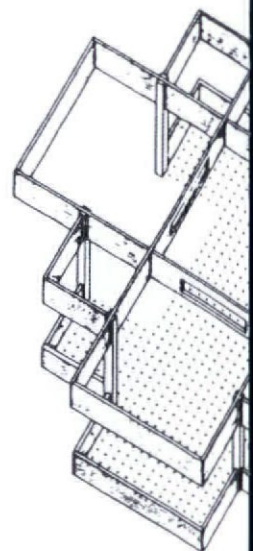
so perceiving where we had been rather than where we are. Thus the Industrial Revolution made an art form of the pastoral in landscape gardening and painting. Luhmann and Schumacher exemplify and describe the modern age that it is not only urgent we transcend, but is in any case waning, not least due to the impact of the computer. With Luhmann, this is apt for his sociological analysis; with Schumacher it limits the relevance of anything he says about the future.

The fragmentation into autonomous functional systems, which Luhmann describes at what may be its passing peak, corresponds to the fragmenting 'explosion' of knowledge and disciplines that McLuhan attributed to the impact of Gutenberg's printing press – a key factor in launching the Renaissance and the modern era. But long before the internet and Wikipedia, McLuhan had already foreseen electronic communications as creating a global nervous system, bringing about an 'implosion' of specialist fields of knowledge and disciplines melding and interacting. The urgent quest for sustainability immeasurably compounds the implosive pressures.

McLuhan also described sunset effects, his resonant term for last fling flare-ups as caricatured exaggerations of now obsolete characteristics of a passing age. Parametricism, like all other products of the avant-garde (a quintessentially modernist notion), is a sunset effect, an exaggeration of the pathologies of modernity. The book includes a table showing the transitional styles between the epochal styles of Historicism and Modernism as Art Nouveau and Expressionism. The combination of these results in something resembling Parametricism – this point is made only half in jest.

As a correlate of modernity's core defining notion of an external objective reality (a weird idea to pre-moderns and now again Post-Quantum Mechanics), modern architecture was typically —

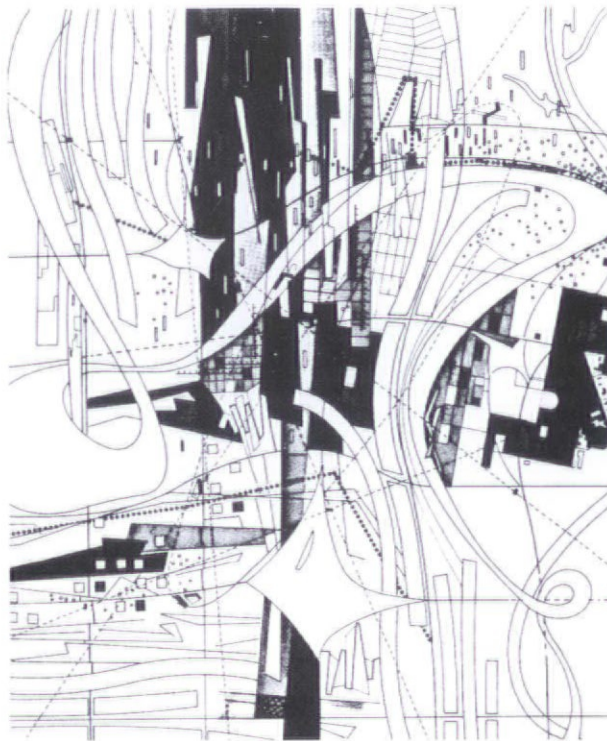
- 9_ Aldo van Eyck, Sculpture Pavilion, Arnhem, 1965
- 10_ Joop van Stigt, University of Twente, Enschede, 1963
- 11_ Ubiquitous Urbanism, Studio Hadid/Schumacher, Columbia University, 1993
- 12_ Zaha Hadid Architects, One North Masterplan, Singapore
- 13_ Zaha Hadid Architects, One North Masterplan, Singapore



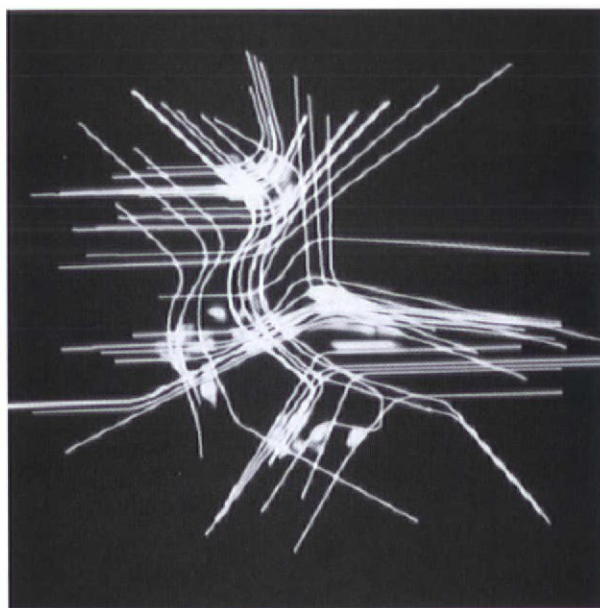
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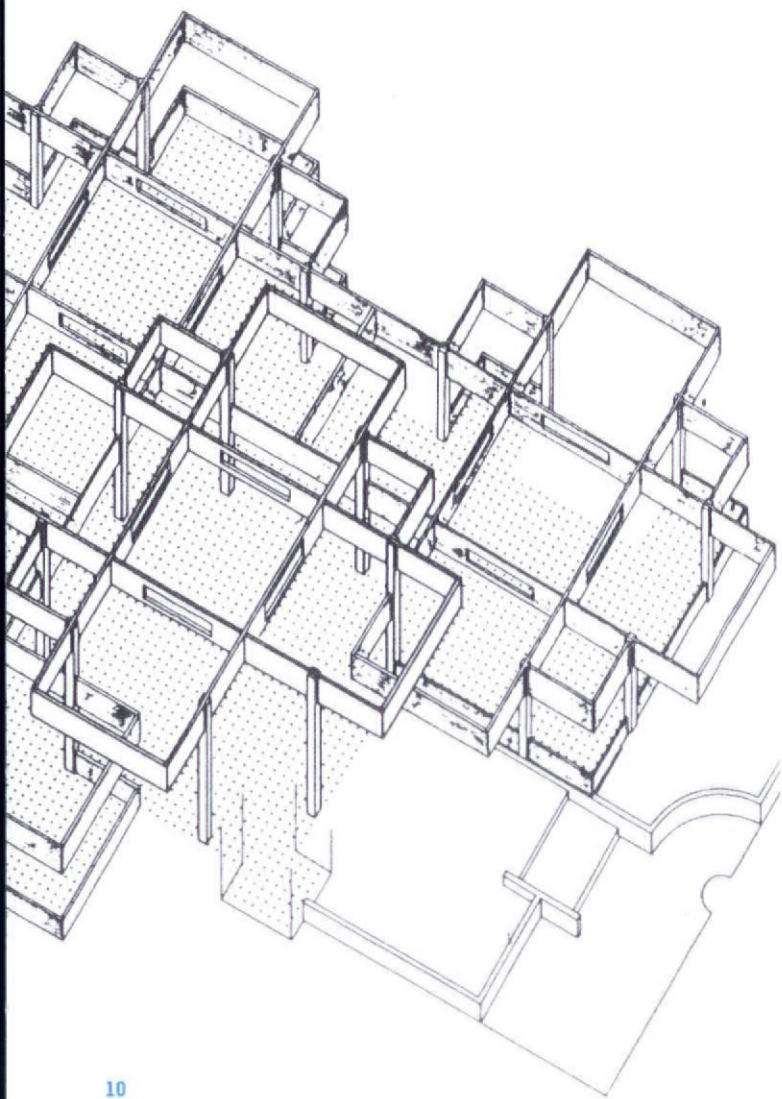
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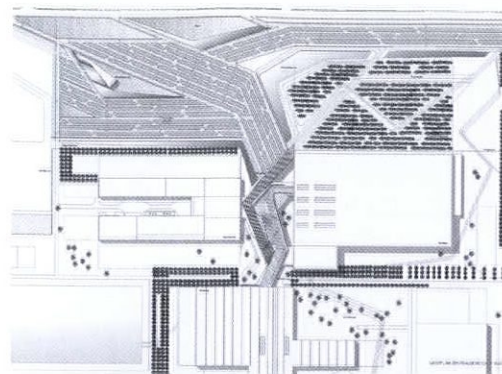
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**SUSTAINABILITY IS THE
OVERARCHING DISCOURSE
THAT SCHUMACHER CLAIMS
CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY LACKS**

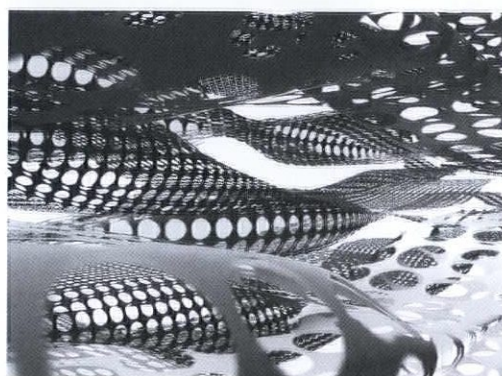
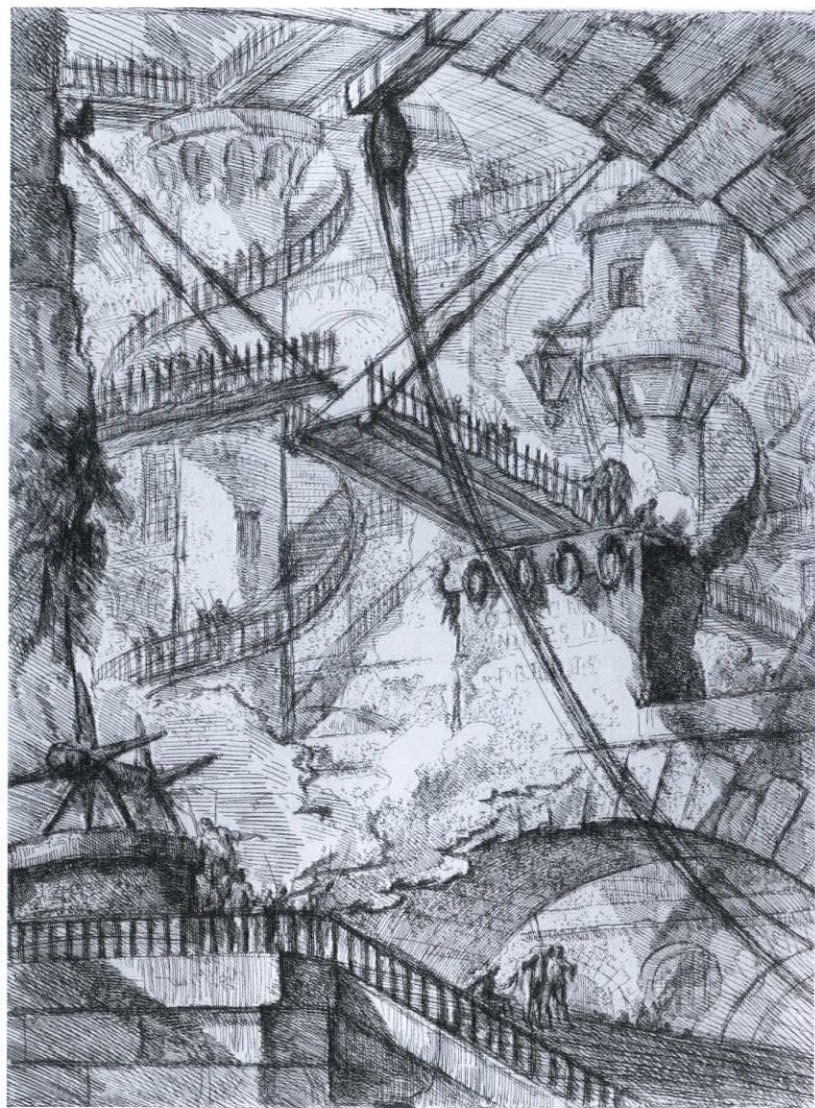


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14_ Zaha Hadid Architects, BMW Central Building, Leipzig, site plan

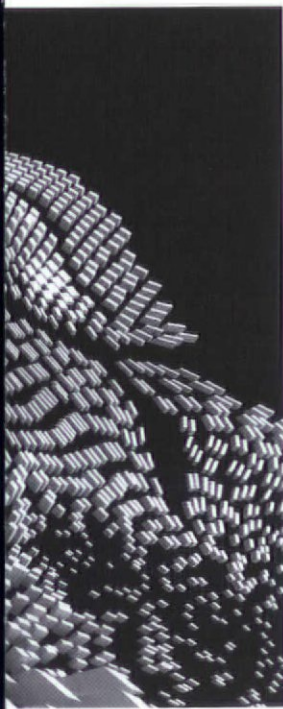
15_ Zaha Hadid Architects, BMW Central Building, Leipzig, interior rendering

16_ Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Carceri d'invenzione*, plate 7: the drawbridge

17_ Rok Oman and Spela Videcnik, AADRL, Corporate Fields, London, 2000

18_ Form Informing Urbanism – Parametric Urbanism – Thames Gateway, Zaha Hadid & Patrik Schumacher, London, 2006

18



designed as isolated objects. Often these were shaped only around their internal anatomy of spaces and circulation, structural skeleton and enveloping skin. But even when not, and particularly in the early phases, modern buildings related to little in their surroundings, not to climate and culture, nor to other buildings and us humans (through, for instance, forms shaped so we recognised ourselves in them, such as columns and vertical windows). As a result, people found many of these works to be, if not outright alienating, at least difficult to relate to. Compare in your mind's eye a street of traditional buildings with one of modern slick-skinned buildings: if empty, the former remains companionable and full of life, whereas the latter is a lifeless husk that largely defies relationship.

Parametricism may produce novel, whizzy and momentarily exciting forms, but it also compounds the pathologies of modern architecture. The style can neither adequately frame nor address public space, with facades whose composition and elements allow us to identify and relate to them. Nor do parametric buildings relate to each other (beyond establishing superficial formal contiguities), nor to other architecture. Yet a fundamental purpose of architecture, yet again not mentioned in this book, is to aggregate into good urban fabric. Perhaps most profoundly problematic is that modernity's marginalisation of the human, reducing such psychologically resonant notions as dwelling or inhabitation to function (human agency understood only from the outside, as in Behaviourism) is taken yet further. This is also clearly reflected by this book's complete aversion to the subjective. Rather than regenerating all the webs of connection and relationship severed by modernity, as essential to achieving sustainability, these are yet further denied.

Rejecting Parametricism, the transient sunset-effect style, does not imply a rejection of parametric


modelling. This is now an immensely useful and powerful part of any architect's repertoire – not least in facilitating the manipulation and synthesis of many more variables than were previously possible. But, apart from their other limitations in suppressing relationships, the sculptural and scale-less forms typical of Parametricism are not necessarily implied in parametric modelling, but rather reflect the personal aesthetic preferences of the designer. Perhaps the most intelligent use of parametric modelling is to explore new formal disciplines to bring a wide range of increased efficiencies, in terms of structure, energy, constructional assembly, shaping of flows of people, air and so on.

For instance, the Swiss Re building – although still a glacially forbidding, stand-alone modernist work – was designed using parametric modelling to achieve new levels of efficiency in structure (20 per cent less steel than an equivalent tower) and energy use. As Spanish critic Luis Fernández-Galiano reminds us in *Fire and Memory*, architecture involves construction and combustion: buildings have energy-consuming metabolisms that heat, cool and ventilate them, and their materials are manufactured in various other metabolic processes.

Other computer-dependent techniques were used to design Swiss Re. These include Computational Fluid Dynamics to model climatic conditions inside and out, and Space Syntax axial analysis to check whether the square would be used. Yet none of these contemporary concerns, let alone the core discipline of construction, are discussed in Schumacher's supposedly comprehensive and ultimately anachronistic theory of architecture.

Swiss Re also draws attention to more of its weaknesses, not least the exaggeration of the degree to which, in becoming a progressively more autonomous functional system, architecture has diverged from

engineering. In practices at the leading edge of architecture (something very different to the avant-garde), engineers play a key role in the design team. This includes not only structural engineers but also, with the quest for sustainability, services engineers. In the near future, it will involve production engineers, who will be redesigning the manufacturing processes of materials and components to make them less energy-intensive and polluting. As contemporary parlance puts it, we have moved from the Age of Genius (of the solitary master creator) to the Age of Scenius. Creation now happens in inter-disciplinary teams, in which everyone contributes as (more or less) equals. Moreover, the architect of Swiss Re is the hardly avant-garde Foster + Partners, winner of a recent poll in *Building Design* magazine as the most influential of all architectural practices.

This review may seem unduly harsh because, for all the book's serious limitations, much of the discussion is illuminating and, within its own terms, conducted with well-informed rigour. I can imagine parts of it being recycled in an anthology of late-modern theory. Because ultimately this is the problem with this ambitious book: its style of argument and the style it promotes are what many would refer to as forms of hyper-modernity, what we now see as the limitations and pathologies of modernity pushed to new limits. What we need instead is what some would refer to as trans-modern theory (postmodernism being merely the repressed flipside of modernity). This would elaborate a more complex and complete view of architecture, which would not only address many of the pressing problems we face, but also help us to shape and move into a whole new epoch, that of sustainable civilisation. To rival in impact *Vers Une Architecture* this vision of architecture, and of the new epoch, would have to be much more inspiring than this book. 

EXPLORING EYE

**AS THE SOVIET UNION CRUMBLLED, IT GAVE RISE
TO A CHAOTIC AGE OF BUILDING. YET POETIC
IMAGES OF ITS DECAY SPARK AN UNEXPECTED
REBIRTH OF ARCHITECTURAL IMAGINATION**

WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHY
FRÉDÉRIC CHAUBIN

This project came about by chance. It began with a second-hand book bought on a sidewalk in Tbilisi one day in August 2003. Under the rather anonymous grey dust jacket 200 pages in Cyrillic, published 20 years earlier, surveyed 70 years of architecture in Soviet Georgia. Among the listed buildings, two curiosities stood out. As the captions indicated, they were located in Tbilisi. I was there to interview President Shevardnadze. I had time to spare, so I looked for them and found them. Stunned by their sheer scale, I took photographs. Usually, that's as far as it goes. You return home with a photographic souvenir of something exotic and unusual. The adventure fades once the journey is over. Not this time, however. The photographs inspired by a book were the beginning of another book.

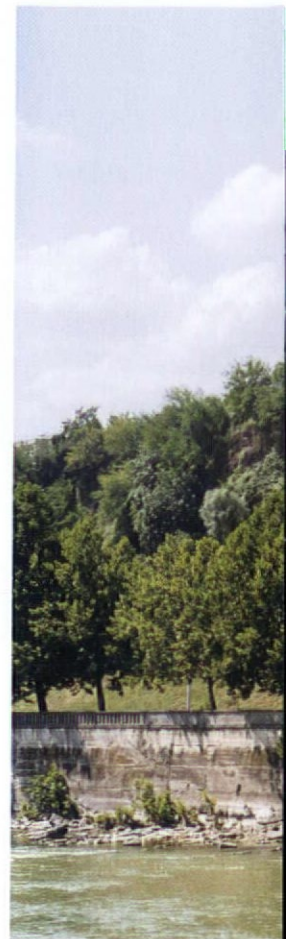
The key event in this process came a few months later, when I met a woman in Lithuania. Working alongside her architect husband, she

had helped to build a monumental health centre there in the 1970s. The construction work took 10 years. The building went up in the middle of the woods, near the border with Belarus, and was made, she told me, with total freedom. A homage to the work of Gaudí, she said. This spa at Druskininkai was the worthy product of such an ambition. There, surrounded by conifers, I found colossal concrete curves, modelled by an extraordinary aesthetic.

This was miles away from my preconceived ideas about the Soviet world. How had this building managed to come into existence, so far off the beaten tracks of architecture? Was its formal liberty compatible with an official commission, bearing in mind that in the USSR every construction was commissioned by the State? There seemed to be no work of reference, no precise documentation that might answer my questions. And then I remembered a real folly of a building that I had glimpsed on the

road from Minsk to the airport. In the 1990s, for no particular reason, I had gone to spend a weekend in Belarus, an unknown country. There I caught an absentminded glimpse of the Institute of Technology.

Back in Minsk, a copy of an old issue of ARCA about Perestroika architecture brought other 'monsters' to my attention. This was a whole field of investigation. And also the beginning of a game. Its rules were simple: to locate the diverse manifestations of this very different style of architecture, and generate an effect of mass by methodically pinpointing, one after another, these particular buildings. The Soviet world was huge. The adventure was a fine pretext for travel. I was not looking for formatted or inventoried objects, but for a form of extravagance that I alone could delineate. A powerful, dreamlike presence that I wanted to capture in my photos. I saw an opening and I went for it with pleasure. Not only was this a chance to sketch the —





Left, top_ Despite being completed in 1974, the stacked Jenga-like blocks of the Georgian Ministry of Highways, in Tbilisi, appear to be curiously *au courant* Below_ Built in 1983, on a Russian military road crossing the North Caucasus, the Krestovsky Pereval Belvedere marks two centuries of Russo-Georgian friendship. In 1783, Christian Georgia placed itself under Russian suzerainty for defence against the Islamic world Bottom_ The 1985 Druzhba sanatorium in the Black Sea resort of Yalta in the Ukraine. The Pentagon mistook the building for a missile launch pad



THERE ARE VESTIGES OF THE SOVIET UNION THAT SEEM LIKE BACKDROPS TO MOVIES THAT NEVER HIT THE SCREEN

outlines of a history that had not been written, an almost fictional history, but also, and with the same gaze, it was possible to reverse what for 20 years had been a cliché of contemporary photography, 'the post-Soviet world seen in terms of decay.' I much preferred its utopias.

Contrary to the usual logic, it was at the end of the whole process that I discovered the archives and, in particular, the authoritative Soviet monthly, *Arhitektura SSSR*, which enabled me to be more rigorous. I found constructions that people told me had been destroyed. I photographed buildings that have disappeared since. Sometimes I got there too late. But wherever I went, my interest was deemed unusual, no doubt because the people who lived near these buildings still had a strong hangover from the Soviet period. The Russians were at least as eager to turn their backs on their past as anyone else. The complex response to the collapse of the USSR developed

into amnesia, a denial commonly applied to those years of disintegration. Hence the strange purgatory in which these objects seem to float: so close in time and yet out of time. This void taught me that history does not write itself. We must invent it, risk making mistakes. We must imagine it.


There was another circumstance to explain the neglect of this architecture: lack of 'historical distance' was compounded by geography. Today, the Soviet Empire has been replaced by a mosaic of states, making overall perceptions that much hazier. The very object of this collection has been fragmented, dispersed by the formation of new political boundaries. Most of the states concerned now have hostile or at least distant relations with Moscow. As well as the particular case of Georgia, the Baltic States were annexed late in the day and occupied with a brutality long masked by a convenient version of history.

Emancipation therefore went hand in hand with rejection. Depending on local sensibilities, the architecture of those years generally met with indifference because it was too directly associated with the bad years and a collectivism imposed from outside.

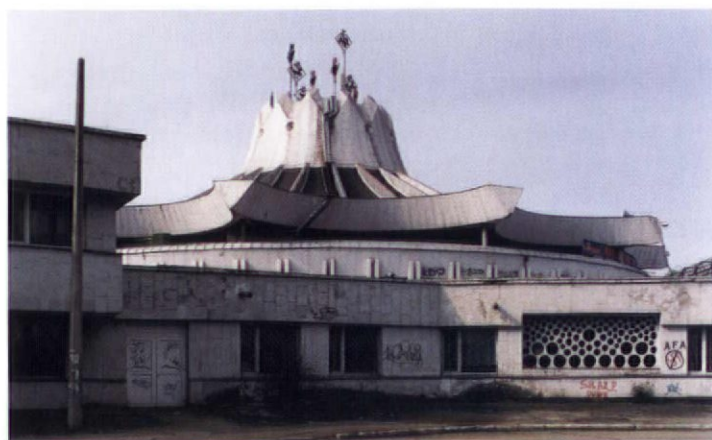
Today, however, there are signs of rehabilitation. In Estonia and Lithuania, for example, new generations are calling for certain buildings to be listed. Rejecting ideological assumptions, they are simply realizing that it is better to preserve an ambiguous heritage than to face a historical void. Slowly, and unevenly, people are beginning to look at these strange vestiges. But it took the freedom of movement and thought of a 'tourist' to re-establish the connections between one country and another, and to compose this set of images.

My hope is that this 'archaeology of the present,' while not exhaustive, will allow readers to share my emotions as they learn about a long-forgotten reality, and that it will vividly convey the dreams of forgotten, sometimes nameless architects. This piece of work is a homage to their extravagance. Aesthetic outsiders. Anyone's first trip to New York always comes with a feeling of déjà-vu, as if you were walking onto the set of a movie seen a hundred times. In contrast, there are vestiges of the Soviet Union that seem like backdrops to movies that never hit the screen, because they were never made. A collection of exuberant sets oscillating between audacity and folly. Placed in the middle of nowhere, with no context or norm, some of these buildings really stand out. They seem to have no obvious rationale, to ignore all architectural doctrines. They are like orphaned moments, scattered over the planet of collectivism.

Their defining characteristics? First of all, they are aesthetic outsiders in an ocean of grey. Soviet architecture is synonymous with monotony, with stereotyped —



Above_ Marooned in the winter landscape like a beached supertanker, the 1983 Polytechnic Institute of Minsk in Belarus is a surreal megastructure
Right, top_ The Chisinau Circus in Moldova, 1981. Circus was a popular art form in the Soviet Union and every major city had a civically prominent circus building
Right, bottom_ Completed in 1980, the Circus at Dnepropetrovsk in the Ukraine now has a languishing air
Far right_ Rehabilitation work underway on a winter sports resort that first opened in 1985 in Dombai, a mountaineering centre in the North Caucasus



THE INERTIA OF THE SOVIET MACHINE LET THE WORK IT COMMISSIONED ON ITS MARGINS FLOAT FREE OF ITS CONTROL

developments repeating the same forms again and again over phenomenal distances, based on the same urban models, the same economy of materials. Here we are somewhere else. In the singular. Secondly, the construction of these buildings extended from the late Brezhnev era to the collapse of the USSR, a period of barely 15 years. A period of crumbling walls. It is as if, growing old, the Soviet net grew slack, allowing big holes of freedom to form between its gaping threads. Hypothesis: the inertia of the Soviet machine, too busy putting off its own demise, let the work it commissioned on its margins float free of its control. In this sense it is surely no coincidence if most of these specimens came into existence on the fringes – the Polish border, the Caucasus, or on the Black Sea.

Counter-hypothesis: these projects were not ignored but actively encouraged. After Brezhnev and nearly 20 years of stagnation, Russia

under Yuri Andropov suddenly grew bolder. The need was felt to freshen up the image of a country disfigured by several decades of architectural cloning. After the Second World War, the proletarian paradise was covered with forests of concrete housing, the *khreshchevka*. The fact is that in Russia the most Neanderthal conformism always coexists with the boldest avant-gardes. In the 1960s the young avant-gardes that were unable to build drew attention to their purely utopian constructions. Although it never left the drawing board, and while the phenomenon was no more than a flash in the pan, this work won them international recognition. Then, in the early 1980s, they reappeared, bearing the label of 'paper architects,' displaying once again the same wild imaginings. The tradition they were reviving was born with the 20th century; it was that of the revolutionaries of Russian art, who were determined to change the world by aesthetics. Except that

these newcomers were not touting collective progress – building communism was no longer on the agenda – but campaigning for the needs of the individual. Their creative exuberance was an implicit criticism of Soviet inertia. Their projects, their drawings mimicking Escher and de Chirico, were attempts to elude a gloomy reality.

It is precisely the same quasi-psychedelic, crypto-Pop aesthetic that insinuated itself into the prestige architecture and manifested itself in some of the most spectacular projects of those times. As if the administrations were attuned to the world and its changes and at last allowing themselves a few flights of fancy. The regime just let it go, allowing a great variety of forms to emerge. It even encouraged architects to take regional specificities into account. Although it denied it, the USSR was subject to outside influences and had been aping the International Style since the 1960s. Now at last it gave free rein to unexpected, sometimes even irrational impulses. Whichever hypothesis we opt for, these buildings designed at the hinge of different worlds, in which sci-fi futurism conjoins with monumentalism, constitute one of the most disconcerting manifestations of the dying USSR. The disconcerting effect of a house of mirrors.

In the vast post-Soviet world, with its diverse landscapes and uncertain, abandoned terrains, that transitional period lives on in vestiges such as these. These buildings are happy accidents for some, and for others lapses of taste, but most of them, whether modest or not, somehow managed to dodge the norms. Neither modern nor postmodern, like free-floating dreams, they loom up on the horizons like pointers to a fourth dimension. The ultimate dimension of the Soviet world.

СССР – Cosmic Communist Constructions Photographed, by Frederic Chaubin, Taschen, €34.99, is available to buy at www.taschen.com

Right_ The 1987 Palace of Weddings, known as the 'House of Happiness', in the Kyrgyzstan capital of Bishkek
Right, middle_ As though emerging from a tumulus, the 1988 Archaeology Museum of Tbilisi features an exhumed body in bas-relief
Bottom_ A monumental viewing stand built in 1983 for an official visit to Tbilisi of Yuri Andropov, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet
Far right, top_ The Central Puppet Theatre of Moscow, completed in 1970
Far right, bottom_ The 1986 Solntse solar complex in Parkent, Uzbekistan was built to compete with the French Odeillo solar furnace







MARBLE MURAL

LOCATION

INTERIOR DESIGN
SHOW 2010,
ATHENS, GREECE

ARCHITECT

POINT SUPREME

PHOTOGRAPHER

GIANNIS DRAKOULIDIS

WRITER

JAMES POCKSON

KEY WORDS

MARBLE,
WATER-CUTTING,
DIGITAL PRINTING,
CNC ENGRAVING





The linking of 'Greece' and 'marble' in the same sentence inevitably calls to mind images of great temples and classical sculpture. The Athens-based practice Point Supreme, however, has set out to defy such dusty associations with its Marble Mural, a large-scale decorative stone screen that integrates a medley of images and textures with a mixture of techniques both ancient and digital. As the piece's Greek inscription translates: 'Marble is not simply the clean and base material

that we are used to seeing, but it is a rich, dense, live mass that conceals and reveals narratives, stands up, creates space and transforms itself into a work of art.'

Unveiling the mural at the Interior Design Show 2010 in Athens, the practice collaborated with a team of artists, specialist craftsmen and digital fabricators to create a rich palimpsest of artistic processes. The mural is 10m x 2m and comprises seven pieces of marble, all 30mm thick and supported on a steel frame.

Each piece is coloured by a different hue, texture and origin, the characteristics of which have informed the imagery applied to the panel. An elephant has been printed on to the rough Indian marble, while a topographical map enfolds the marble with dark parallel veins from Athens. 'We never specified what the end product would look like,' says Point Supreme's Konstantinos Pantazis. 'We let the process guide us.'

After the basic shape of the mural had been produced, apertures—

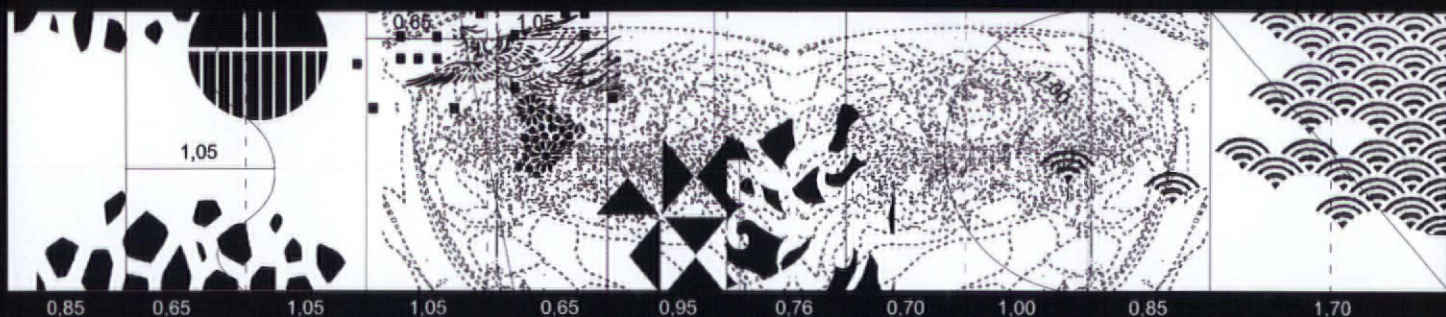
marble pieces

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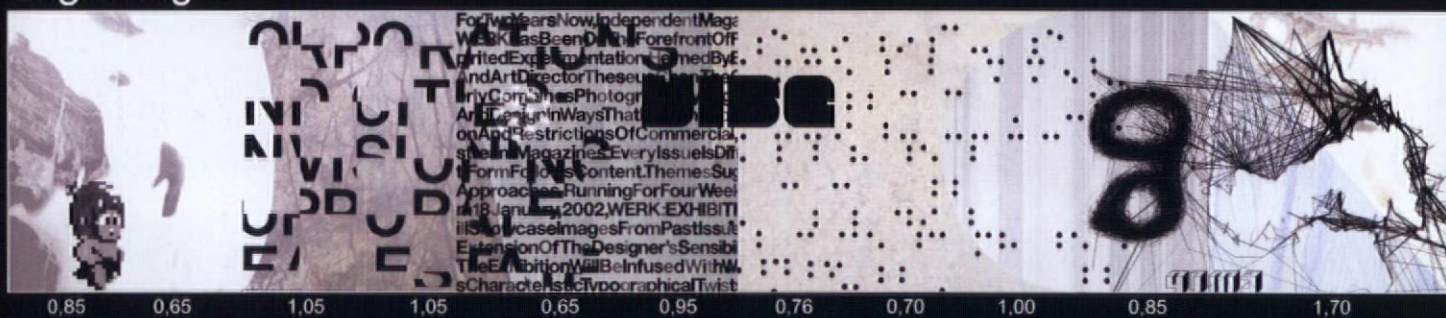
holes

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engraving

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printing

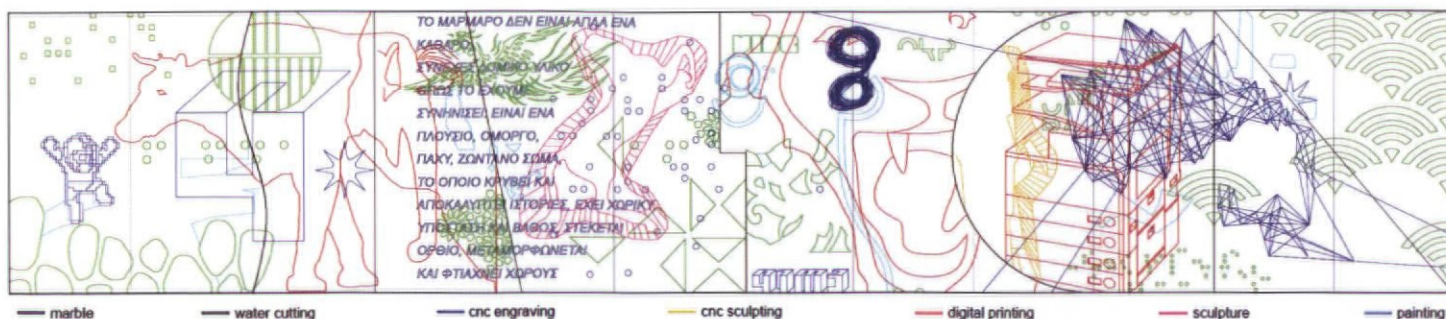
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all techniques

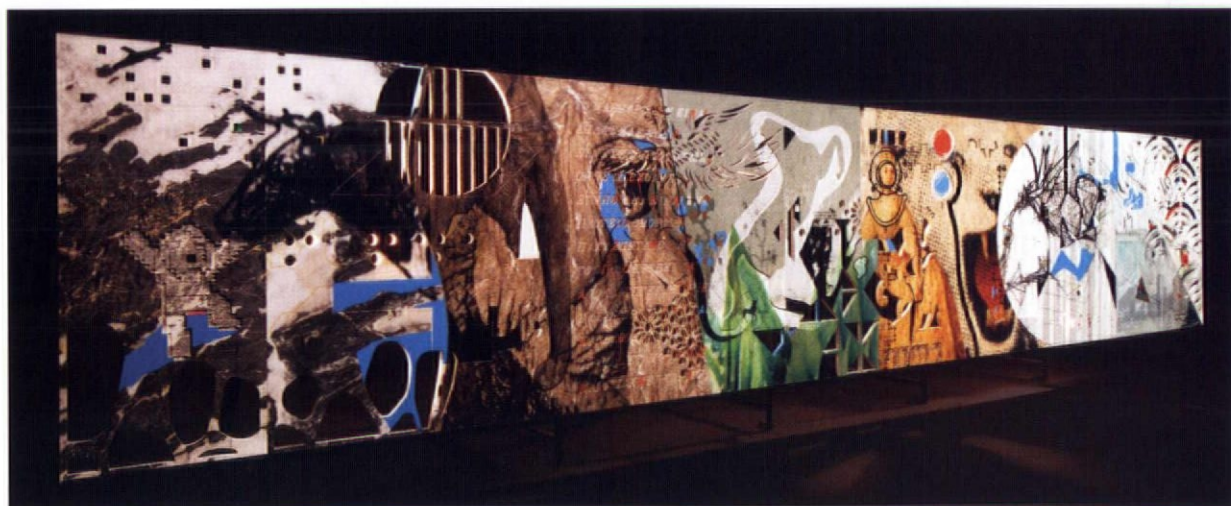
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Previous page,
main picture_The
marble mural in
situ at the Interior
Design Show held
in Athens last year
Previous page,
below_Detail
of mural panel
support system
Above_Colour-coded
drawing showing
different marble
treatment
techniques

Opposite_Layers
build up to create
a visually rich
palimpsest
Top, left_A digitally
printed layer adds
further complexity
Top, right_Detail of
mural highlighting
water-cut
perforations and
CNC engraving
Right_The finished
mural redefines
the potential of an
archetypal material
through craft skills
and experimentation



were water-cut to add transparency. These openings were based on the geometrical proportions and symbols that were native to the country from which each piece of marble had originated – India, Brazil, Morocco and Greece. Imagery was also CNC machined, engraved and digitally printed on to the material.

Since the marble was relatively thin, disruptions to its surface were limited to a depth of 15mm. The final layers of the mural were created by a sculptor and then a

painter, who was given the freest rein by the architects.

Despite performing material tests and even making a 1:1 paper mock-up, 'it was impossible to fully understand the visual or physical effect that each layer would have on the next,' explains Pantazis. From conception to completion, the whole piece took just three months of intensive work and cost €40,000 to make.

Perhaps the title 'mural' is misleading because it alludes to a condition where surface is secondary

to the applied medium. Yet Point Supreme has used marble centrally in an exhaustive process as the generator of its art – a methodology more akin to sculpture.

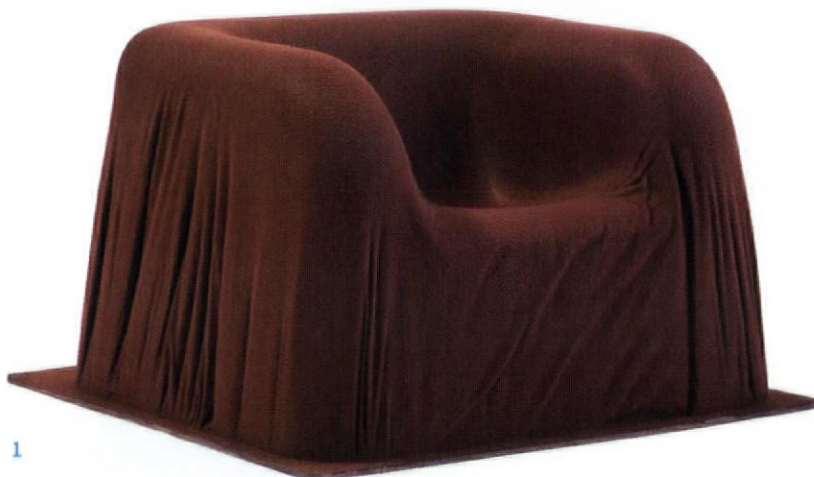
Herein lies the beauty of the project and the skill of this young practice: it has taken one of the most steadfast materials of the architectural palette and rediscovered its potential through a process of playful experimentation fused with a great respect for the culture of marble craftsmanship and trade still alive in Greece today.



THE AR CASTS A CRITICAL EYE ACROSS
DESIGN TRENDS EMERGING AT THIS
YEAR'S STOCKHOLM FURNITURE FAIR

EDITED BY
WILL HUNTER

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1_ Spook armchair
in compression-
moulded form felt
by Blå Station | 4_ Spectra
Easychair by Matti
Klenell for Källemo |
| 2_ Finn coatstand
by Kristine Melvær | 5_ Collection by Aker |
| 3_ Light Me Up by
Blond Belysning | 6_ K-chair by Kitani |
| | 7_ Sideboard No
216 by Jesper Ståhl
for Voice |



1



2

3



4



5



6



7



8

8_ Papillons

Sofa by SICIS

9_ Pattern Hej!

by Kazuyo Nomura

for Almedahls

10_ Kubo table lamp

by Eero Aarnio for

Innolux Design

11_ Book of Light

by o0o designlab

12_ Collect 2011

Cabinet in yellow

by A2 designers

13_ Cabinet by

Bo Robert Ek

from Konstfack

14_ Tapiovaara

Collection by

Ilmari Tapiovaara

for Artek

15_ RAW Lounge

Chair in green

by Jens Fager

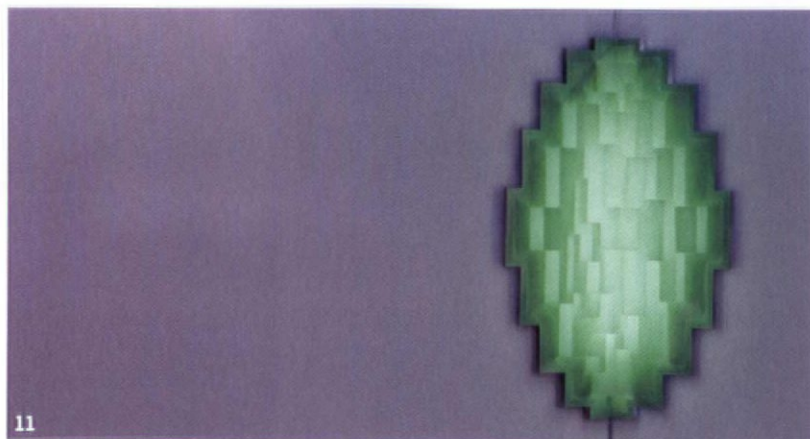
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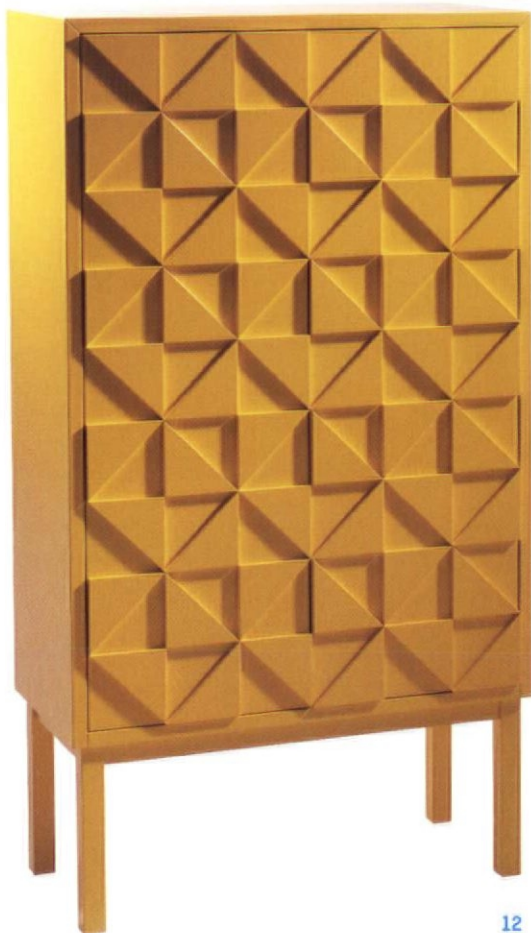


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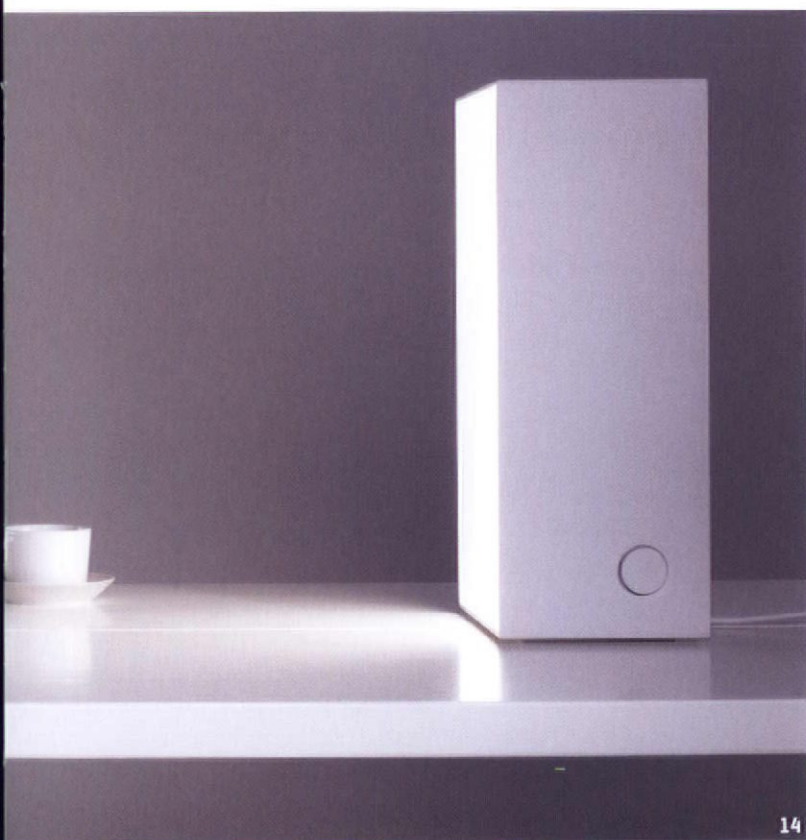




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15

Bremner speaks of a way of being in the world that is nomadic

BOOK / Writing the City into Being: Essays on Johannesburg 1998–2008

Lindsay Bremner, Fourthwall Books, 2010

Lindsay Bremner's central thesis is that a city becomes a city analogously to the way in which a book becomes a book. Reading is to a book what dwelling, walking, playing, working and the rest is to the city. City dwellers are like readers. Just as anonymous readers assert the uniqueness of a work, so anonymous citizens, through their inattentive, distracted, careless daily lives assert the 'citiness' of a city. For this there are no words, only routines, gestures, desires, textures, sounds, shadows, light, glamour, noise and money.

This is the concept of the city asserted by Benjamin's *flâneur*, Kracauer's mass ornament, Debord's *dérive*, de Certeau's walker, Rendell's rambler, Mbembe and Nuttall's migrant labourer, and Le Marcis' AIDS sufferer – a city accessible only through the practice of walking, of knowing with the feet, a city that runs like a thread through Bremner's own work on Johannesburg, in her attempts to reveal the manner in which it constitutes itself and its citizens as modern, urban and cosmopolitan.

The book also quite literally records Bremner's own walking about, between archives, urban



theory, critical theory, government offices, party caucuses, community meetings, gated enclaves, shopping malls and city streets. The volume speaks of a way of being in the world that is essentially nomadic – and perhaps part of a feminine topology – and that through movement, seeks to make connections among things.

Writing the City into Being segways into a discussion of the work of Clive Chipkin, as Johannesburg makes the transition from apartheid city to 'world-class city'. Attempts to redistribute resources and to confront the separations of apartheid have caused lacunae to open up in the bureaucratic processes of planning, leading to uncontrolled speculation, opportunity and crime. As a result, Johannesburg has become one of the most written about, photographed, exhibited,

globally-circulating and contested cities in the world.

South African cities, as instruments of the apartheid political economy, were not easily assimilated into the general urban discourse. However, this is not to say that its urban scholars were not engaged, as Bremner elegantly demonstrates with her whirlwind tour through the key players on the global stage, ranging from the beginning of the twentieth century to the four primary sites of architectural urban research today.

Bremner then challenges her readers to consider that African cities might serve as starting points for cities generally, since they remind us that urbanisation is a complex, constant process with no single predetermined end point: all cities in Africa are works in progress, driven largely by the

Below_ Snapshots of the new Johannesburg where the intermingling of fantasy and consumption cauterises reality



creative inventiveness of ordinary people.

Three themes conceptualise, theorise and bring into relation a number of conditions of radical uncertainty, unpredictability, ethereality and insecurity that characterise contemporary city-making: 'Smooth Space', 'Immaterial Architecture' and 'Terror' serve as the titles to photographic essays forming the central section, followed by 10 essays and an extensive bibliography with endnotes on pink paper – this is a modest volume, but satisfyingly dense and beautifully produced.

The essays, both written and photographic, present a facsimile of Johannesburg, which is at once complex, instantly recognisable and compelling. 'Six Ways of Being a Stranger' describes six characters haunting not only the delicate postcolonial project

in South Africa, but also, Bremner argues, everywhere in our globalised world.

'Remaking Johannesburg' reveals the logic of the city's past performance and theorises the strategies of the present, analysing the architecture of fear, in between and landscapes of desire, in which highly defended public realms of the new city are invested with meaning through their configuration as little bits of Italy. Anyone familiar with the architecture of Sun City, photographer David Goldblatt's recent work, or indeed any number of luxury hotels around the world, will recognise this intermingling of consumption and fantasy, which allows the reality of a place to be temporarily forgotten.

As a young architect, grappling with issues around identity, authenticity and truth



to materials, I was mortified by an established commercial architect's assertion that there were three types of architecture in South Africa: lightly themed, medium themed and Sun City. But as it turns out, he saw the future, or perhaps even built it.

It is a relief therefore to find that this volume offers so much more to those seeking to understand the relationship of architecture to cities in a rapidly changing and fragmenting world. And engagingly, Bremner does not try to present this vision all as her own. In parallel,

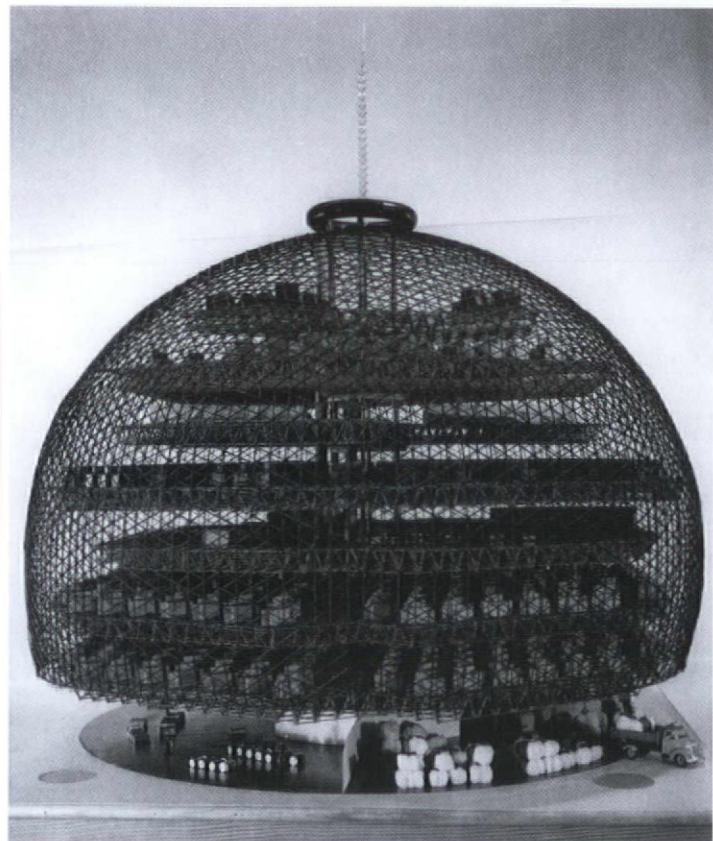
Le Roux, Judin, Vladislavic, Weizman et al's explorations are all carefully cross-referenced in this book. Perhaps Bremner's real triumph here, aside from writing with depth and authority, is to bring such a multitude of voices into a single coherent work, evidencing the fact that she has written a new Johannesburg into being.

CATHERINE DU TOIT

+ *Authoritative work*
- *Fast-moving subject*

For factories to thrive at inner-city densities, they need to function vertically

Below, left_ Buckminster Fuller, Automatic Cotton Mill, 1952, designed with North Carolina State University. Below, right_ Rooftop test track at Lingotto



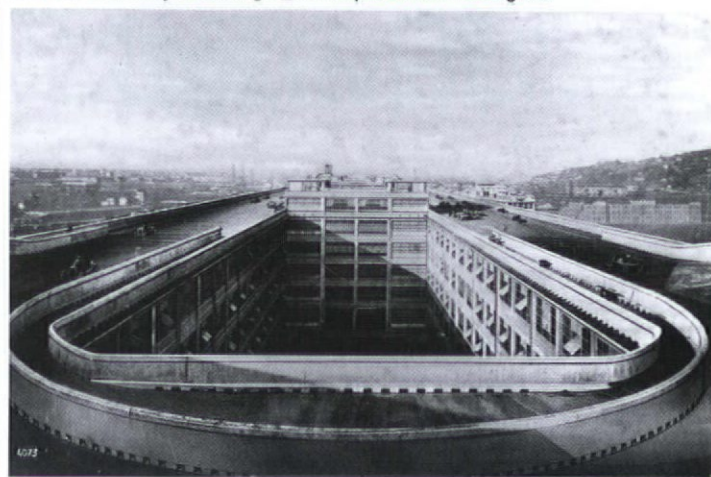
EXHIBITION / Vertical Urban Factory

Until 26 June, Skyscraper
Museum, New York
www.verticalurbanfactory.org

In the days following the financial crash, a British Second World War poster bearing the comforting advice 'Keep Calm and Carry On' became the ubiquitous survival slogan for the developing crisis. Almost immediately, it spawned a dozen imitators, not least a cheery green version with the British crown drawn from nuts and spanners and the message:

'Get Excited and Make Things'. The recession has awakened a passion for making, seen in the proliferation of hacker spaces and domestic 3D printers, in DIY conventions and books on how to 'make do and mend'. And not least in calls for manufacturing – long exiled to soulless suburban industrial parks and sweat shops in the Far East – to retake its place at the heart of our cities.

This agenda underpins a new exhibition at the Skyscraper Museum in New York City. Vertical Urban Factory, curated by architectural historian Nina Rappaport, celebrates the factory in the city. Not the



single-storey, windowless sheds confined to out-of-sight, zoned ghettos. But innovative, multi-storey buildings, existing alongside the places where we live, work and play.

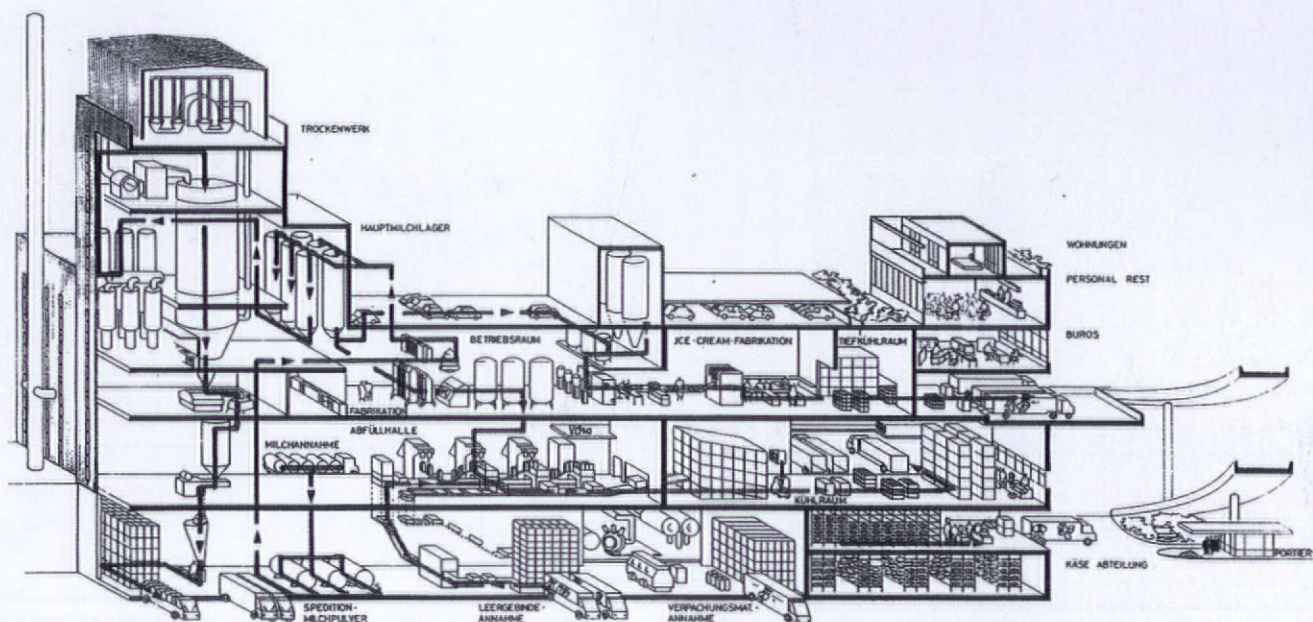
The modernists had great fun with the factory, and their achievements provide the substance for this heavily researched show. Photographs, drawings and commissioned models tell the stories behind a clutch of exemplar projects, among them Sir Owen Williams' Sainsbury's factory in London's Blackfriars (1934–36), Johannes Brinkman and Leendert van der Vlugt's Van Nelle factory in Rotterdam (1925–31) and Corb's Usine Duval (1946–51), as well as the socially conscious shoe manufacturer Tomas Bata's utopian workers' town.

Highland Park, the factory designed by Albert Kahn for Henry Ford's motor company, came to house the first moving assembly line, ushering in the era of mass production. Its numerous Crittal windows set

within a gridded concrete frame, earned it the nickname Crystal Palace. There's a photograph here of thousands of car chassis lined up outside the factory, produced during a single nine-hour shift. Kahn, himself a mass producer of buildings, ran his office like one of the factories he had designed. 'Architecture,' Kahn said, 'is 90 per cent business and 10 per cent art.'

For factories to thrive at inner-city densities, they need to function vertically – to create production flow over multiple levels. One of the better-known examples here is Giacomo Matte-Trucco's Lingotto Fiat factory, with its rising, spiral assembly line culminating in a banked rooftop test track. A lesser-known example and a highlight of the show is the 1949 design for an automatic cotton mill by Buckminster Fuller, developed with students from North Carolina State University. Fountain Factory, based on his prototype Dymaxion House,

Below_A.E. Bosshard and H. Widmer, Toni-Molkerei ramp, Zurich, Switzerland, 1974-76



contains a central mast core with a series of catwalks suspended above the factory floor. The cotton would be moved up through the building by means of a pneumatic tube set inside the core. This is the first time the project has been shown in recent years; when the Whitney Museum held a Buckminster Fuller retrospective in 2008, it was unable to find the original model for Fountain Factory, so omitted it entirely.

Not all the buildings here are vertically integrated, however. There are also examples of layered factories, like the stacked lofts in New York City's Garment District, where different manufacturers function independently on each floor. Another example, displayed in a section of the show devoted

solely to factories in New York City, is the Starrett-Lehigh Building in Manhattan. Conceived as a vertical street, it enabled trucks to drive straight into vast lifts that would carry them up to higher levels. 'Every floor a first floor' was the tagline used to attract tenants.

But while these 20th-century buildings answered the concerns of their time, today's challenges require a fresh response. At the end of this concentrated show, which also contains archival film footage and a dense timeline charting several centuries of factory development, Rappaport presents her own mini-manifesto for the urban factories of tomorrow. She calls for less stringent zoning laws to bring small scale and high-tech

manufacturing back into the city. And for architects to create efficient, environmentally responsible, spectacular spaces in which to house them. Through a series of contemporary projects – presented on boards laid out on reclaimed rollers from the Paragon Paint factory in Queens – she looks for early shoots of such factory architecture. Some of the examples here, including the ambitious redevelopment of Brooklyn's Navy Yard or Abalos and Herrera's Madrid recycling plant, are more inspiring than others, such as the poor conditions in Hong Kong's vertical factories.

Missing are the contemporary equivalents of Buckminster Fuller's Fountain Factory, the sort of architectural visions that

could bring her manifesto aspirations to life. There is welcome talk of another exhibition that would do just that, picking up where this one trails off. For Rappaport's part, she imagines the new factory as a flexible, transparent space, where skilled workers put their talents on display, and where making proudly comes back into the open. **ZOË BLACKLER**

- + *Transparent ideology*
- *Layers of complexity*

Stezaker subjects the image to a deep gaze until it betrays some locus of fascination

EXHIBITION /
This Is Tomorrow
 Until 6 March,
John Stezaker
 Until 18 March,
 Whitechapel Gallery,
 London,
www.whitechapel.org

EXHIBITION /
Philipp Otto Runge
 Until 13 March,
 Hamburger Kunsthalle,
 Hamburg, www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de

At its 1956 Whitechapel Gallery exhibition *This Is Tomorrow*, The Independent Group's ambivalent fascination with mass culture was captured in Richard Hamilton's pop icon *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?*. Hamilton assembled slivers of ads, comics and porn into what is often called a 'photomontage', but may be more exactly termed a 'photocollage'. For whereas montage intends to create a seamless continuity between story and image, as seen in films, collage leaves evident the fragmentation of parts.

This distinction underlies John Stezaker's photocollages. They present apparitions that approach but never quite reach hallucination because they always display the indices of their construction – the cuts and sutures of manipulated photographs. They deploy collage in minimal terms, the better to concentrate on one

original *motif* – often a single photograph, barely altered, or impinged upon by one other image. Like Hamilton, Stezaker began with found photographs, but rather than assemble cuttings, he isolated images from their captions and currency, altering them in a similar way to the Situationist *détournement*.

In architecture, Gordon Matta-Clark's chainsaw cuts into buildings came closest to this practice of diversion. But whereas *détournement* hijacked 'spectacle' into political redirection, Stezaker subjects the image to a deep gaze until it betrays some discrete locus of fascination, which he then transfers to an ambit more open to reverie. The *3rd Person Archive*, his file of tiny shots of isolated figures on unknown streets, arrests its subjects in an 'otherwhere' as enigmatic as the void above anonymous roofs in his series *Stolen Sky*, or the smoke clouds belching from truncated chimneys in *Sublime*.

Where a familiar icon, Big Ben, appears in *The End*, it but margins a gaze into a burning dusk beyond. This recurrence to some charged absence resembles certain passages in the films of Michelangelo Antonioni – think of *Blow-Up*, where David Hemmings obsessively dilates a photograph of a seemingly empty corner of a park to discern a hidden figure. Stezaker's favourite isolating device is an outline: either a shadow

Below_ John Stezaker, *Marriage (Film Portrait Collage) XXXII*, 2007



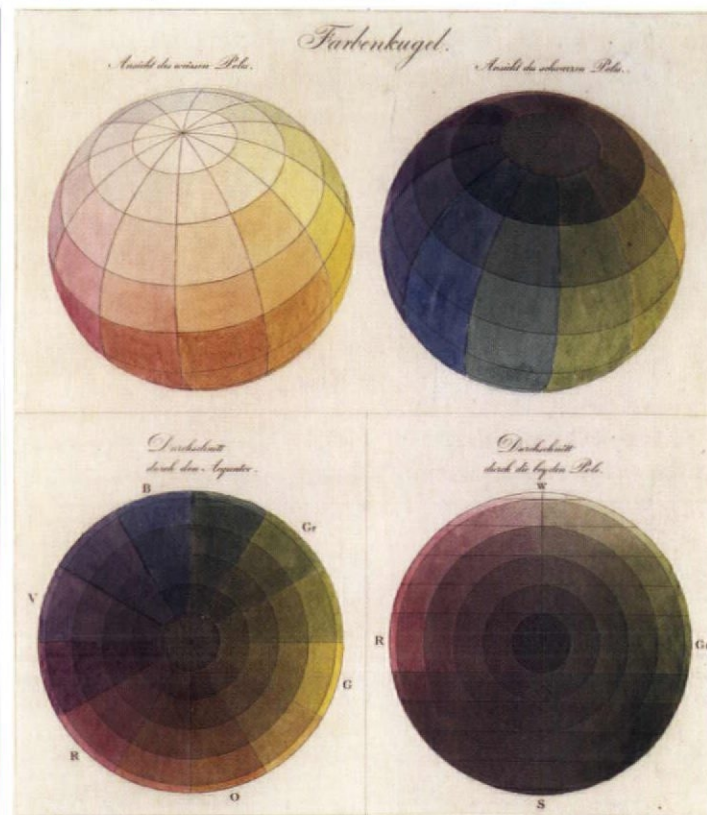
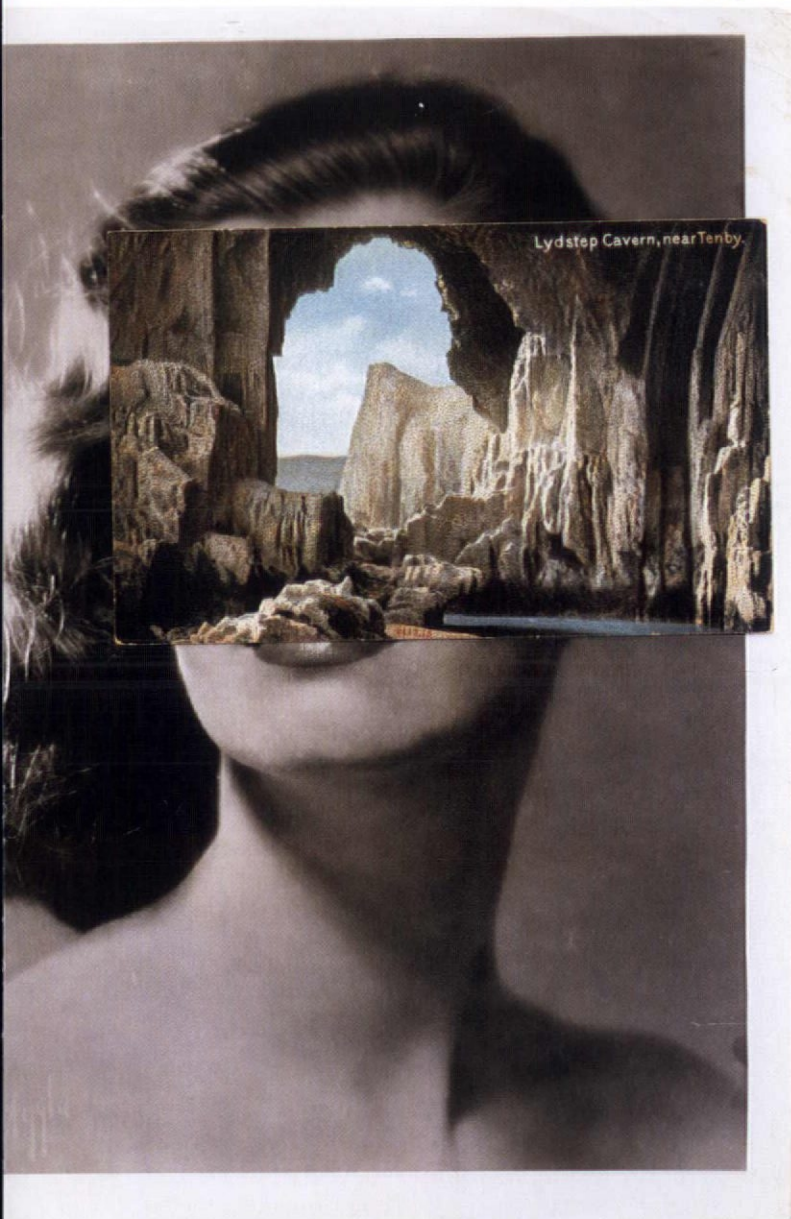
doppelgänger, filled with uncanny vitality, or a silhouette. For Stezaker, the silhouette is that negative *gestalt*, which most conduces from familiar to strange, or as Stezaker puts it, 'from stereotype to archetype'.

In the silhouette-as-symbol, Stezaker's photocollages connect to his admiration for the work of Philipp Otto Runge, exponent of a Romantic idealism that saw in the close study of singular things a window to transcendence. Among Runge's works at the Hamburger Kunsthalle, his *Scherenschnitte* ('scissor cuts') appear as

inceptions for a vision that was still unfolding at his death, aged 33 in 1810. Infusing crystalline black-and-white silhouettes with sprite vitality, they delineate the pictorial equivalent of a musical *motif* – a cell that is both a structural unit and a seed of potential for expressive development.

This is what Gottfried Semper found in the primordial knot, and what Paul Klee was seeking when he wrote in his diary in 1903: 'I want to find a tiny formal motif, one that I can hold on my pencil, and from this a host of examples will follow.'

Below, left_ John Stezaker, *Mask XXXV*, 2007. Below, right_ Philipp Otto Runge, *Probedrucke der Bildbeigabe zur 'Farbenkugel'*, 1809



Klee's idea of an initiating motif may be sensed in the Old English word 'Ord', meaning both the point of a tool and a point of origin, as in metallic 'ore'. Ord's modern German cognates are 'Ort', which means 'place', and the prefix 'Ur-', meaning 'primordial', and translatable

as 'ore-', widely used in the saying 'ore-iron'.

Runge's other founding motif was his *Farbenkugel*, or 'Colour globe', which was to compass all colours in a single sphere, intended to be both a map of chromatic relations and a symbol of the optic manifold

of divine nature. This he depicted in watercolours of planetary beauty, rendered in precise architectural projection. He evolved too, his sequence of allegorical compositions *Morning, Day, Evening, Night* into proto-architectural visions that configured flowers, infants, sun, moon and stars into airy botanic gazebos midway between a Robert Adam pergola and a glass-and-iron conservatory.

Such a magical crystal palace was imagined in ETA Hoffmann's tale *The Golden Pot*. Indeed, a fantasy of primordial/ supernatural architecture ran from the Romantics through to the Moderns of the 20th century,

so we may see the *Farbenkugel*'s truest architectural descendant as Bruno Taut's Glass Pavilion at the 1914 Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne.

As for Stezaker's intuition of the uncanny cliché, we still await, despite the work of Walter Benjamin, an exponent of the architecture of the 'cliché sublime'. **BRIAN HATTON**

- + *Windows to the soul*
- *Mazes of deconstruction*

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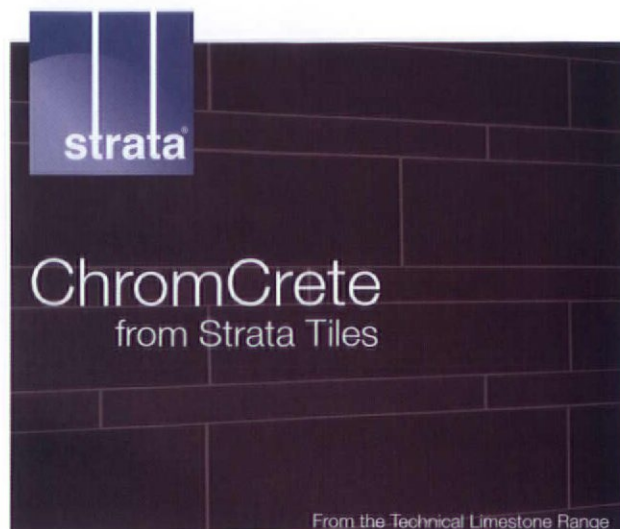
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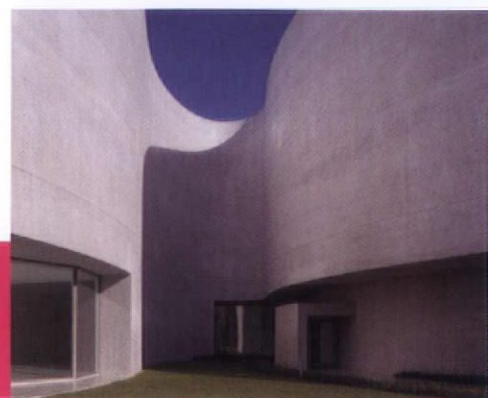
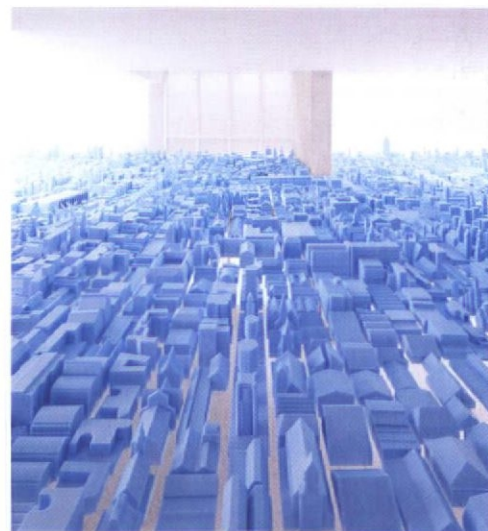
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DELIGHT

Artist/architect Daniel Maggs made this mixed-media work on paper, entitled *Shack Rise*. It was exhibited in Spier Contemporary 2010 – an art biennale in Cape Town). He depicts an imaginary scenario where a property developer goes bust. The reinforced concrete building being designed for a generic multi-storey apartment block is abandoned.

Inhabited by squatters, each floor is populated with makeshift schemes and DIY engineering. Everything on site is recycled and put to use in the spirit of 'n Boer maak 'n plan'. The squatters are ingenious and resourceful in their methods of maximising the use of space. Rooftops are planted with vegetables and trees, materials are left in their natural state to age gracefully, or decorated in a vibrant way.

The work conjures an adaptable community/organic democracy, celebrating the potential of the human and creative spirit to endure against the odds. This vision stands in counterpoint to the subsidised 'wastelands', the South African government is building for the poor and the endless tracts of bland middle-class suburbia.



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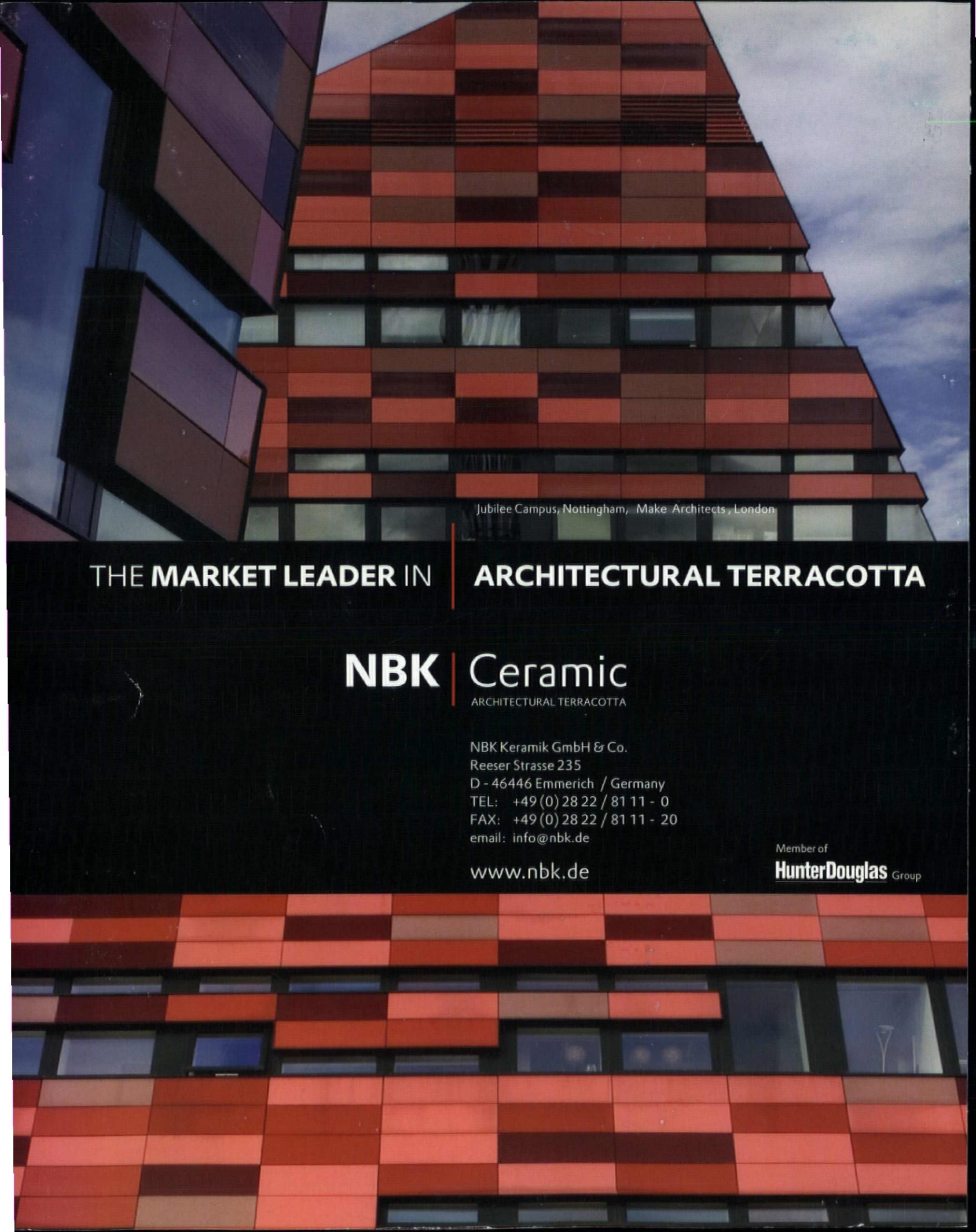


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