

Mapping the Post-War

objective

The desire for this course came from an observation of the remarkable frequency to which architects and works from this time period are referenced in contemporary discourse today. In order to gainfully participate in this we need a deeper understanding than provided to us in previous courses, and hope that this course can satisfy that desire while allowing enough freedom to be adaptable to changing interests.

We considered numerous different lenses to study this time period through, but ultimately reconciled ourselves with the fact that we simply didn't possess enough breadth of knowledge to distinguish a precise area into which we wanted to dive. The resultant curriculum and reflections are a broad survey of the post-war period, unrestricted by country, style, or typology - and has served to give us a comprehensive look at the trends and narratives that run throughout.

The independent study met twice a week, and was conducted under the wonderful guidance of Professor Kai Gutschow. We hope to be able to continue this topic and mode of investigation as we progress further into our education and our careers.

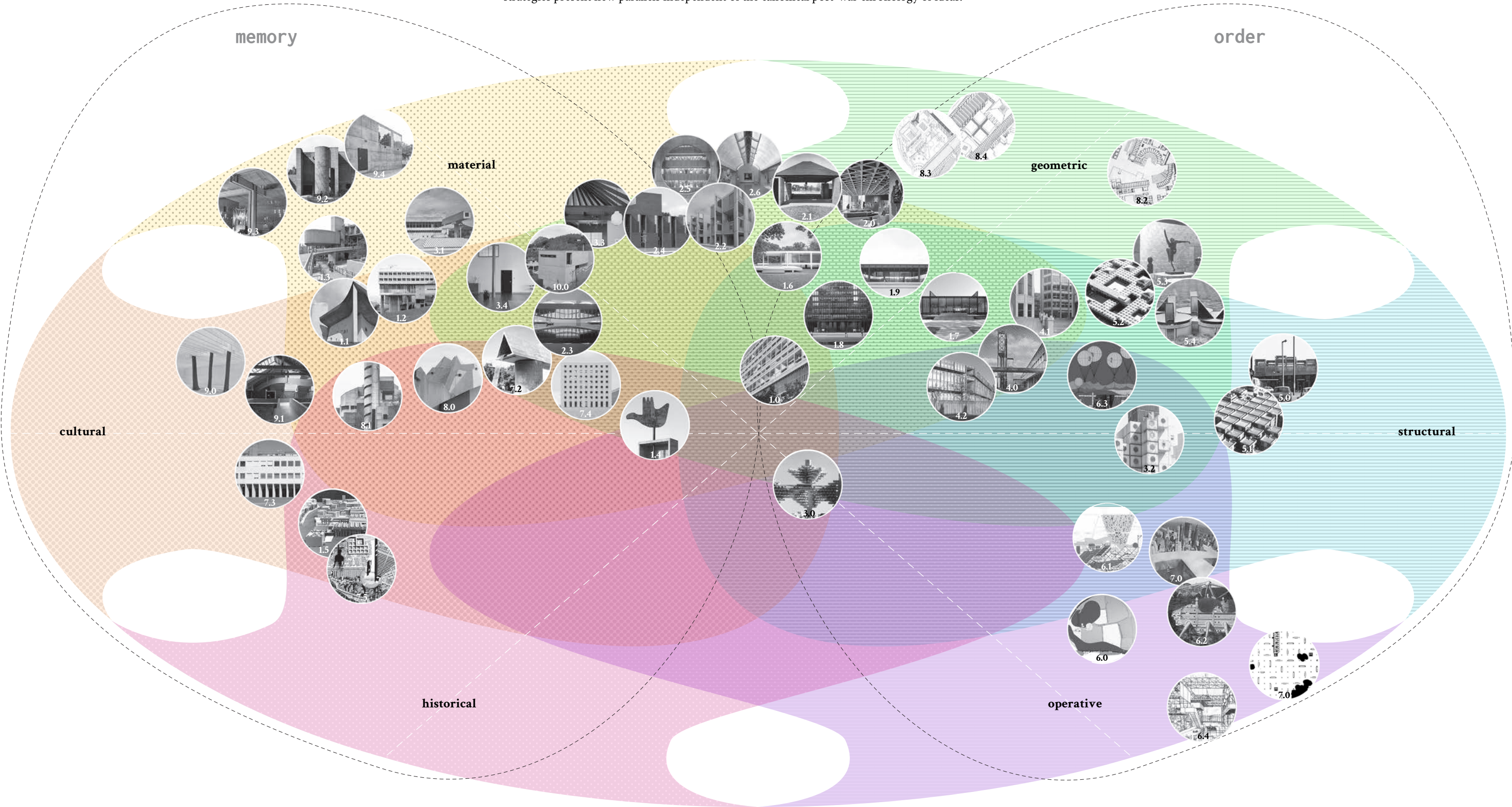
CE, RK, BS, HL

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preservation and control in the face of contagion

The post-war era was a preemptive act of preservation of institutional identity against the contagion of a bastardized modernism, operating in the shadow of two devastating consecutive world wars. Architects of the post-war period reacted to these circumstances in two distinct ways: first, with intense reassertion of cultural, historical, and/or material identity through memory, and second, with an assertive implementation of geometric, structural, and/or operative order. The overlaps in these strategies present new parallels independent of the canonical post-war chronology of ideas.



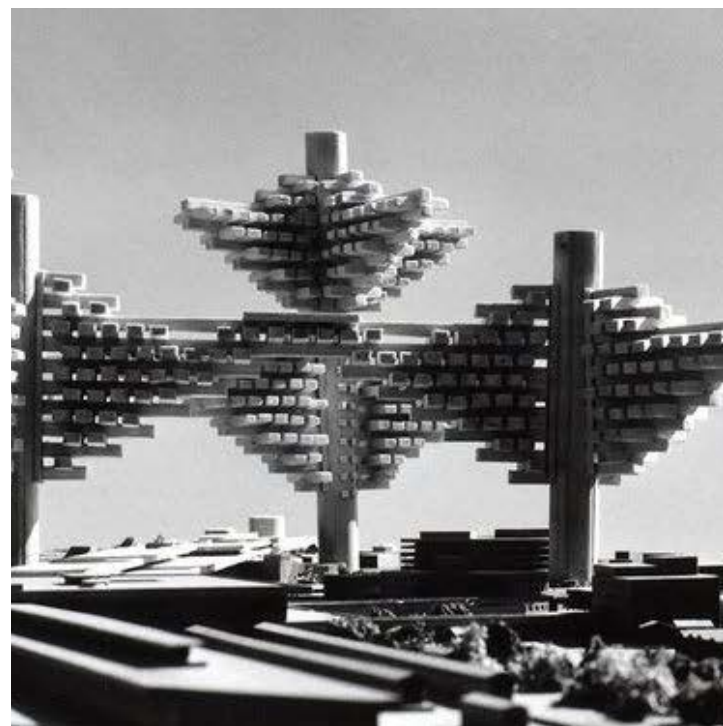
identity

identity

diagram legend

- 1.0 Le Corbusier - Unite d'Habitation '52
- 1.1 Le Corbusier - Ronchamp Chapel '54
- 1.2 Le Corbusier - La Tourette '60
- 1.3 Le Corbusier - Carpenter Center '63
- 1.4 Le Corbusier - Chandigarh '65
- 1.5 Le Corbusier - Venice Hospital '65
- 1.6 Mies van der Rohe - Farnsworth House '56
- 1.7 Mies van der Rohe - Crown Hall '56
- 1.8 Mies van der Rohe - Seagram Building '58
- 1.9 Mies van der Rohe - Neue Nationalgalerie '68
- 2.0 Louis Kahn - Yale Art Gallery '53
- 2.1 Louis Kahn - Trenton Bath House '55
- 2.2 Louis Kahn - Salk Institute '65
- 2.3 Louis Kahn - Palazzo dei Congressi '68
- 2.4 Louis Kahn - Rochester Unity Church '69
- 2.5 Louis Kahn - Phillips Exeter Library '72
- 2.6 Louis Kahn - Kimbell Art Museum '72
- 3.0 Arata Isozaki - City in the Air '62
- 3.1 Arata Isozaki - Oita Prefecture Library '66
- 3.2 Kisho Kurokawa - Nakagin Capsule Tower '70
- 3.3 Kazuo Shinohara - Umbrella House '59
- 3.4 Kazuo Shinohara - House in White '66
- 4.0 Alison & Peter Smithson - Hunstanton School '64
- 4.1 Alison & Peter Smithson - Economist Building '64
- 4.2 Alison & Peter Smithson - Robin Hood Gardens '72
- 5.0 Herman Hertzberger - Lin Mij Textile Workshop '64
- 5.1 Herman Hertzberger - Central Beheer Apeldoorn '72
- 5.2 Aldo van Eyck - Amsterdam Orphanage '60
- 5.3 Aldo van Eyck - Sculpture Pavilion '66
- 5.4 Aldo Van Eyck - Wheels of Heaven Church '66
- 6.0 Archigram - Cushicle '64
- 6.1 Archigram - Plug-In City '64
- 6.2 Archigram - Walking City '64
- 6.3 Archigram - Instant City '69
- 6.4 Cedric Price - Fun Palace '61
- 7.0 Archizoom - No-Stop City '68
- 7.1 Superstudio - New Domestic Landscape '72
- 7.2 Aldo Rossi - Monument to the Resistance '65
- 7.3 Aldo Rossi - Galleratese Housing '67
- 7.4 Aldo Rossi - San Cataldo Cemetery '71
- 7.5 Aldo Rossi - Citta Analoga '76
- 8.0 Gottfried Böhm - Mariendom Church '63
- 8.1 Gottfried Böhm - Christi Auferstehung Church '70
- 8.2 Oswald Mathias Ungers - Enschede Dormitory '64
- 8.3 Oswald Mathias Ungers - Deutsche Botschaft '65
- 8.4 Oswald Mathias Ungers - Museum Preussischer '65
- 9.0 Sverre Fehn - Nordic Pavilion '58
- 9.1 Sverre Fehn - Hamar Bispegaard Museum '73
- 9.2 Sigurd Lewerentz - St. Mark's Church '60
- 9.3 Sigurd Lewerentz - St. Peter's Church '62
- 9.4 Sigurd Lewerentz - Flower Kiosk '69
- 10.0 Luigi Snozzi - Casa Bernasconi '90

in the face of contagion



Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault argue that the architecture of the post-war period is far more multifaceted than the traditional architectural canon lets on, the typical narrative being that the post-war era was a period of strange and inconsequential design that ended with the inception of the postmodern establishment. Goldhagen and Legault describe the anxieties that plagued post-war architects that led them to incredibly diverse experimentation from the mid-'40s to the early '70s, yet in "Anxious Modernisms" they fail to systematically organize the strategies with which post-war architects responded to the two dominant threats to architecture of the time: the possibility of total annihilation with the development of the atomic bomb, and the growing pandemic of acontextual, geographically indifferent modernist architecture, dubbed the international style. Goldhagen and Legault describe themes of the post-war period, from popular culture/everyday life, anti-architecture, and democratic freedom to primitivism, authenticity, and regionalism/place. Yet this cluster of groupings misses a simple organizational bifurcation that is exposed in the context of growing architectural homogenization in the wake of before-unseen destruction - an interplay between a desire to control and an instinct to preserve. At the core of the post-war period is a simultaneous collective reassertion of the significance of cultural difference and a reactive imposition of control over one's environment. This reassertion of culture clarifies identity while the instinct to control fills the theoretical cavities of pre-war modernism and takes advantage of the conceptual and literal tabula rasa condition of much of Europe and Japan.

preservation and memory

Material consideration carries with it the phenomenological associations of mass, texture, color, scent, as well as the associated field of craft, which includes considerations of dimension, assembly, and detail. Attention to materiality is exhibited in the obsessive purity of Sigurd Lewerentz's uncut bricks at St. Peter's Church or Louis Kahn's respect for the brick's dimensional and structural identity at Phillips Exeter Library. Concrete plays a vital role in the success of post-war architecture as its role as "liquid stone" suggests a material with a memory unlike any other. The heroic Oita Prefecture Library by Arata Isozaki pushes forward an agenda of accessibility by virtue of the symbolic quality of concrete to adopt any form. Concrete might be called the most democratic material. Swiss architects such as Luigi Snozzi also adopt concrete as a medium for design, with a greater focus on the material quality of the finished surface as an exhibition of material craft. Material is a primary means by which these architects impose a rigorous methodology which carries deeper and more visceral associations than the abstract pre-war metaphor of the machine.

Cultural preservation embodies a need to assign a clear national identity through reference to a primitive, pre-industrial ritual past. This mythical past collective identity draws from the regional traditions of the place to reassert a lucid image of an established national identity. Sverre Fehn's Nordic Pavilion evokes the contemplative simplicity of the Norwegian forest just after snow, while Gottfried Böhm's Mariendom recalls the jagged peaks of Germany's mountainous terrains. Cultural identity of the post-war period draws heavily from the geography of its place because it is intrinsic to the romantic way of traditional life but because it also presents a strong antidote to the blank placelessness of the international style.

Historical engagement has been a polarizing topic in the post-war era in that groups such as CIAM had intense debates about the applicability or even relevance of pre-modern architectural history. Yet architects such as Le Corbusier had maintained a degree of respect for classical ideas of order, harmony, and procession that then saw implementation in his projects from the very beginning. But there exists a different type of historical engagement, one addressing regional history. Le Corbusier's unbuilt Venice hospital directly confronted the deep history of Venice through the quiltwork method by which it stitches into the urban fabric, a stark contrast to Le Corbusier's typical object-like forms, exhibiting respect for the historical outward growth of Venice's islands. Aldo Rossi, however, through collective memory, engages history through an 'archaeology of the mind' that uncovers history of place through abstracted nostalgia. These varied strategies for addressing the history of place is another means by which the post-war architects sought to maintain control over their diverse environments with the threat of homogeneity looming. This historical engagement would later develop into the postmodern obsession with historicism, but its connection to the unique qualities of place would inevitably dwindle in exchange for a more generic interpretation of classicism.

order and control

Geometric form is perhaps the most intuitive form of architectural control. The post-war period saw an increase in highly controlled and rigid geometric organizations, perhaps those best known are the plans of Louis Kahn, whose work attempts to reconcile modern programmatic needs with pure geometries, principally the square and the circle. In contrast, the work of Oswald Mathias Ungers sees a similar rigor of pure geometries but its collective expression is arguably more rational and contextually engaged through form. While Kahn employed a top-down large-scale form to smaller discretization, Ungers' projects worked more from the small-scale to the larger agglomeration of parts. Nevertheless, both architects imposed a newly formed system of geometric control that suggests a fundamental shift in organizational strategies of pre-war modernism, and it is this culture of strict geometric thought that would later feed the formal ideas of the so-called postmodern "whites."

Structural control refers not to structural statics, but rather to the ideas associated with the structuralists, who put into practice ideas about how a building might address the variety of scales inherent to architecture, from the individual to the urban. Structural ideas are not limited however, to the structuralists, but rather permeate architectural discourse in the 60s, in particular with the work of Archigram as well as the Metabolists. Archigram's Plug-In City and Instant City in particular exhibit the characteristics of structural thinking that endows the city with a certain organizational idea without overarticulating the specifics of its material form. The metabolists, especially with Kurokawa's Capsule Tower, exhibit similar ideas of clear programmatic, compartmental, and hierarchical organization. Arata Isozaki's City in the Air is of particular interest in that it demonstrates these structural ideas while also engaging the newly redefined cultural and historical identity of Japan, making it a particularly holistically-engaged example of post-war architectural control and preservation. Structural control represents, similar to geometric, a means by which post-war architects could reintegrate order into cities that had been plagued by the dual chaos of world war and modernism's frenzy to build.

Operative architecture argues for an architecture that engages processes, whether they be enabling programmatic processes and plurality of event, as was envisioned by Cedric Price in his "Fun Palace" project, or by describing the capitalist processes of consumption and the underlying organizational theory that underlies such a framework, outlined in Archizoom's "No-Stop City." Many of Archigram's projects also might be classified as operative, for example the Cushicle project, which presents new possibilities of how living as a process might be redefined in a technologically integrated contemporary society. These architects who engaged the operations and processes of architecture as opposed to their discrete forms and layouts identified a particular looseness with which pre-war modernism addressed living as being purely a consideration of material form, as opposed to a unified vision of the complex interplay between matter and behavior.

RK

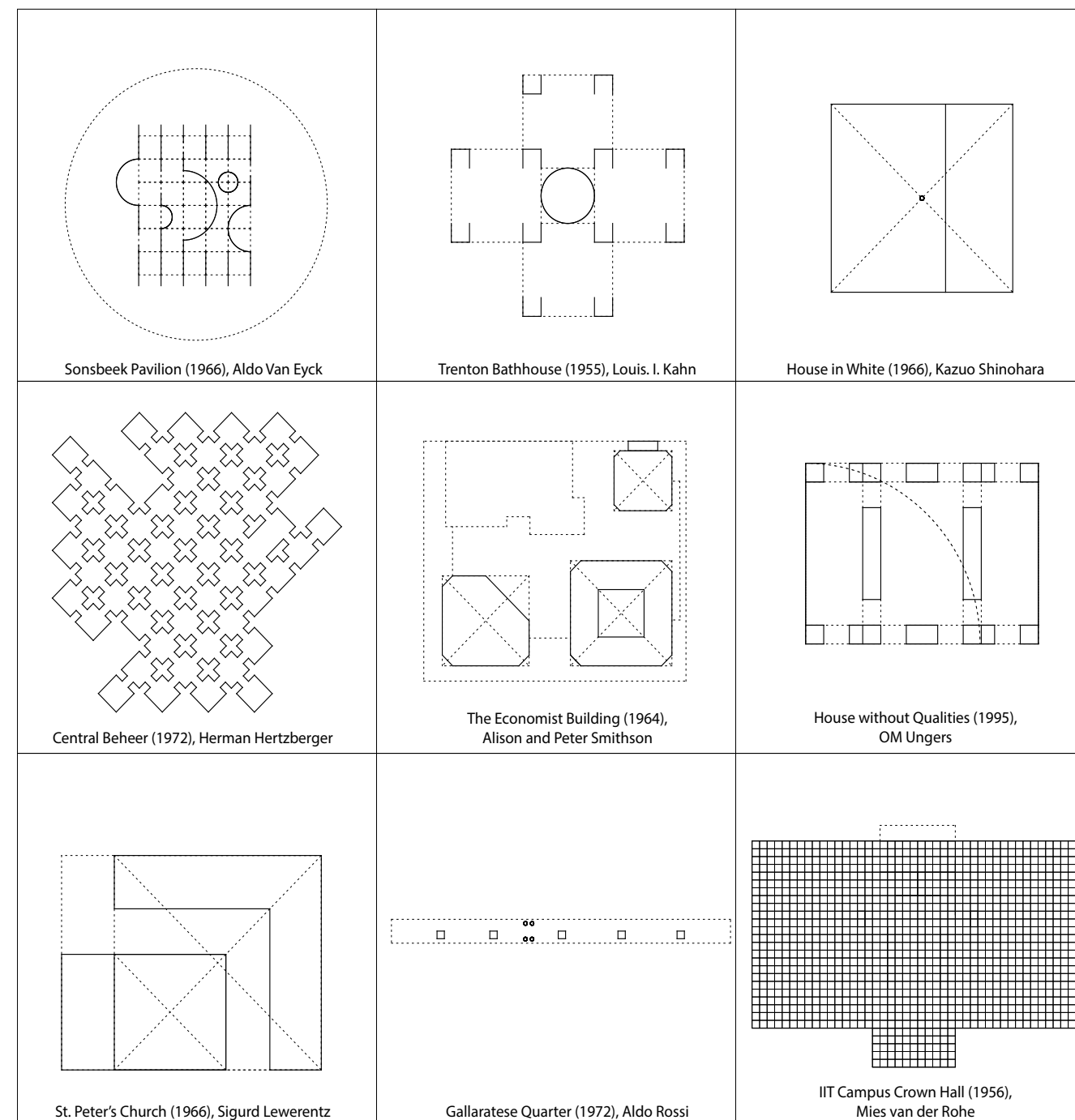
new scale for a changing society

In the Post-War era (approximately 1945-1970), several years have passed since the birth of Modernism and its movement was no longer in its infancy. Modernism has developed its own history and the Post-War architects began to radically reassess its legacy and orthodoxy to challenge/reform its lessons to continue the redeemable qualities of the movement. As many Modernist Architects put forth the agenda of rejecting the history of architecture previous to Modernism, the Post-War architects rejected the anti-historical attitude of Modernism and were comfortable in referencing not only the history prior to Modernism but also the history of Modernism as well. The coexistence of the aesthetic of Modernism and histories before it was the primary concern for the Post War architects and through their work they achieved a lineage in creating work that was fundamentally modern in its aesthetic but grounded in the realities of its context.

Plethora of new architectural ideas came out during the Post War. Some focused on a radical departure from traditional architecture discipline by creating an aesthetic and working in a medium that was unconventional, while some architects had a more historical stance and developed a new lense of looking into history and reforming the mistakes of Modernist Architects through disciplinary ideas. My interest in this time period is the latter group of architects. The revisionist attitude by architects like Rossi, Van Eyck, Hertzberger, Shinohara, Kahn, Smithosons, Lewerentz, etc are inspiring as they created their own sense of proportion, composition, and scale to better suit the people of their generation. Through a series of diagrams I will like to demonstrate their ideas.

The diagrams shown on the left represent nine buildings by nine architects. Each building scheme is derived through an aggregation or distortion of a square geometry. The square in each project is experienced in a completely different scale - a room, a house, a pavilion, an office building, a church, and a bathhouse. The square composition in its plan is not intended for any visual or aesthetic appeal through its drawing but rather to achieve greater collective experience within the square space. The particular program of the space is not important as the feeling of the space becomes the primary concern for the architects.

HL



the grid

“The grid’s mythic power is that it makes us able to think we are dealing with materialism while at the same time it provides us with a with a release into belief.”

Rosalind Krauss in “Grids”

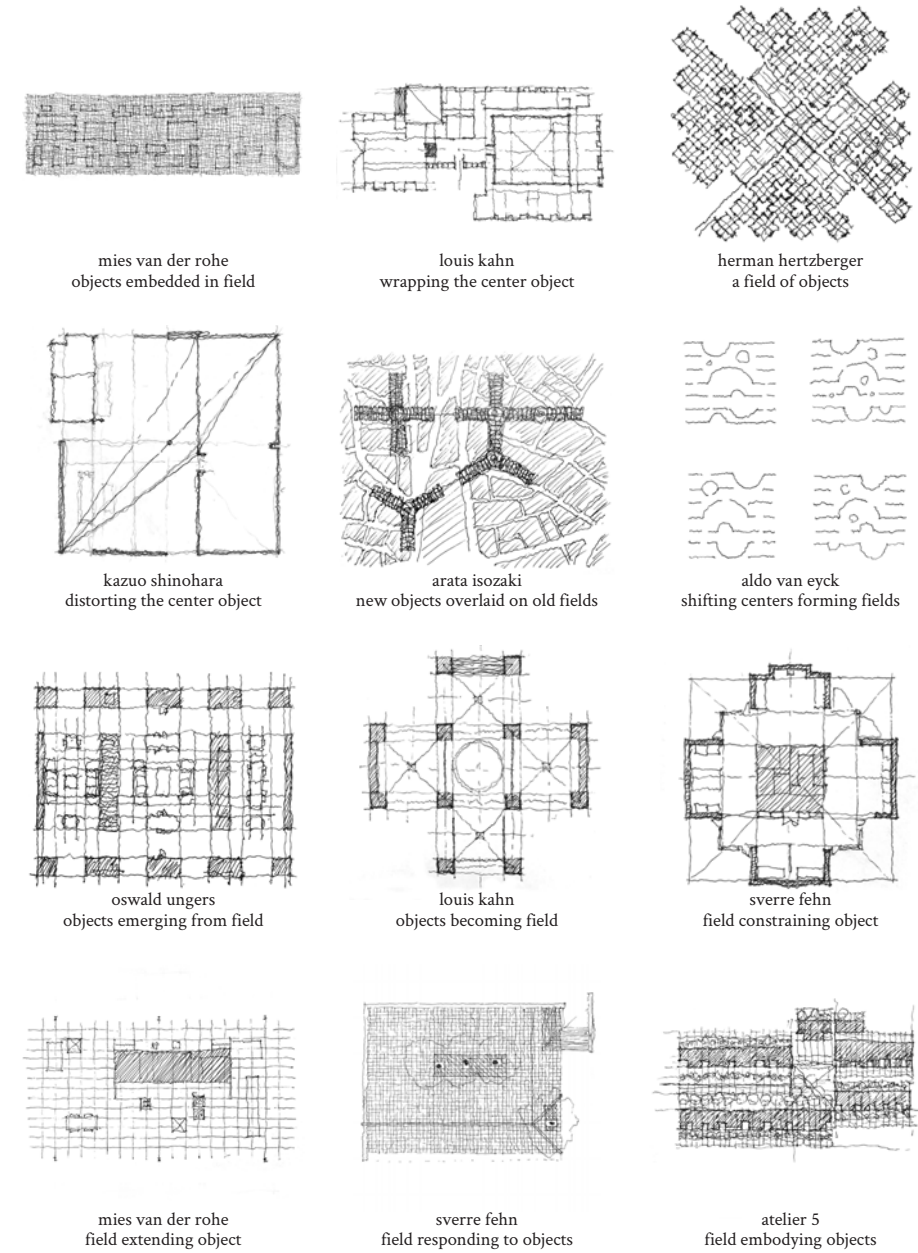
The Postwar architects utilized and manipulated the grid as formal and social spatial strategy to create order amidst a world of disorder. The grid becomes autonomous structure, tethering architecture to notions of composition, history, and experience. The grid becomes didactic language, embodying temporal and spatial notions, offering insight into the architect’s interpretations of program, sequence, and form. It forms spaces, walls, furniture, enclosure, roof, imparting each with nuance and articulation.

The grid, while being a regulating strategy, is never anonymous nor borrowed. The grid is manifested in each project as responsive to a variety of contexts, agendas, precedents. The grid becomes field, entangling, generating, distorting objects and spaces. Diagramming the grid informs the reader of the material and intellectual identity of each project. The grid is specific, revealing ephemeral qualities of the spatial experience.

BS

the grid

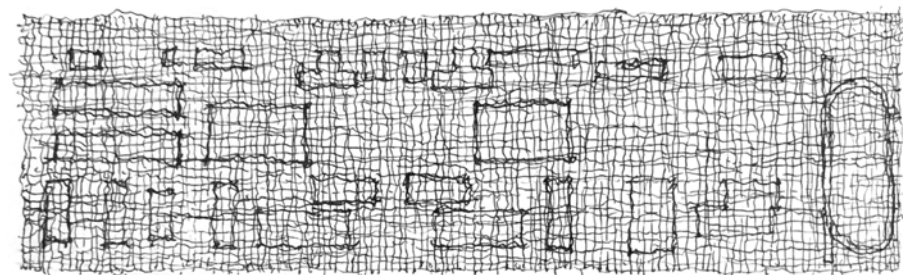
cataloging the grid



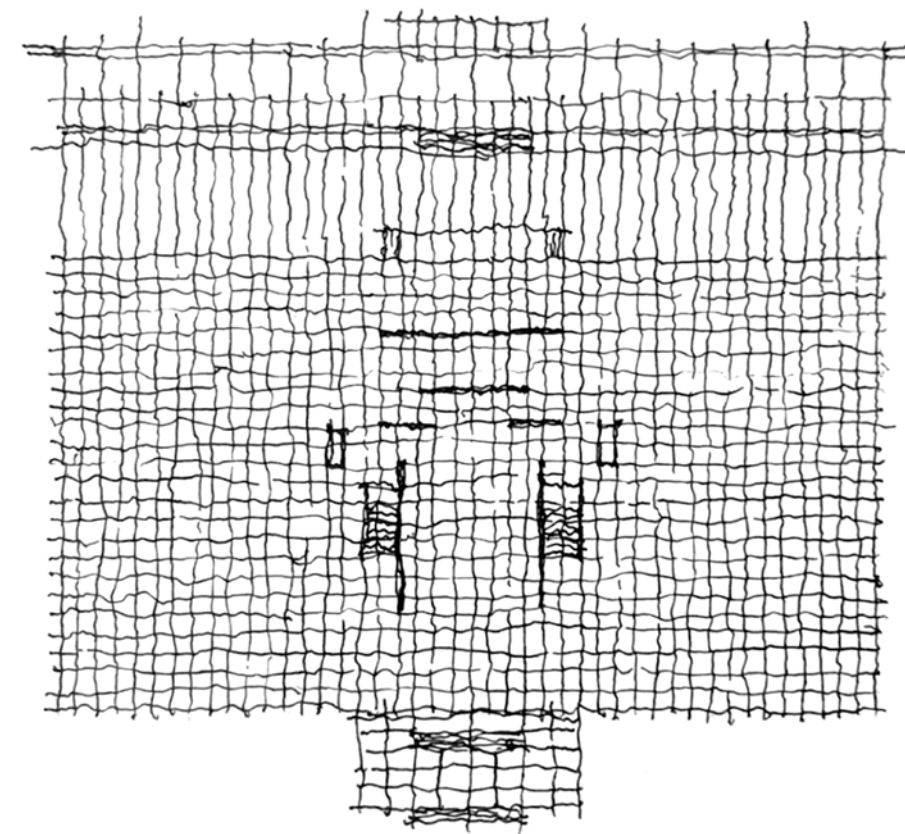
the grid

scale: tectonics

mies van der rohe iit campus



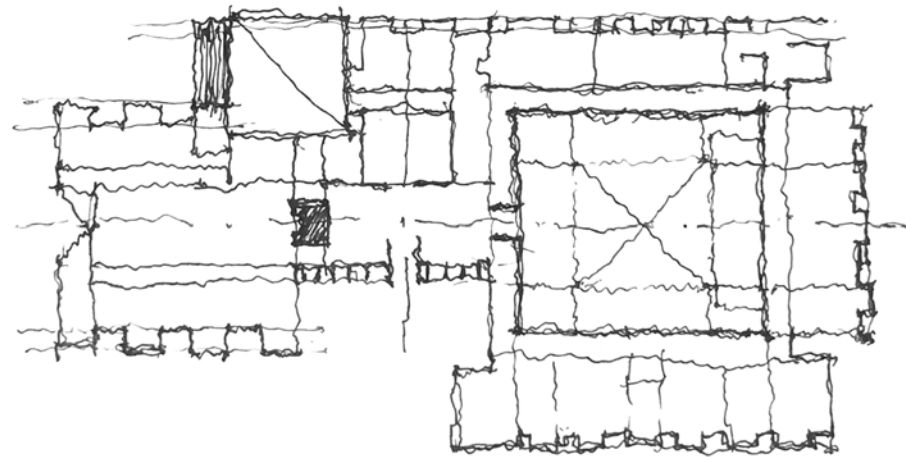
Mies' IIT campus plan explores how carefully crafted objects are embedded within an encompassing field. At the building scale, the hierarchy remains skewed towards the grid. There is a neglect of object overlap, in favor of a universality of the grid condition. The grid's abrupt edges, meeting the city with no objects and only hidden fields, yields an understanding of the placelessness of the space. Buildings as objects are organized with specificity and a responsiveness to context, but they sit as isolated forms. The field itself resists adaptation and influence from its surroundings.



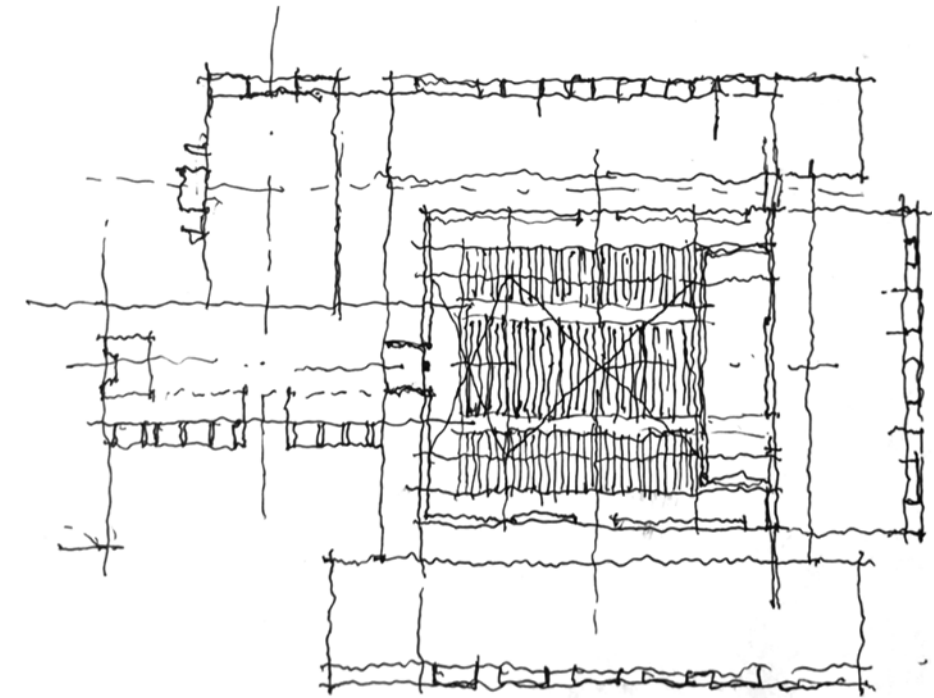
Mies' detailing is designed to isolate each tectonic element (floor/wall/roof), allowing objects to extend beyond, tethering them to the overall field. The underlying grid's visibility is essential to the construction systems. The disappearance of the ephemeral object into the grid establishes the anonymity of the field condition. The submersion of the programmatic clutter to the basement condition as to alleviate vertical tension in the main space furthers the hierarchical understanding of the grid as the overriding geometry. The detail, the wall, the building, the site exist to populate the grid.

scale: complexity

louis kahn first unitarian church



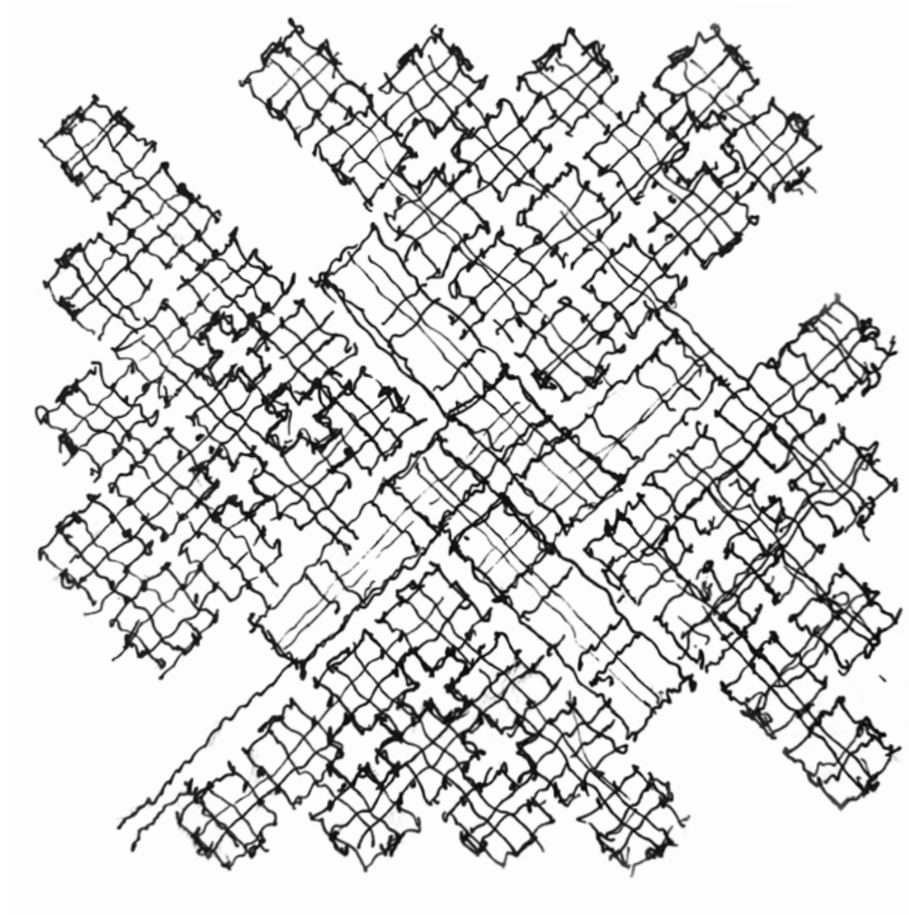
The field of Kahn's church is highly object oriented. The sanctuary space serves as the origin, wrapped with layers of circulation and classrooms. Edges and extensions are denied to create enfilade. The program is interpreted as strictly hierarchical and spatially. The church is understood as a community which occupies a center with resources and service spaces built as field extensions. The walls are heavily thickened, enabling ductwork and ventilation to exist between the space and the additive forms, further isolating it and establishing the sanctuary as a seclusion.



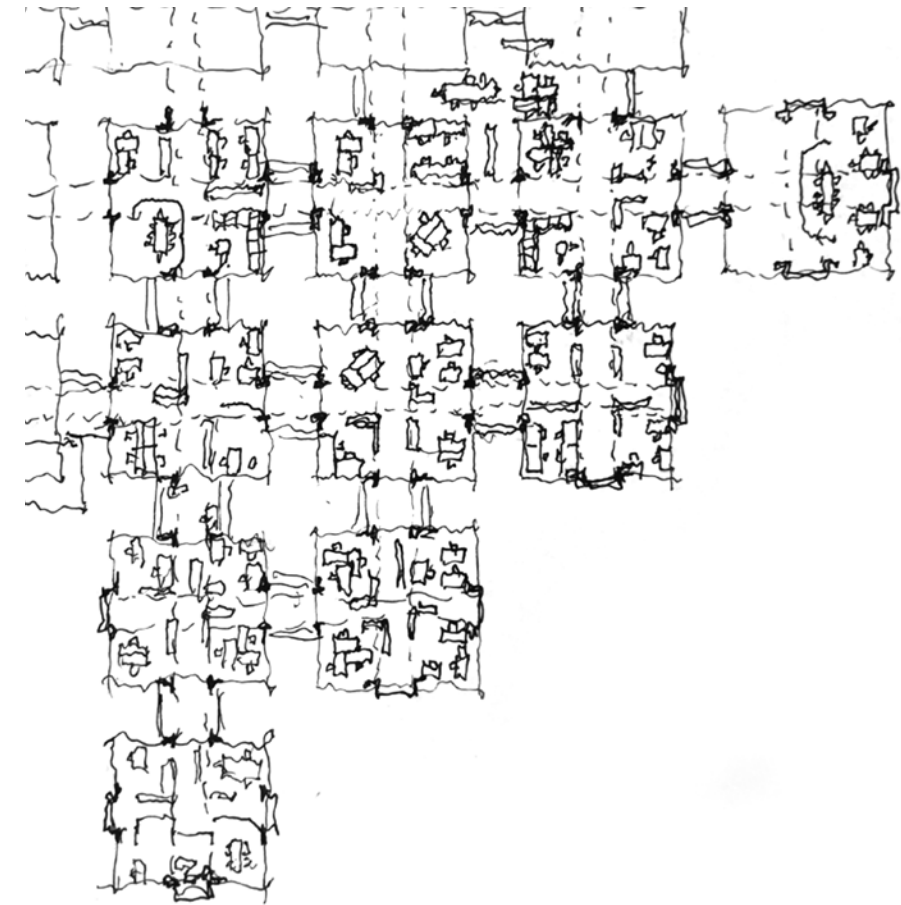
The purity of the sanctuary space is complicated with further examination. The circulation is divided by the entry column. The symmetry is disrupted by the organ loft and alter space. The back wall slips beyond the object. The circulation and classrooms which wrap the object appear highly articulated by the underlying grid. The object is still understood as destination, but the path, the journey to reach it is equally present. The complexity demystifies the object, illuminating the strength of the field, of the disruption of purity.

scale: humanist objects

herman hertzberger centraal beheer

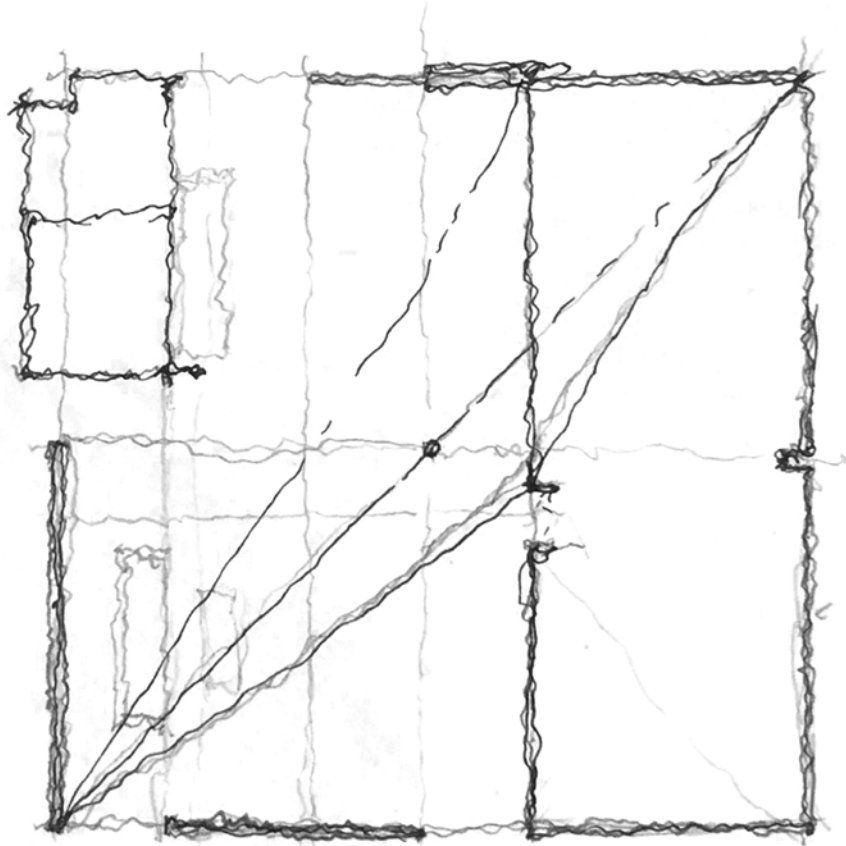


Hertzberger's Centraal Beheer appears to be an overwhelmingly field oriented project. The building reorients the urban condition creating order. However, further investigation reveals the project as a field of highly crafted objects. The field is no longer field, instead explores specificity and nuance. The edge condition, unlike Mies' IIT campus plan, becomes serrated, accepting and embracing the context. In section, the building steps down towards the edge, becoming a hill town, a collection of distinct elements, never an encompassing grid.

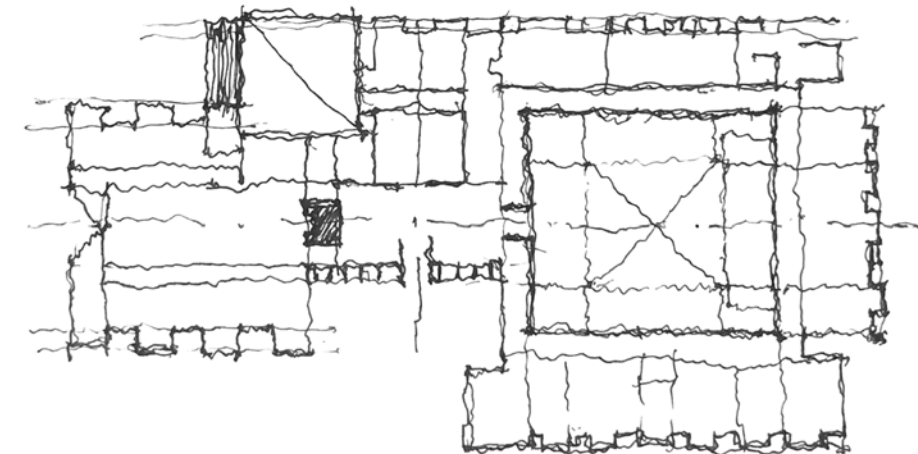


At the scale of the object, each unit is carefully studied and assigned programmatic function and spatial identity. The design of the building originates from the single element. The office building embodies Hertzberger's structuralist principals. Architecture, for Hertzberger, is about occupation, about people and their lives. The space and field are secondary to the object, to the individual. The grid is domesticated and inhabited.

center: objectification

kazuo shinohara
house in white

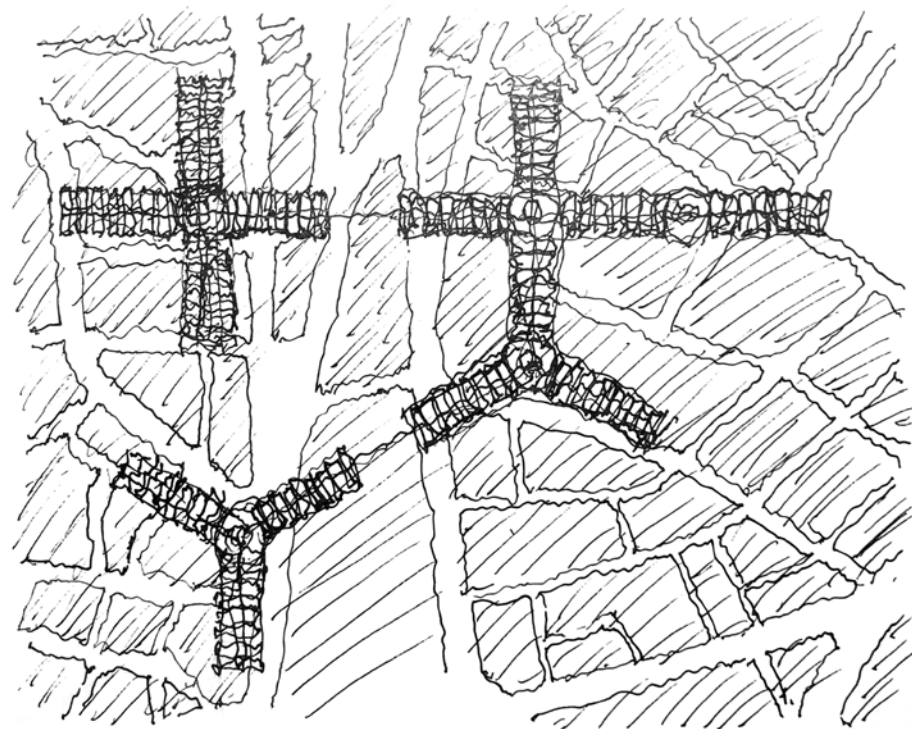
The column is placed as object at the center. Walls and openings are positioned and repositioned to distort the sensation of center, creating an invisible grid to organize the space. The grid begins to distort the object, altering its reading within the overall space. Shinohara's house attempts to modernize historic understandings of proportion and composition. Even the facade treatment reinterprets the traditional Japanese screen grid in atypical sizing and ratios.

louis kahn
first unitarian church

Kahn places the sanctuary space as the center object. Where Shinohara's grid disrupts the formal reading of the object, Kahn uses the grid to wrap the core. The field is highly articulated and developed to minimize its formal reading. The field is read within object specificity, becoming constant conversation between the individual and the community. The building reunderstands the programmatic tension and formalizes it with its complex dichotomy of object and grid.

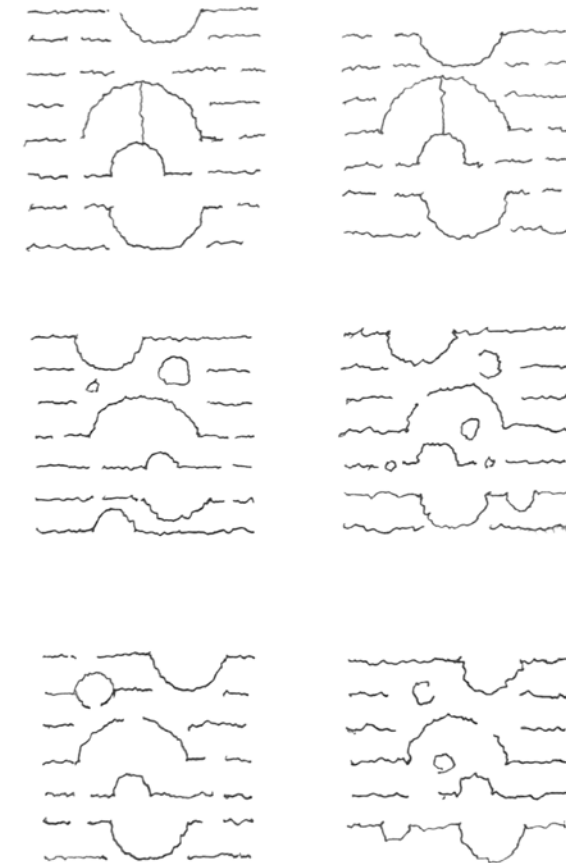
center: field response

arata isozaiki
city in the air



Isozaki's towers in the sky create new grids rejecting the disorder of the destroyed city grid. The centers are indifferent to the original field, instead creating anonymous, objectified grids in the sky. The chaos of the horizontal plane is ignored and forgotten as towers grow vertically, extending out to form new means of living. Housing shifts from vast horizontal planes to arranged around the point condition. It becomes about a sharing of resources.

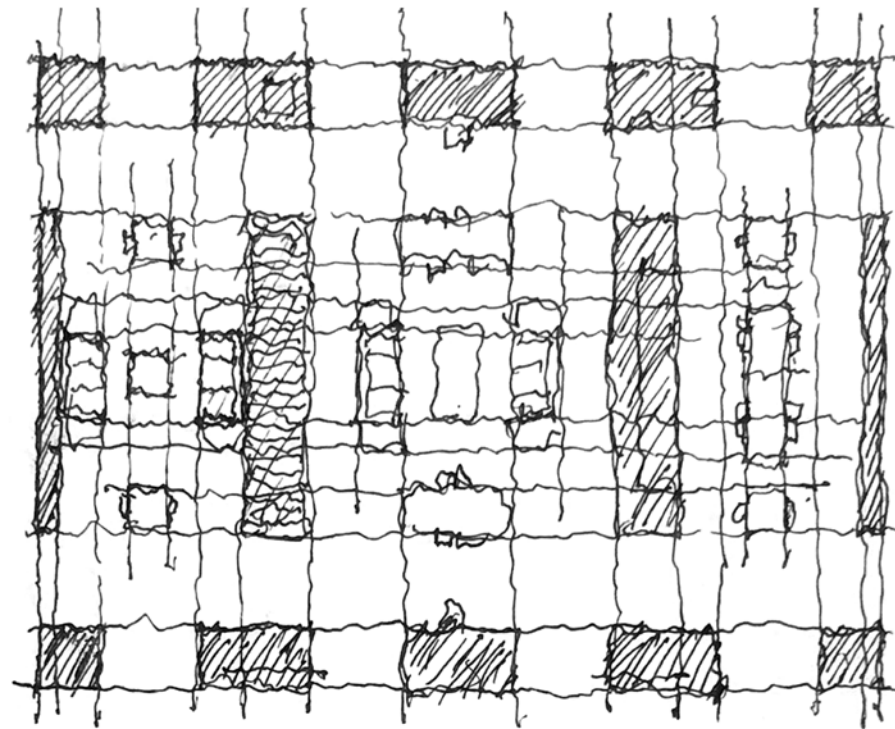
aldo van eyck
sonsbeek sculpture park



The sculpture park demonstrates a series of field explorations where multiple centers attract and repel the grid, forming niches, openings, and circulation. The repetitive, simple nature of the walls that align and distort to the grid become a complex spatial device to create unexpected internalized conditions. The grid becomes highly specific and attuned to the experience of the building. The objects that contort the grid become the intimate spaces for sculpture and views.

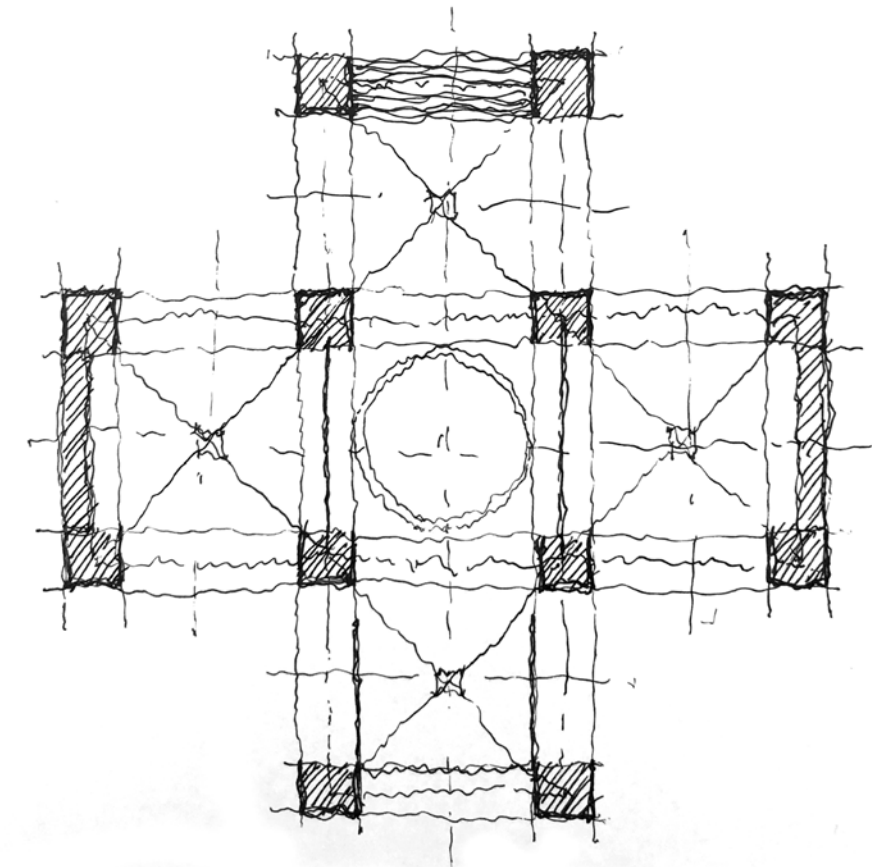
objects: field generated

o.m. ungers
house without qualities



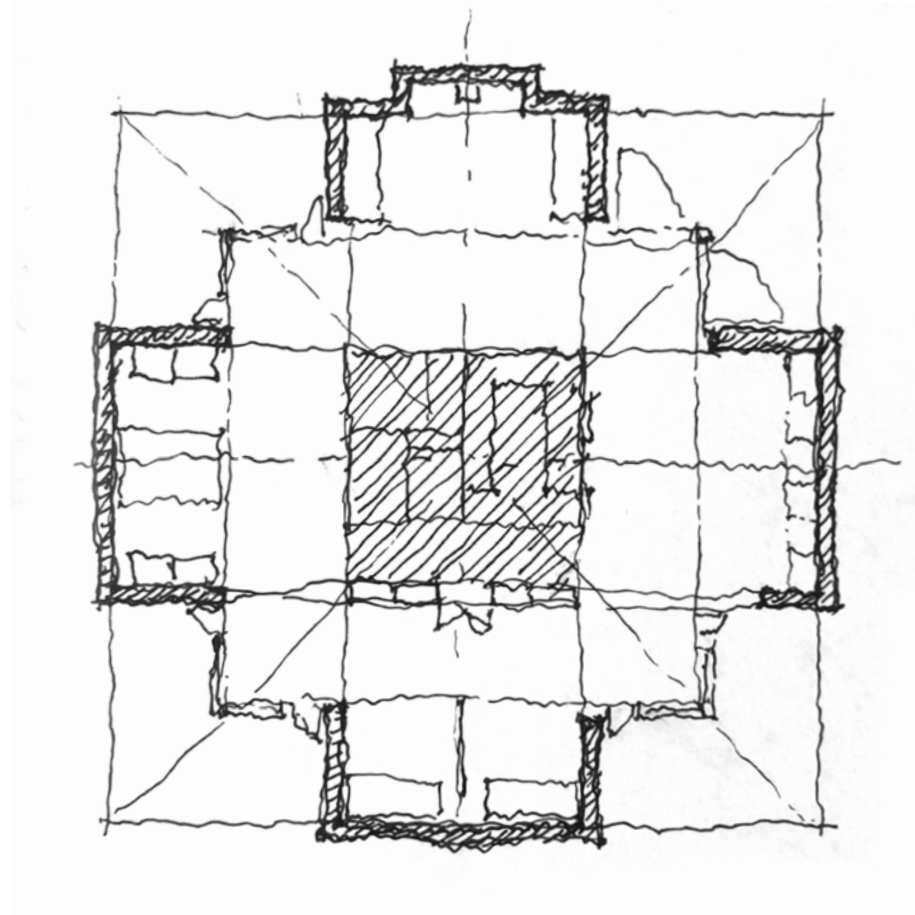
The underlying grid of Ungers' architecture is thickened and solidified to form service walls that organize the spaces. The walls, however, become occupied, domesticated. They not only define the space but participate in the space. They become the bookshelf, the desk, the stair. The grid dissolves, becoming furniture aligned to the original axis. The walls become objects, almost furniture in nature as well.

louis kahn
trenton baths

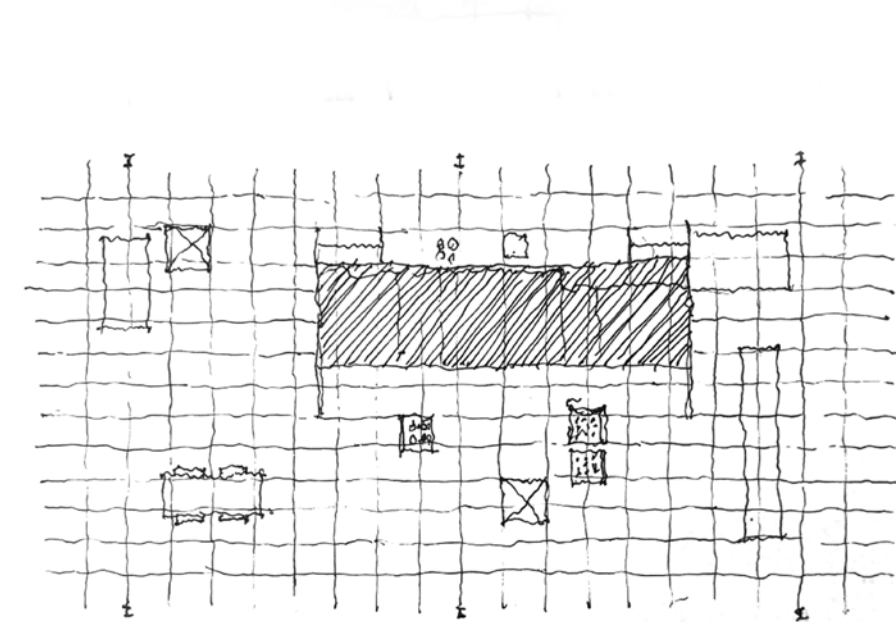


Kahn's grid, similarly manifesting in a series of objects, becomes more heavily about the organization of the space than the individual elements. The objects, instead of being furniture engaged in a space, become transitory rooms, circulation cores that navigate the grid. The objects are tethered to the flow of the building, inseparable from the spatial experience.

object: field contained

sverre fehn
norrköping villa

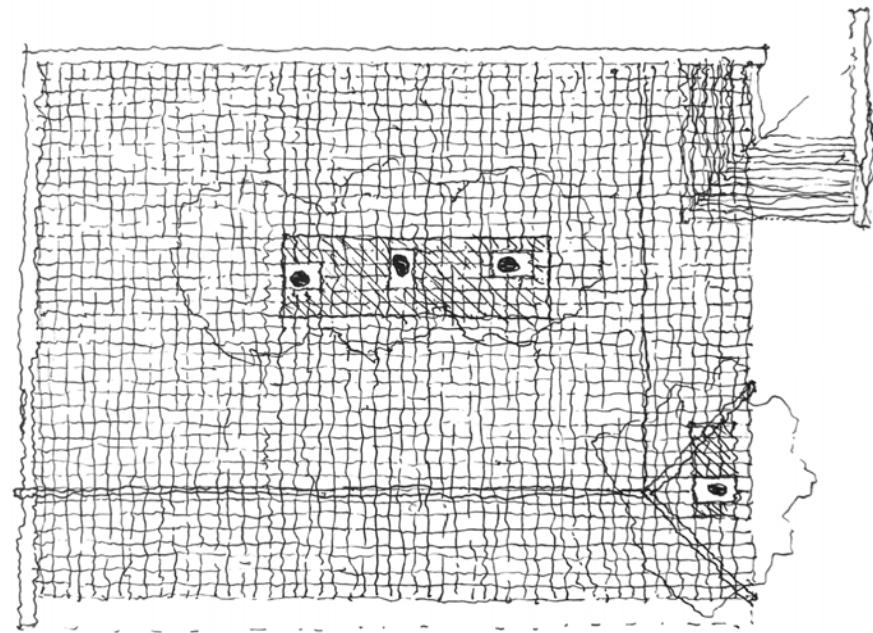
Fehn places the service core of the building as the center of the spatial grid. The surrounding field condition, however, serves to encapsulate the object. The home becomes an internalized spatial sequence. Furniture and programmatic spaces are placed within the edge condition. The corners of the field are isolated and articulated to become niches for engagement.

mies van der rohe
farnsworth house

Mies' Farnsworth house places a similar service core of the house as the origin of the grid. Mies' object, however, shifts off center, disrupting the field condition. Mies also disappears the edges of the field, extending them into infinite space. The furniture becomes objects disrupting and shifting the overall grid. It becomes a house for exteriority, for view and for the grid.

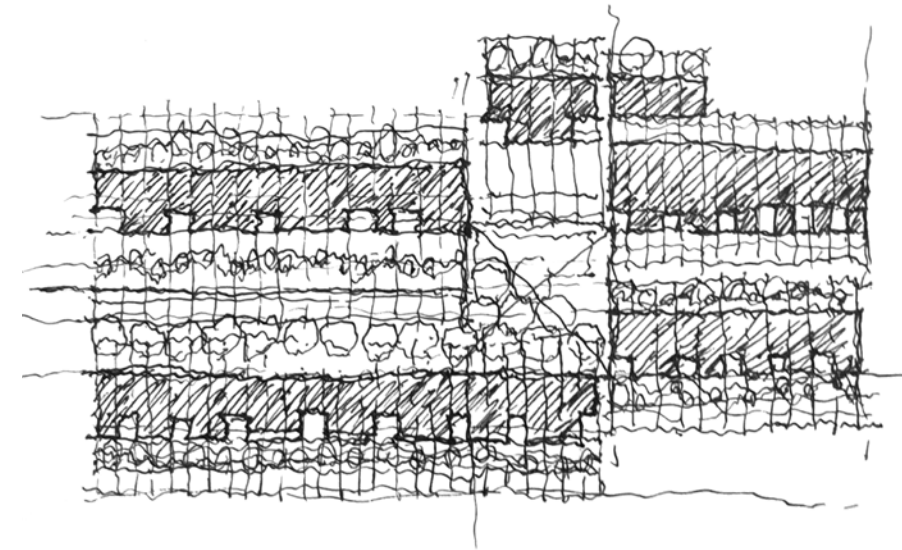
objects: field responsive

sverre fehn
nordic pavilion in venice



Fehn's Nordic Pavilion explores the response of the field to a series of trees that function as centers. The grid does not distort and instead is articulated where it breaks to allow for the vertical entry of the tree. The beam splits, diverging from the tree and celebrating its presence. The grid is accepting of the natural.

atelier 5
siedlung halen



Atelier 5's housing plan creates a series of fractured grids that respond to both a topographic condition and a rupturing fissure of greenery. The overall grid becomes several grids, each tethered to the site massing. The need for nature in a residential project, at both the scale of the site and the unit is understood and the grid becomes a secondary force. Each unit becomes shrunk and punctured to allow for garden space. The purity of the grid is broken to allow for the organic flow of life to occupy its spaces.

visions of utopia / premonitions of dystopia

Architecture critics, historians, theorists, and pragmatists even – have always acknowledged the significance of theoretical projects for the development of our field. Whether we call it paper architecture, narrative architecture, radical architecture, utopian architecture, experimental, visionary, fantastical architectures... the pursuit of channeling aspirations and ideals through the lens of architecture gives form and function to an ideology characterized primarily by optimism and cynicism. While perhaps unlikely comrades, these two values together have fostered a body of work which is uniquely situated to oppose existing hegemonic powers and look towards better futures. Resultant from a collision of war induced delirium, rapid technological/economic development, and an optimistic impression of lasting peace – the post-war period produced some of the most influential works in this typology.

Now perhaps more than ever we as a discipline have a need for these ideals once more. The worldwide pandemic that is raging rampant (particularly through our dysfunctional country) has placed a blanket of pessimism on our culture, and leads us to question our way of life on an unprecedented scale. As Zizek writes: “The only thing that is clear is that the virus will shatter the very foundations of our lives, causing not only an immense amount of suffering but also economic havoc conceivably worse than the Great Recession. There is no return to normal, the new “normal” will have to be constructed on the ruins of our old lives, or we will find ourselves in a new barbarism whose signs are already clearly discernible.”[1] In this kind of global context, the importance of understanding this narrative of utopian thinking is ever so much more crucial.

I would say that the connotation of a Utopia as a holistically perfect society is a hindrance, particularly in relation to this pursuit. Perfection is subjective first of all, but more importantly, these architects were not try-

ing to create perfection – the goal was to grapple with pressing issues facing society, posing potential solutions, and provoking the global imaginary. With this definition it could be said that all architecture is utopian in some small way. As designers we all seek to solve problems and make the world a better place. The distinction I will use to tease out the lineage and narrative I find so important, is not whether it exists on paper or as a building, but rather if the idealism driving the practice is just beyond reach. I find this kind of ideological prodding to be the most powerful, and there are ways to articulate it both on paper and in building.

Inferring as best we can about the historical context surrounding the beginning of what we can perhaps call post-war idealism, there was a coalescence of factors that went into its development. Partially reactions to the limitations of pre-war modernism and the idea of the heroic architect, partially excitements of new technological advances and blossoming economies, partially engagements with political turmoil and ideals – these drawings, writings, and occasional projects represented a staunch commitment to envisioning what could be.

The unbuilt projects are typically easier to fit into this narrative. Beginning with (perhaps the catalyst for the rest of these projects) Corbusier’s Plan Voisin or Ville Radieuse. Late modernist idealism is not to be trifled with, it spawned many ambitious and realizable projects which held at their core a belief in the potential of architecture to change the world for the better. Regrettably other forces neglected to work together to give many of these projects the best chance possible, and contemporary popular discourse around modernism has been colored rather negatively.

More fantastical projects put forth by Archigram served to engage the global imaginary and attack the pedagogical establishment which was entrenched in the past. At

the same time the theorist and technophile Cedric Price was creating cybernetic systems and envisioning new purposes and actions for architecture, and the mutual influence was clear. Relying on drawings and words did not limit their influence on the profession, rather it is likely the reason it has endured to this day.

The Italian radicals seemed to bridge the two by making physical installations which alluded to the concepts illustrated in their drawings and written work. While Archizoom and Superstudio were writing manifestos and working on theoretical projects reimagining the urban situation created by various factors of capitalism and democracy, they were also working in exhibit and installation to augment paper-space. Not as full-scale replica, but rather as allegory or a way to step into the worlds they were envisioning.

On the other side of the world the Metabolists in Japan ventured the closest into putting their ideology into practice. In retrospect we must consider the interesting question if this was a fool’s errand. Should these futurist ideas be realized when the world is perhaps not quite ready, or is it better to leave them on paper? In a way this allows them to be read into, believed in, and like Archigram have a lasting impact on the field that isn’t impacted by external factors of economic success and the like.

Architects such as O.M. Ungers, the Smithsons, Aetletier 5, the Tendenza, etc. also had a strong commitment to advancement of ideals but focused more on what was achievable in the now. The exchange of ideas and mutual influence between groups in different countries and cultures reached a scale in the post-war that it never had before. These optimistic and idealistic practitioners are equally as important as the Archigram’s and Superstudio’s that strive to invigorate the imagination of the next generation. Ultimately the critical and reformist

ideas that have been germinating need to sprout, even if they aren’t fully in bloom.

I guess maybe I’m more interested in an optimistic post-modernism than an anxious modernism. Perhaps following a world-wide conflict it’s no surprise there was a world-wide exchange of ideas. Either way it’s quite an important pursuit, and I hope we can take that to heart in light of our new global conflict.

At the end of the day what we must take away from this is that to get out of our current societal rut, sometimes we have to leave reality behind and imagine what the future could be in order to look at the contemporary situation and the past in a critical light, to know what must be changed, what must go, what must be kept, etc. By tracing influences and affects of post-war utopians perhaps we can get a better picture of how meaningful this was, and can be.

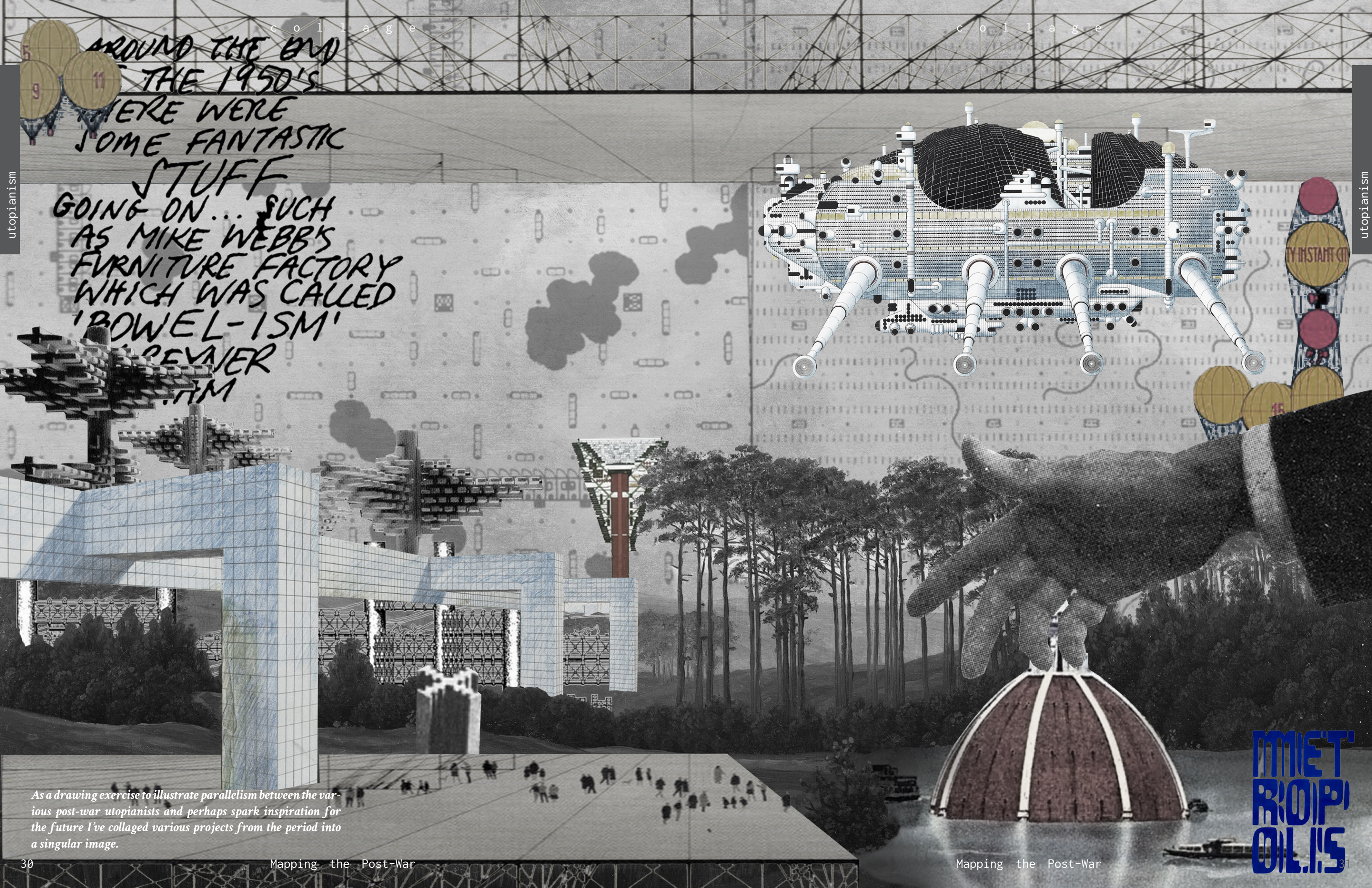
CE

[1] Zizek, Slavoj - “Pandemic!”, 3

AROUND THE END
 OF THE 1950'S
 THERE WERE
 SOME FANTASTIC
 STUFF
 GOING ON... SUCH
 AS MIKE WEBB'S
 FURNITURE FACTORY
 WHICH WAS CALLED
 'BOWEL-ISM'
 REYNER
 HAM

utopianism

utopianism



As a drawing exercise to illustrate parallelism between the various post-war utopianists and perhaps spark inspiration for the future I've collaged various projects from the period into a singular image.

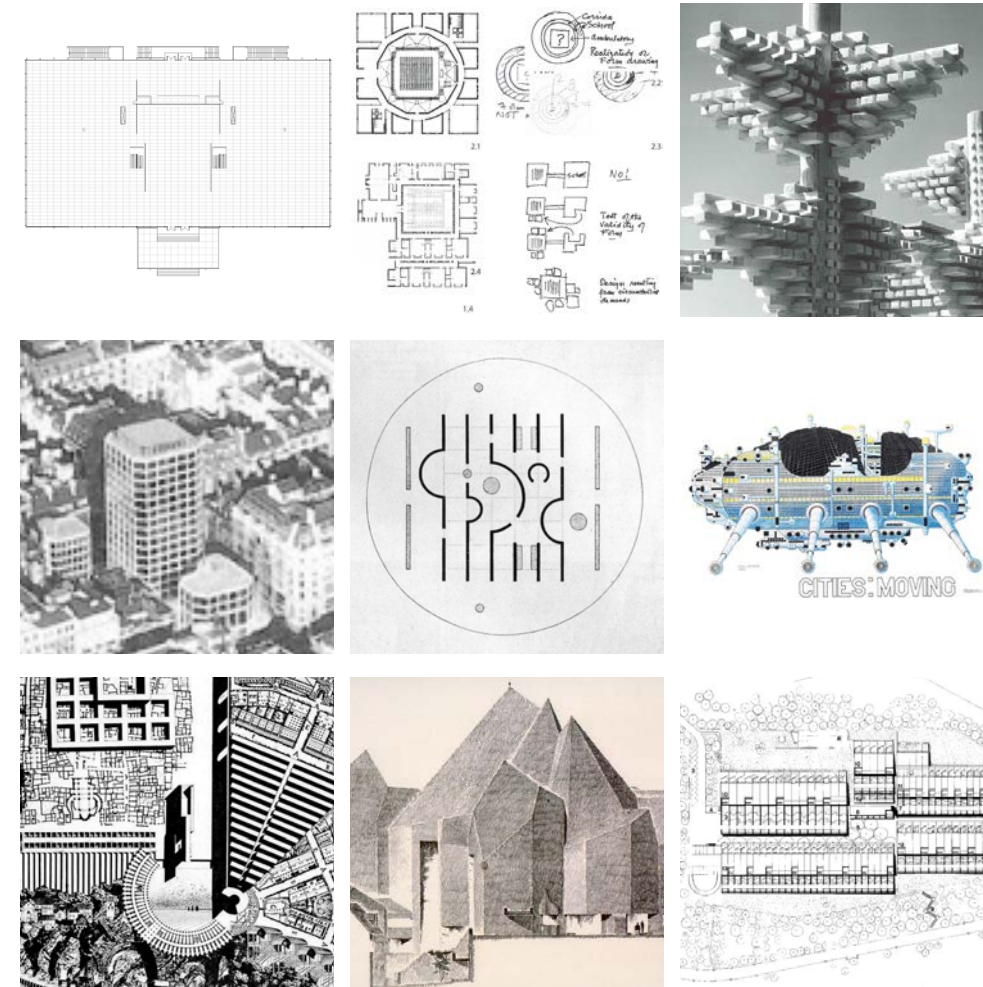
weekly writings

Throughout the course of the semester we read numerous readings each week, and wrote short reflections on the ones we chose. Some weeks we each read the same readings, some they were almost all different. We drew from a pool of readings selected and found by the group, but ultimately read and wrote about the ones that we felt the strongest affinity with.

The readings listed at the bottom of each week are those we found and are available online in our google drive folder. A more extended bibliography that includes readings that were not in the pool can be found at the end of the document. The brief introductions to each week were completed retroactively after we had done the readings, most at the end of the semester.

Our individual responses are tagged with our initials at the end, and organized in no particular fashion. The tags on the sides of the pages represent our individual specific interests, and represent the sections we deem to be of importance to that narrative.

Images at the end of each section are gathered from that weeks set of presentations.



mies & corb

Known as the masters of Modern architecture, Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier had an immense influence on the architects of his generation and the generation after him. Modernism has developed its own history and the Post-War architects began to radically reassess its legacy and orthodoxy to challenge/reform its lessons to continue the redeemable qualities of the movement. As many Modernist Architects put forth the agenda of rejecting the history of architecture previous to Modernism, the Post-War architects rejected the anti-historical attitude of Modernism and were comfortable in referencing not only the history prior to Modernism but also the history of Modernism as well.

readings

Anthony Vidler, "Framing Infinity, Le Corbusier, Ayn Rand, and the Idea of 'Ineffable Space,'" *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*. (Cambridge MIT Press, 2000), pp. 51-64

Peter Eisenman, "Mies and the Figuring of Absence." *Mies in America*, edited by Phyllis Lambert, New York: H.N. Abrams, 2001, pp. 706-715

Detlef Mertins, and Lambert, Phyllis. *Mies*. (London; Phaidon Press, 2014)

Detlef Mertins, "Same Difference," *Modernity Unbound* (Architectural Association Publication, 2011), pp140-160

Martino Stierli, *Mies Montage*. (AA Files, No.61, 2010), pp. 54-72

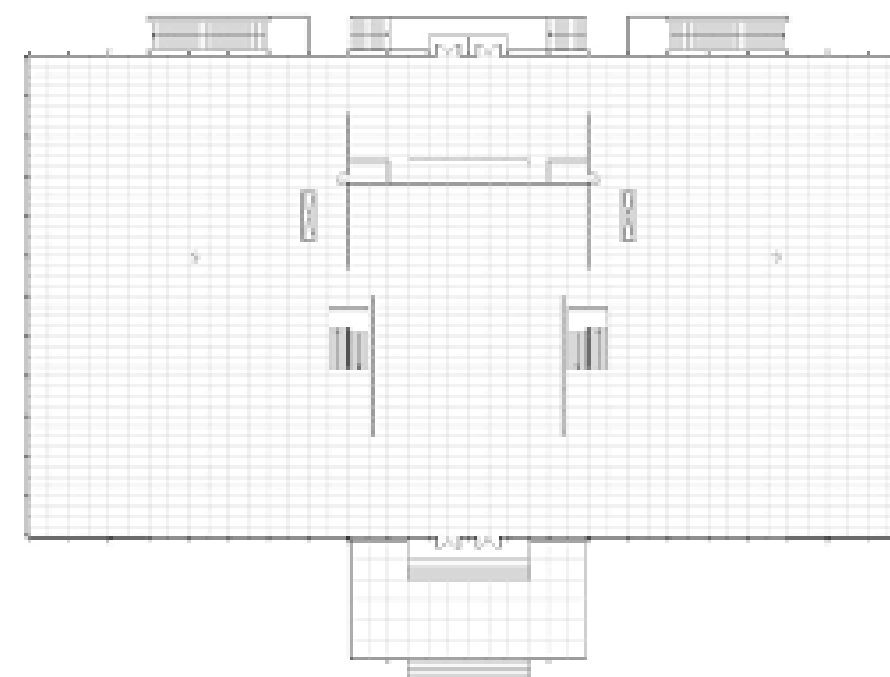
Gargiani, *Le Corbusier: Beton Brut and Ineffable Space (1940- 1965)* (EPFL, 1994)

Menin, Sarah & Flora Samuel, *Nature and Space: Aalto and Le Corbusier* (2002)

O'ROURKE, KATHRYN E. "Mies and Bacardi: Mixing Modernism, c. 1960." *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984-), vol. 66, no. 1, 2012, pp. 57-71.

K. Michael Hays, *Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form*. (Perspecta, Vol. 21, 1984), pp. 14-29

Michael Cadwell, "Flooded at The Farnsworth House," *Strange Details*, (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2007), pp. 92-134



Menin, Sarah & Flora Samuel, *Nature and Space: Aalto and Le Corbusier*

Menin and Samuel shed light on the ways in which Alvar Aalto and Le Corbusier approach the issue of nature through an “intellectual and psycho-spiritual” lens that studies the formative influences which gave rise to their ideas about the relationship between environment and building. Both men saw nature as a vital part of the experience of architecture due to a number of important cultural factors and personal developments, from their respective trips to ancient Greece to their ideas about the healing capacities of light and vegetation. Both were interested in the synthesis of the two seemingly conflictory themes of the spiritual, characterized by nature, and the technological, characterized by modern ideas of the machine. A changing cultural attitude towards cleanliness in the aftermath of a destructive war led both architects to reconsider the role of materiality, of facade, and of context in the modern object building. Underlying both narratives is the idea of transparency; the transparent curtain wall through which nature may be channeled into the building; the transparent skin that turns monumental mass into a shimmering crystal that disappears into the sky; the transparent wall that turns darkness and disease into light and air. Modern conceptions of the dwelling, a typology that, to Aalto and Le Corbusier, was understood as a sacred space, became outward-looking to absorb and internalize the mental influences of the natural world.

RK

Menin and Samuel write as if almost conducting a psycho-analysis upon Corbusier and Aalto. They use biographical facts and insights to draw conclusions about their sentiments and positions. The main goal is to understand the relationship these two figures had with nature - and - it feels like, the ways in which two outwardly very different individuals were actually oriented quite similarly. They write regarding how disturbed the two were early on, the similar trauma's they have suffered through, and how nature became a guiding figure for them, leading to their utilization of “nature” as a grounding concept to better the lives of others in ways that were lacking for themselves.

I always feel like there's a bit of a disconnect between the white-washing of typical modernism and the desire to embrace and emulate nature. Nature is never clean, never

white and spotless. It is messy and multicolored, vast and always changing.

I understand Corb kind of left that behind, or at least it feels like he did towards the end of his life, embracing more messiness and ambiguity, gestural forms and so forth. But how does this mentality shift really come about? Is the war the turning point?

I appreciate the emphasis on personal art practice Corb and Aalto had, something that feels lacking to me in the contemporary field, no? Cruz and Nathalie claim to not feel accepted presenting work from one area to operators in the other.

CE

Anthony Vidler, “Framing Infinity, Le Corbusier, Ayn Rand, and the Idea of “Ineffable Space,” Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture.

Vidler speaks of the modern conception of infinity in reference to the Fountainhead's thematic undertones suggestive of architecture's “rape of nature” and its role as a reaction against the visceral disgusts of the existing old urban fabric. The Parthenon is paradoxically of paramount importance in its exhibition of the antithesis of the old European city: its situation atop the Acropolis characterizes the modernist ideal of infinite outward vision toward a horizon which collapses landscape into the infinity of a line. Le Corbusier speaks of the claustrophobia of the trenches of old European streets “plunged into eternal twilight,” suggesting an aversion to the suffocating darkness of the traditional dense figure-ground which manifests as the free plan and culminates with the Ville Radieuse. Vidler writes, “Infinite space for Le Corbusier and Roark became the instrument of suppression for everything they hated about the city,” framing modernism not as a tabula rasa reinvention of architecture but as a response to a growing nausea concerning the claustrophobia the city, propelled to action by dreams of spatial luxury and public solitude.

RK

In this article Vidler is comparing Corbusier's positions on nature and space to those of Ayn Rand's fictional god architect Howard Roark. In an interesting way this feels slightly counter to the previous essay, but gets at the disconnect I was thinking of regarding modernism's embrace of nature. With *Ineffable Space*, Corbusier has finally succeeded in assimilating the power and wonder of nature into an architecture. Vidler goes on to speak further to Corbusier's insecurities, and the general anxiety that plagued the period and spurned the utopian urban renewal projects characteristic of pre-war Corb. Perhaps this does indeed mark the transition, emblemized in the letter from Corbusier to Fleury, from pre to post war Corbu.

Roark: Nature is subordinate to the dominion of man, there to be crafted and made

Corbu: Nature came first, but its meaning is created through architecture

What happened to urban neurosis? Our cities have only gotten more stimulating, more cavernous, more dense, should it not be worse now than ever? Has it mutated into what Colomina and Wigley call burnout syndrome?

Confused regarding the ending... Was that implying that Corbu embraced De Fleury's view of urbanity?

CE

Peter Eisenman, “Mies and the Figuring of Absence.”

Eisenman's primary interest in Mies's work is the figure ground relationship, especially in his project for the IIT Campus in Chicago, Illinois. Eisenman's primary speculation or observations in the project are the relationship of the urban fabric to the campus, the relationship of the campus to the individual buildings and the relationship of building to buildings. The voids in Mies's IIT project define the edge of the campus, implying a radical detachment from the rest of the city. This gives the project a sense of a Polis that the campus must be seen as profane with respect to the city.

The notion of “the necessary duality of inclusiveness and separation” is interesting. The individual entering the

building could freely and openly participate in the evolution of the project due to the openness and spaciousness of the project. The individual in relationship to the surrounding buildings is seen as a freestanding object in virtually and physically flowing through the campus.

The stark contrast from the city of Chicago and how the campus sets up its own rhythm.

Twenty four foot square grid as an organizing element of the project. The notion of the “Neutral Grid” is mentioned in the Mertins's reading about the Smithsons.

HL

Eisenman explores Mies' distortion of figure ground relationships through an autonomy of void (specifically at IIT). Several distinctions between Le Corbusier and Mies' spatial perception of ground as void suggest varied understanding of the horizontal plane. Where Corbusier sees ground plane as the ideal and architecture as the lateral extension or extrusion of plane, Mies perceives a multilayered system of horizontal datums of building and space, roof and floor. The building becomes volumetric and figured, opposing Corbusier's free flowing space. Eisenman specifically explores the work at IIT, where structural grid creates slippage within figure and ground, where void defines edge and becomes detached from global spatial conditions. Eisenman analyzes how Mies plays with boundaries, how the absence of the corner column within object-like buildings allows the spatial organizing grid to function both as figure and ground.

BS

Detlef Mertins, “Same Difference” & “Mies's Event Space,” *Modernity Unbound: Other Histories of Architecture modernity*

In this chapter, Mertins focuses on the discrepancy between the perception of Mies's work and the actual effect and intention of his architecture. The neutral frame and grid in Mies's work, which is tied with the notion of universal rationality, homotopic, restricting, implies the pursuit of a universal space that is generous and open-ended approach to living. The neutral frames in his work provided infrastructure for the production of difference, in which order

was to bring together self generated individualities without impinging on that freedom. The space provided users with the opportunity or crisis of self fashioning, which is fundamentally a modern idea.

Homogeneity of structure with heterogeneity of individuation.

Mertins talks about the difficulty in displaying art in the Crown Hall, since the space is entirely spacious with glass on every side of the building, causing difficulties in placement of artwork and considering how the art should be viewed. However, Mertins believes that this conundrum lends new opportunities for artists to conceive art and how the work should be viewed. Mies fundamentally believed that art, like architecture, should continuously strive for change and for the new.

HL

Detlef Mertins, “Same Difference” & “Mies’s Event Space,” *Modernity Unbound: Other Histories of Architecture modernity*

Mertins begins this chapter on how Mies had adopted the vernacular of industrial architecture and elevated it into the status of an artform, bauen to Baunkust. Giedion sees this evolution/elevation as a typological development, in which technological development in construction resulted in a shift in the aesthetics of the building and spatial organization. This speculation rejects the common misconception of Mies’s work of Modern Architecture, since many believe that Modern Architecture is completely new and denies any historical references. Mertins reveals that there is also a Gothic lineage in Mies’s work that the articulated assembly and serial repetition of structural elements were denominator amongst industrial structure, classical colonnades and flying buttresses, as well as plant stems,

The open plan in Mies’s work is mainly possible because of long-span structure. Flexibility became the defining characteristics in his work. “Clear Construction is the basis of the free ground plan”

HL

Mertins recounts the development of Mies’s clear span in parallel to the development of his ideas about transparency, tectonic expression, clarity of structure and the open plan. Venturi points out that Mies’s factory model based upon manufacturing standards of structural/material efficiency and a bare, skeletal aesthetic adapted and redefined the vernacular of industrial production to signify fine art. These industrial standards which facilitate the efficient production of manufactured parts provide a new framework for design which emphasizes truth in the articulation of building components (although often Mies forgoes complete truth in structure in favor of a purist attitude in his structural expression).

RK

Gargiani, *Le Corbusier: Beton Brut and Ineffable Space*

Gargiani and Rosellini describe the process of conception, trial and error, and discovery inherent to the undertaking of the construction of the unite d’habitation in Marseilles. For Le Corbusier, the modern european city relieves itself of the suffocating constriction of old cities in exchange for open land where “vertical garden cities” touch down lightly on the Earth, leaving the ground level permeable and free to leisurely access. These “vertical communes without politics” are characterized by density of occupancy but also by abundant access to sky, air, and light. Atop the unite is what Le Corbusier refers to as a “plastic symphony” of concrete forms that together produce a garden roofscape for communal activities composed as a still life painting. He describes the space and its panoptic views as “a veritable acropolis open to a homeric landscape,” bringing into his work the influences of his travels to ancient Greece. The subsequent pages are an account of the process of constructing the unite from the concrete foundation to the piloti to the structural cores to the sculptural chimneys to the low-relief modulator men found on the raw concrete surface which provided the proportions for the entire building. Gargiani and Rosellini describe this process of experimentation as “research leading to sculpture destined for architecture.”

RK

Serenyi, Peter, *Le Corbusier’s Changing Attitude toward Form*

A brief recounting of biographical events that influenced Corbusier’s development and his ethos. Particular focus on his perception of nature, painting, and self-critique.

CE

Marmot, Alexi, *The Legacy of Le Corbusier and High-Rise Housing*

A recounting of Corbusier’s projects from CIAM onwards, their core concepts, and their relevance today. Particular emphasis on developments of housing typologies, and conceptions of dwelling within a singular building.

CE

Sophia Psarra: *Crafting architectural space: Le Corbusier’s Venice Hospital and the three paradigms*

The last project of Corbusier’s life, quite antithetical in its ethos to that of former projects such as the Plan Voisin. Instead of wiping the slate clean and building upwards, this project seeks to embrace the existing urban fabric and weave itself in, extending the city outwards and maintaining a relatively modest profile.

The project takes the cellular instantiation of one care room, and aggregates it according to the growth logic of the city.

A radical reinvention of this type is introduced: the room is a means to provide complete isolation with no windows looking outside. Light enters the room only through skylights that the patients can use to modulate intensity. The section with two rooms facing a middle corridor and the lateral skylights on top is replicated throughout the whole building. In section, the patients areas are always on top, while the other activities are found below. The ground floor, built on pilotis, accommodates the entrances, admin-

istration, services and arrivals by boat; the first floor houses emergency rooms, doctors offices, surgeries and operating rooms, a free clinic and the laboratories.

Interestingly contradictory to the previous ideas about ineffable space and the physical and psychological benefits of nature in architecture.

That being said it does pick up many classic Corb elements. It sits on Pilotis, you enter from below, it would have almost certainly been rendered in white

Psarra is critical of the Venice hospital project, aware that while representative of a different attitude, if built it would have been much less radical a shift for Corbusier than it seems. There is particular focus and rigorous analysis proposing that in reality, the hospital owes more to Palladio than it does to the urban fabric of Venice.

CE

Unité d’Habitation / Cité Radieuse

It feels like in some ways the war broke Corb, he hadn’t realized a project in 10 years when it had ended, likely contributing to the anxiety and reconsideration of past practices described in the other readings.

First public commission pushed corb from being a critic of the architectural establishment to being France’s most prominent figure.

Identical units slotted together like puzzle pieces with a “street” running through the center. Social spaces on top, surrounded by greenery.

Built several of them in later years, 3 in France and 1 in Berlin.

In a way came from a direct lineage of through resulting out of the Maison Domino. A dwelling unit of two floors; independence of structure from layout or facade; possibility of mass production; use of the roof terrace

The conjunction of several parti’s, a self contained living block, a building raised up on pilotis, two story units free of

identity

composition

the grid

utopianism

structural interference, usage of the modulator, and objectification as a sculpture in the park.

Should be a “vertical commune without politics” capable of putting human beings back into “conditions of nature”

“... there are no pipes in palladio houses” > all systems were hidden in cavities from the dwellings

Chimneys were the first application of surfaces gauches or free form surfaces later to be much more present in corbs work

He entered into significant material exploration regarding grain and coloration of the concrete aggregate, heavily influenced by his experience as a painter. The structure was subdivided into four sections with expansion joints, which allowed for the continuous experimentation even during construction of material mixtures.

This experimentation would also lead to subsequent failures, and in addition to effects produced by weather interruption, have visible vestiges on the building.

A more coarse aggregate would be used in the cladding panels, to contrast with the smooth exposed facing of the structure. The bare exposed concrete would lead Corb to coin the term Beton Brut.

The characteristic reliefs of the Bonne-homme and modulator drawings are done with a carved wooden slab.

Peter Serenyi writes on Corb’s transitional period: the numerous important changes that took place in Le Corbusier’s style during the decade under discussion were realized: first, through his reassessment of nature; second, through his renewed encounter with De Stijl; and third, through his fresh attitude towards his own work of the 1920s. All these changes paved the way for his most mature style of the post-1945 period. One can, therefore, justly call these years a period of reflection and reassessment.

CE

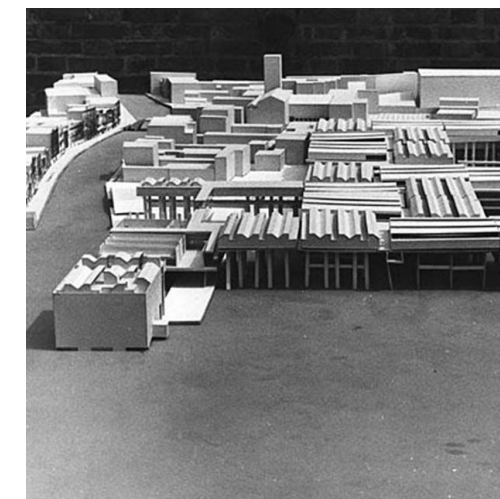
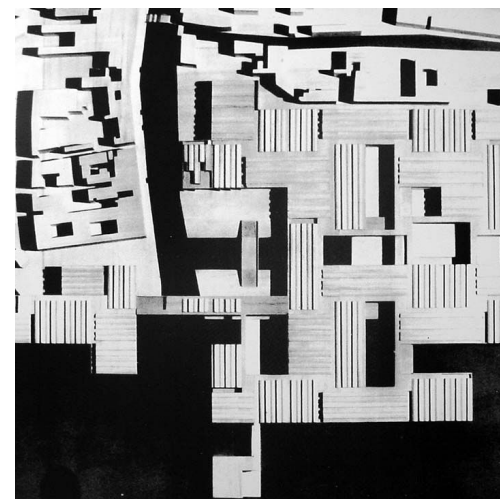
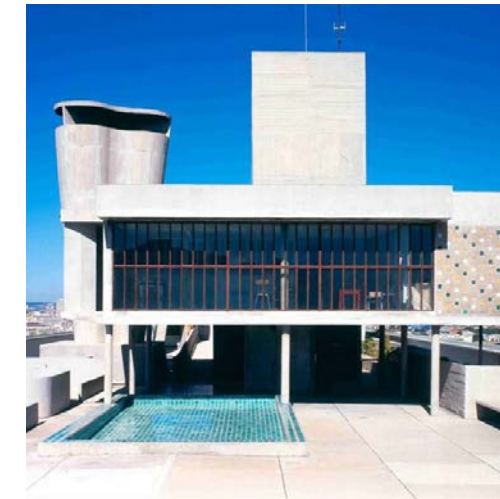
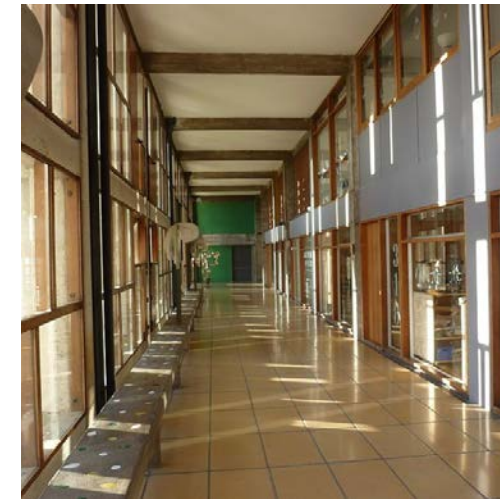
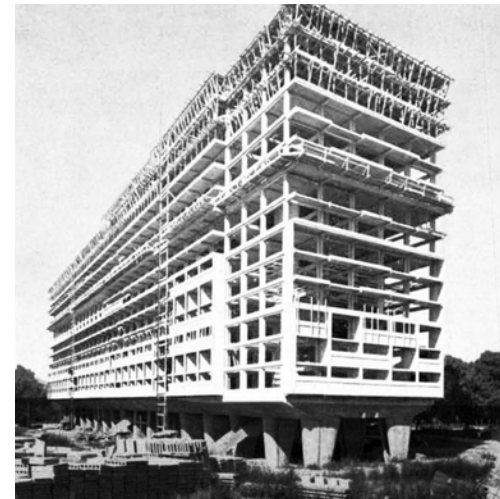
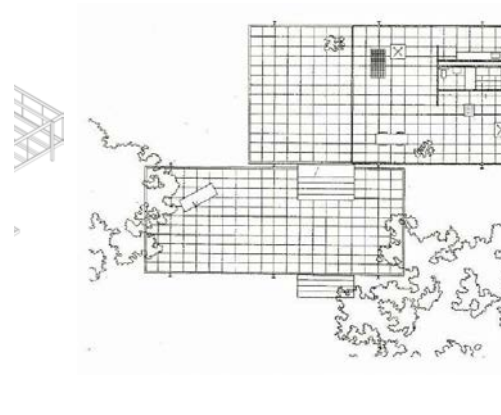
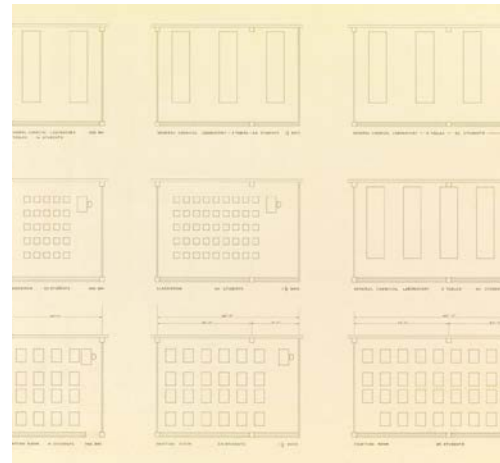
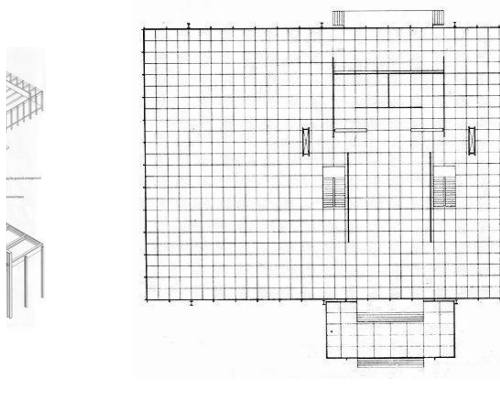
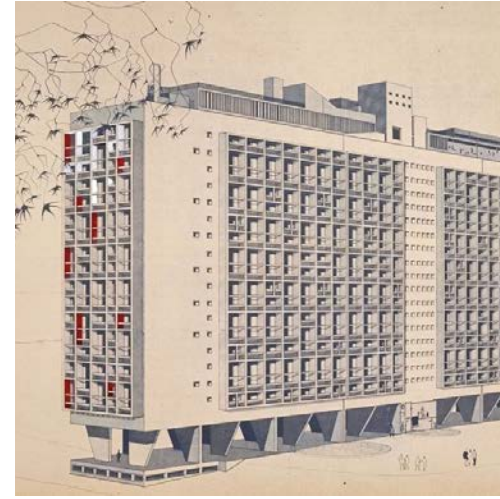
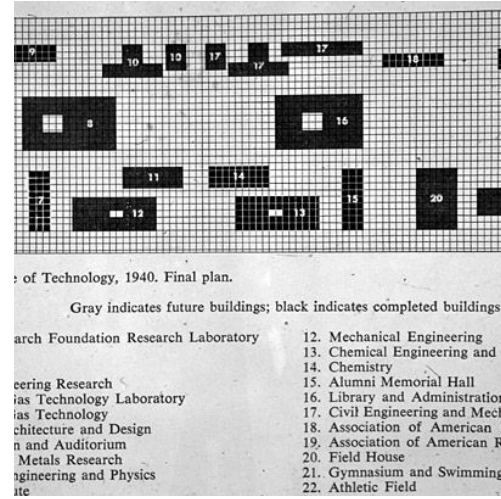
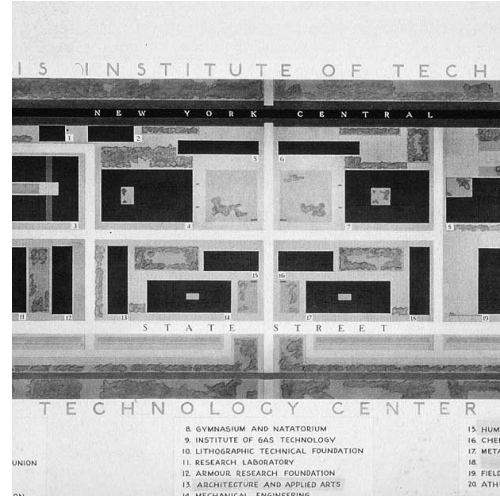
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identity

composition

the grid

utopianism



identity

composition

the grid

utopianism

identity

composition

the grid

utopianism

louis kahn

Louis Kahn explores the poetic expression of tectonic architecture, utilizing rigorous material and light studies to craft articulate, eternal spaces. Kahn's civic work suggests an investigation of the creation of order through highly articulate construction systems and spatial organization. The result architecture is of both humanist and material purity.

readings

Louis I. Kahn, "Silence and Light," 1969, extracts from lecture; from Charles Jencks and Karl Kropf eds., *Theories and Manifestoes of Contemporary Architecture* (Chichester: WileyAcademy, 2006), 2nd edition, 236-8.

Sarah Williams Ksiazek, "Critiques of Liberal Individualism: Louis Kahn's Civic Projects, 1947-57," *Assemblage*, No. 31 (Dec., 1996), pp. 56-79.

Gargiani, Roberto. *Louis I. Kahn: Exposed Concrete and Hollow Stones, 1949-1959 (Treatise on Concrete)* (2014) Chapter Six; *First Unitarian Church and School, or the End of Beton Brut*

William J. R. Curtis. "Authenticity, Abstraction and the Ancient Sense: Le Corbusier's and Louis Kahn's Ideas of Parliament." *Perspecta* 20 (1983): 181-194.

Kenneth Frampton, "Studies in Tectonic Culture" *Louis Kahn: Modernization and the New Monumentality, 1944-1972* pg. 209-246

Rakatansky, Mark. "Tectonic Acts of Desire and Doubt, 1945-1980: What Kahn Wants to Be." *ANY: Architecture New York*, no. 14, 1996, pp. 36-43. JSTOR

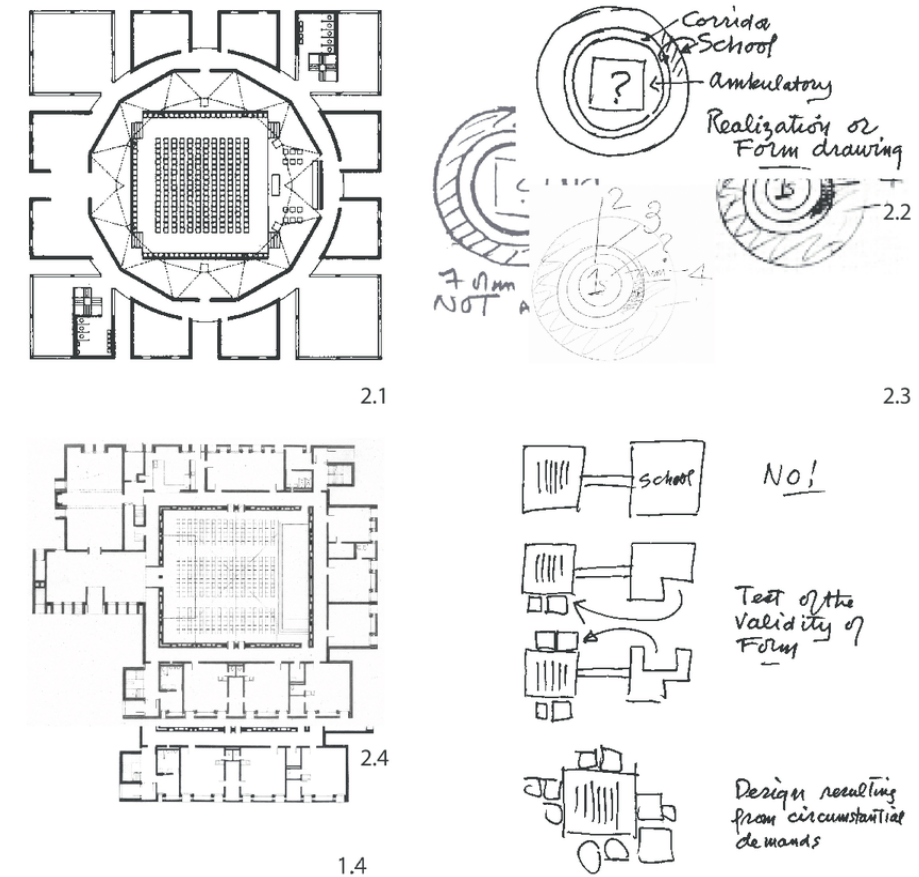
Sommer, Richard M. "Four Stops along an Architecture of Postwar America." *Perspecta*, vol. 32, 2001, pp. 77-89. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1567285. (features the *de vore* house - amongst other postwar projects)

Sarah Williams Goldhagen, *Louis Kahn's Situated Modernism*, Yale University Press, June 10, 2001

Louis I. Kahn: Berkeley Lecture, 1966 Thought on Architecture and Personal Expression: An Informal Presentation to Students at Berkeley

Louis I. Kahn "Writings, Lectures, Interview"

Robert McCarter, "Louis I Kahn" *Shaping an Architecture of Light and Shadow*



Ksiazek, Sarah Williams: Critiques of Liberal Individualism: Louis Kahn's Civic Projects

Ksiazek explores the multiple cultural influences that led Louis Kahn from a 'good modernist' architect to one characterized by proto-brutalist material authenticity and highly rational ordered formalism. The text describes the circumstances surrounding two projects, the unbuilt City Tower project and the AFL-CIO building, in which his ideas of tectonic expression begin to manifest in a more recognizably Kahn-like manner. He was heavily influenced by his Yale colleague Buckminster Fuller, who believed in the geodesic dome as an expression of a newly discovered geometric and organizational order to the natural world, ideas which had been percolating since D'arcy Thompson's *On Growth and Form* of 1912 and building in influence with recent discoveries of geometric optimization appearing at a variety of scales in nature, from soap bubble packing structures to protozoan forms. These recent shifts in understanding of the natural world, boosted by the development of the Scanning Electron Microscope, suggested a world fundamentally built on a principle of geometric order; In an expression at this discovery Fully states, "these wondrous actualities were always there, inherent in a universe of meaning." Order was divine, design was messy, and this idea about order had a lasting impact on Kahn's thinking about form. His career saw a slow transition from metaphor and proofs-of-concept toward meaning-embedded architectural form of his later years.

RK

The reading goes in depth with the analysis of civic projects about Kahn and the social/political aspects in his projects such as, the Jefferson Memorial, City Hall, and the City Tower for Philadelphia.

KL

In this transcript, Kahn establishes his main points in architecture that many have come to know his work for.

His poetic understanding of the role of the architect, who questions the essence of everything around him. The re-

markable part of his lecture is that Kahn traces the origin of things and questions the purpose of ideas like institution or university. There is a sense of nostalgia as he portrays images of spaces to argue for its purity and fundamental qualities.

KL

In this book Gargiani provides a detailed analysis of several Kahn projects through the light of their materiality, particularly focusing on his usage of concrete. The selected chapter was on the First Unitarian church, which was Kahn's last true beton brut building. The formwork was designed very carefully to accentuate the verticality of the space, mask the imperfections of the concrete, and channel the natural light falling into the space. It was divided into two sections, the main space receiving a formwork constructed out of long and thin 4" boards, the secondary spaces using (4x4?) plywood panels. Contrary to Corbusier's approach of using the formwork for decorative potential compartmentalizing the surface into a kind of tapestry, Kahn utilizes the articulation of the formwork to give the surfaces a singular direction and character.

The section on the First Unitarian Church was entitled "the end of beton brut" which I had taken to mean this was the building in which Kahn pushed past his history with unfinished concrete and exposed formwork, but on the contrary (which I perhaps should have known given the building) this was his last project in the beton brut style, and the Salk Institute was the project that marked his transcendence past it. Regrettably, Gargiani's book ends on a cliffhanger (unexpected for a book about concrete) and explains how important the Salk institute is without having a chapter on it.

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CE

Curtis, William J.R.: Authenticity, Abstraction and the Ancient Sense

In this piece Curtis aims to redirect contemporary discourse on the over-simplification of the modern - high modern - post modern trajectory. He finds that much of this "propaganda" exists as a weak stylistic coating on top of an ar-

chitecture with no body. He uses the two examples of government buildings in Chandigarh by Corbusier and Dhaka by Kan to illustrate this point, citing them as examples of "authentic" architecture, forged through a combination of pre-forms coming out of long and extensive practice and sensibilities with cultural sensibilities indigenous to their locations. His analysis of the buildings and the influences upon them is deep and relatively comprehensive, although comes off to me as over-assertive at points. As we read before in the piece by Paula Young Lee, influences are multifaceted and tough to nail down. It seems presumptuous in a lot of these cases to assure us of what the two architects were thinking at the time they designed these projects, but for many of these assertions the lineage does make sense.

CE

Curtis discusses the danger of a reactionary opposition to everything modern in a postmodern age, warning that taking such a position against modernism is to commit the same mistake as modernism did at the start of the 20th century in its seeming rejection of the then-dominant principles of classical architecture. Curtis argues that two buildings in particular - the parliament building at Chandigarh by Le Corbusier and the Parliament Building at Dhaka by Louis Kahn - both exhibit an authenticity in their interpretation of the institutions they represent. This authenticity manifests as a deep understanding of the mythos of their respective cultures which transcends superficial formalism to engage deeper historical narratives and shared symbolism, the materialization of a "vital expression of a deeply felt idea." Curtis argues, "The artist who has found an appropriate language for a genuine myth will also possess the imaginative force to forge together past experiences into new unexpected wholes which are utterly convincing." In this manner, Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn both succeed in joining western and eastern ideas into wholly new yet vaguely familiar architectural forms.

RK

Curtis believes that Modern architecture has a complex tradition of evolving types, motifs and themes. The modern movement could be understood as a return to fundamentals. Revivalism of a style is not the goal since it is not authentic, but it is the anachronistic blending of lessons from the past to the contemporary that results in the richness

of architecture. For example, HH Richardson managed to forge his training as an architecture into a consistent architectural language appropriate to both his own sensibility.

Curtis focuses on two buildings, Le Corbusier's Parliament building in Chandigarh and Louis Kahn's Parliament in Dacca. He believes these two buildings are rich in cosmological meanings, in which both possess archaic qualities. Both are steeped in Eastern and Western monumental traditions.

KL

In this reading by Goldhagen, she uncovers the myth behind the genius by arguing against many narratives that constructed Kahn's reputation. Goldhagen refutes many of the ideas that Kahn was a Later-day Platonist that discovered the geometric ideals and forms for a new archetype of architectural language. She argues that Kahn argues for the social and political aspects in Kahn's work.

KL

Goldhagen, Sarah Williams: Louis Kahn's Situated Modernism

Goldhagen suggests that the timeless, spiritual, esoteric, metaphysical aura surrounding Louis Kahn's work is a shallow interpretation of a body of work that is, in fact, deeply responsive to the social, cultural, and political conditions of each context. Goldhagen states a series of 'myths' surrounding the architect and his values, which according to the general canon, is a gradual transition from active political engagement and social visions to solid, eternal forms that live independent of time's passage. While this may be one reading of his use of geometric primitives, another interpretation is that Kahn's values become increasingly manifest in his buildings, meaning that the ambitions of a younger Kahn never faded, but rather became embodied in his built work. Understanding the origins of Kahn's formative years helps to develop a more complex understanding of his motivations and priorities in his later years designing in exeter, jerusalem, dhaka, and venice, among others.

RK

This book aims to establish not an alternate, but a more informed history, biography, and theory of Louis Kahn as a

much less dogmatic figure. In the introduction Goldhagen sets up and subsequently knocks down five different popular myths regarding Kahn and his work. She explains that these myths are dogmatic and singular in perspective, and discount much of the complicated life and situation Kahn practiced within. The rest of the book promises to utilize case studies of particular buildings from Kahn's oeuvre to illustrate the previously unrecognized complexities there, while attempting to generate a connective thread through a body of work that was previously believed to be best understood in two disparate sections.

CE

central roof structure creating centrality and significance
 square as nonchoice
 ronchamp - cuts into thick mass/curved roof
 fragmentation of volume and structure from core to accessory
 thick concrete block walls that have space for ventilation and ductwork and have detailed profiles for seating and view and light (like ronchamp)
 formwork for concrete
 wanting to express lines
 for corb formwork is an expression of pattern and character, kahn its surface, not component
 expression of formwork for specificity of place
 tapestry relative to corb
 corb uses it as fresco kahn as logic of wall and light

BS

observations on the first unitarian church:
 similarities to flw's unity temple
 tall central sanctuary no eye level views
 square place surrounded and protected by classroom
 ronchamp - lowered ceiling with perimeter light
 clustering of independent self supporting spaces of varying sizes and shapes around a primary and powerful central space
 scaling to flw's church and usage of precedent
 connection between geometry and light
 ceiling as inverse of dome
 expansive boundless character, a world distant from outside world

McCarter, Robert: Louis I Kahn Shaping an Architecture of Light and Shadow
 inspired by wood in england with smithsons
 first building with wood and concrete
 floor was meant to be wood, dialogue of materials
 inhabited edge condition, window seats for individual space
 notion of castle walls
 notion of idealized light (every elevation drawn the same)
 light in all directions, bounced or direct
 varied sun against pure geometry honors true nature of light
 light filling spaces
 promotion of community and unity and building core

BS

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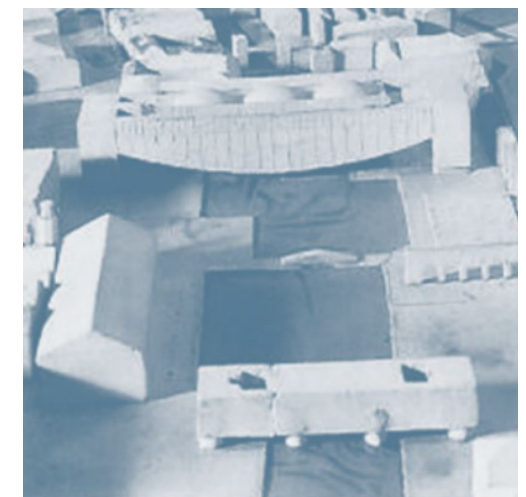
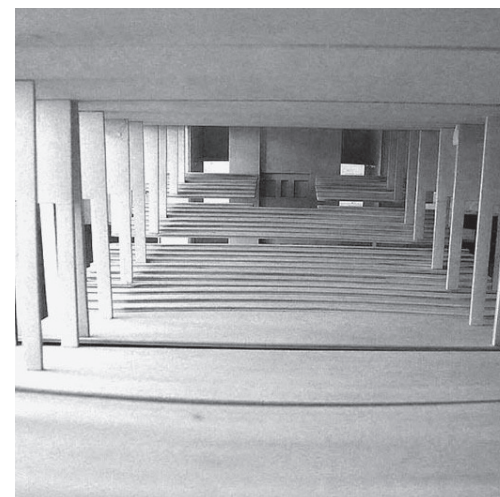
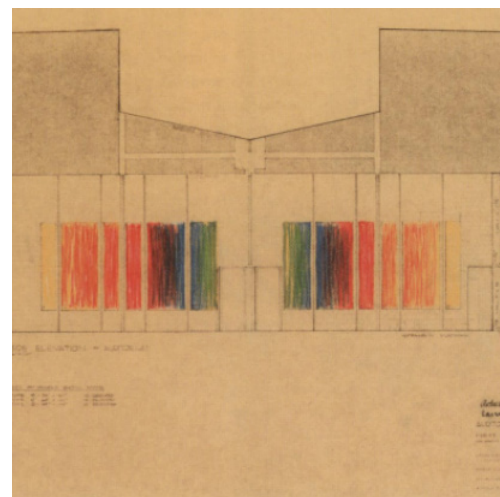
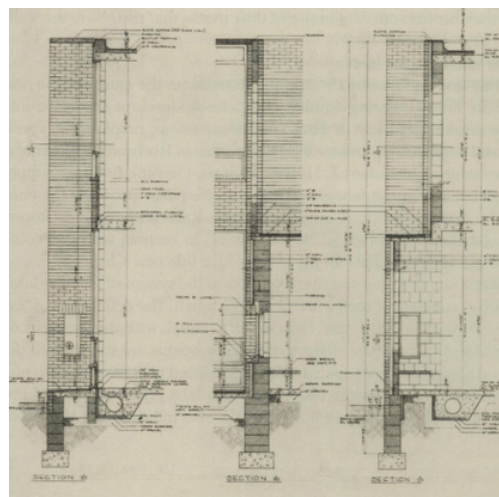
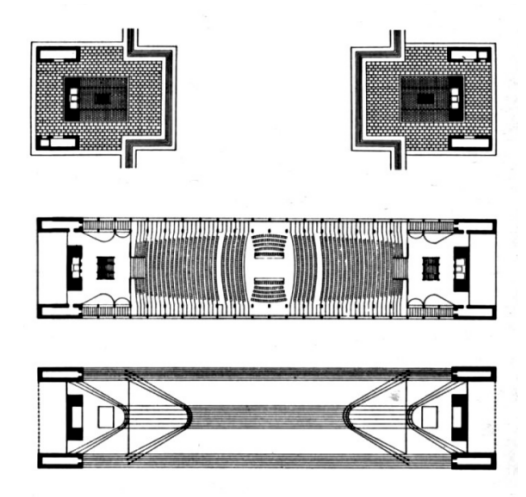
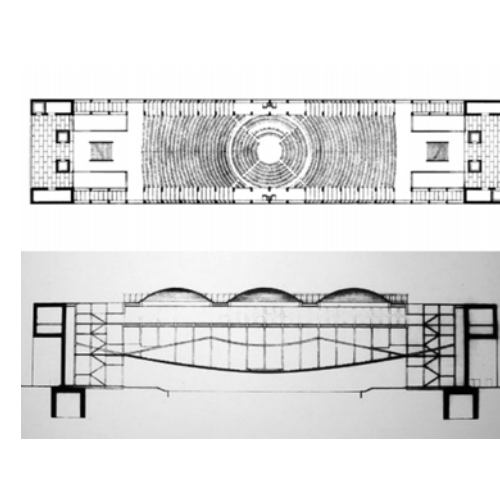
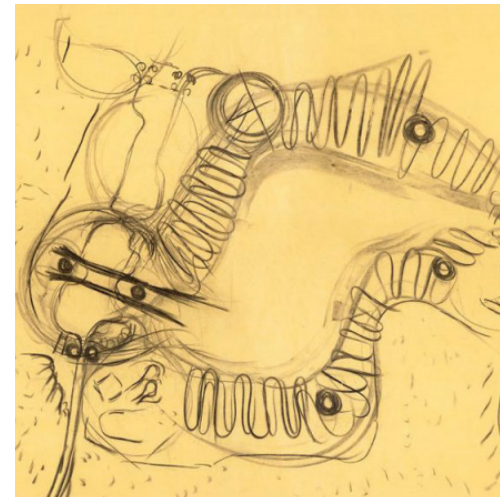
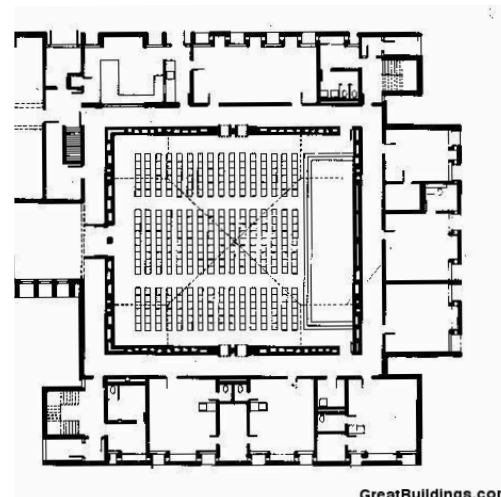
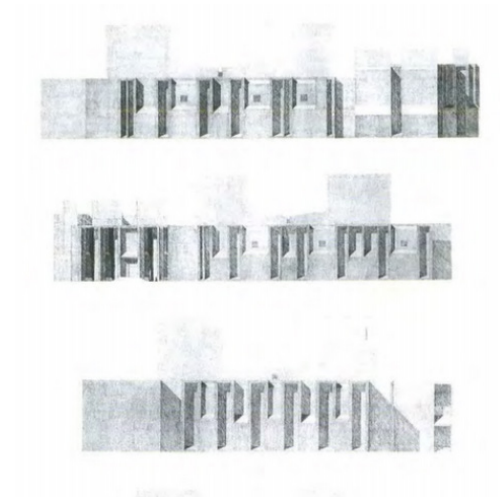
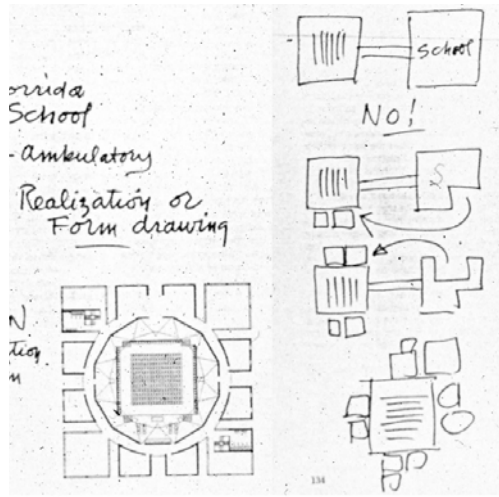
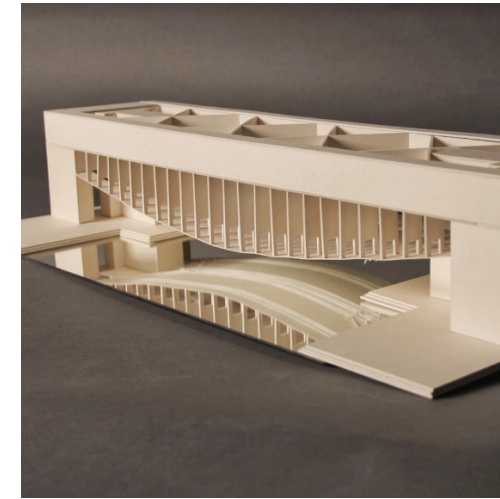
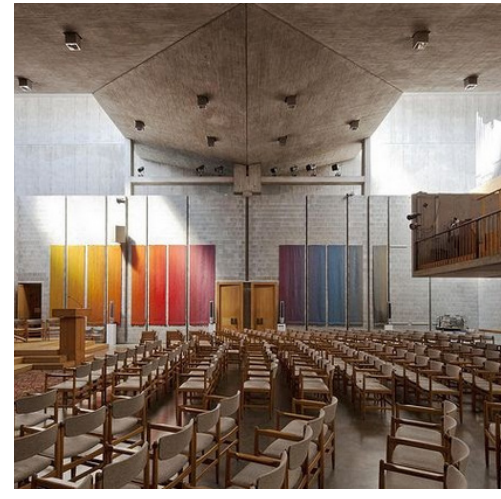
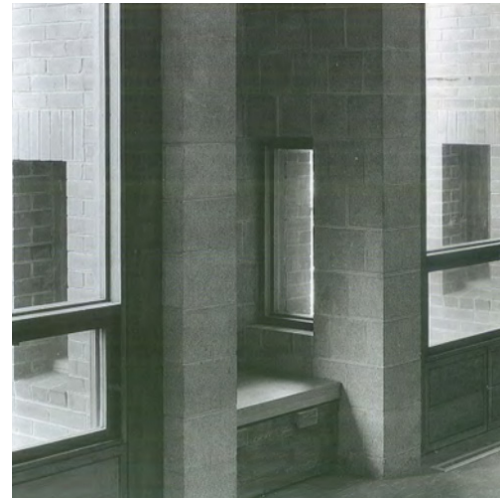
composition

the grid

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japanese metabolism: tange v.s. shinohara

Metabolism in Japan was spearheaded by a group of young architects disillusioned with the post-war trajectory of the country and national architectural discipline. Influenced largely by the social idealism developing in the west with Marx and others, they fused ideas for urban megastructures with principles of organic growth, evolution, and recombination. There is a clear affinity between the ideologies of this group and those of somewhat contemporary western collective such as Archigram and Superstudio, although the tentative ventures into physical realizations set the Metabolists apart from many other utopian movements. The big question perhaps, is did these attempts at realizing their visions ultimately undermine their idealism, or reinforce their claims that this future was reachable?

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Kenzo Tange, "Plan for Tokyo," *Architecture Culture, 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology*, p.325

Kisho Kurokawa, "Metabolism in Architecture" Introduction by Charles Jenks & Chapter 1 - Metapolis

Koolhaas, Obrist et *Project Japan Metabolism Talks (2011)*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpwcTQ5RKbw>

Maki/Ohtaka, "Toward Group Form," *Architecture Culture, 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology*, p.319

Mark Jarzombek, *Positioning the Global Imaginary: Arata Isozaki, 1970, Critical Inquiry*, 2018,

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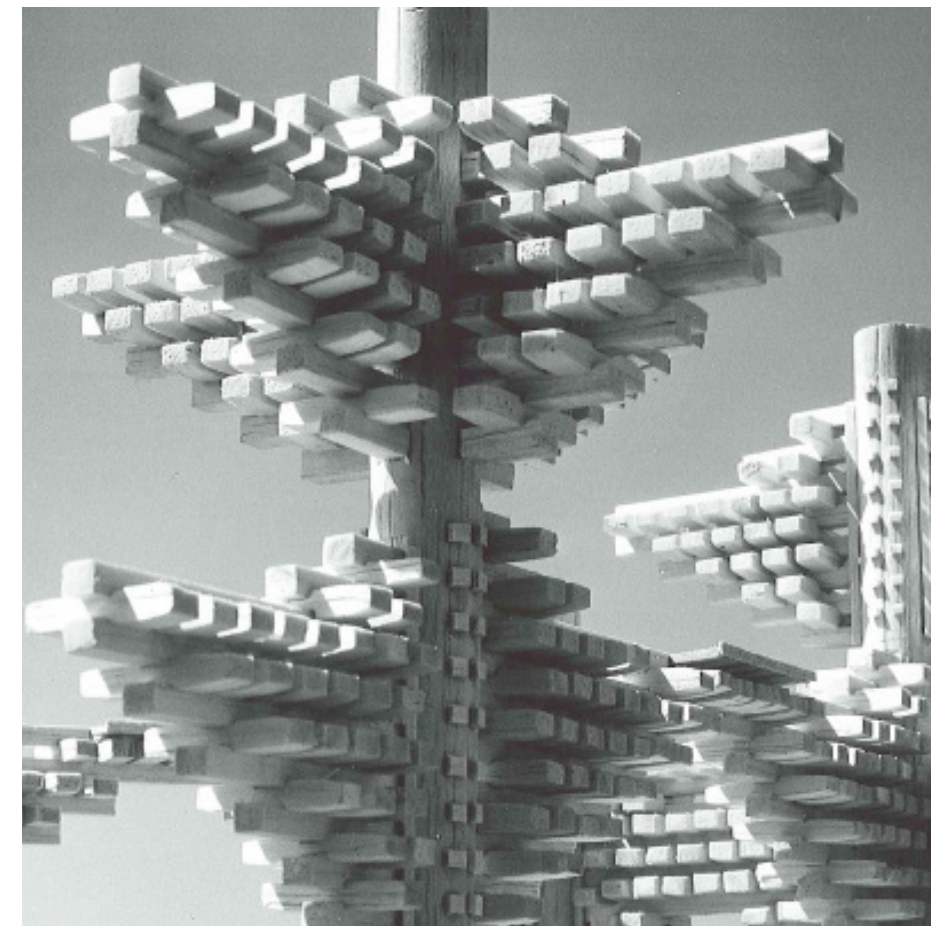
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Petit, Emmanuel. "Incubation and Decay: Arata Isozaki's Architectural Poetics - Metabolism's Dialogical 'Other.'" *Perspecta*, vol. 40, 2008, pp. 152-163.

Schaarschmidt-Richter, Irmtraud, Kazuo Shinohara, "Kazuo Shinohara, Philosopher of Architecture" 1994

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Jarzombek, Mark: Positioning the Global Imaginary: Arata Isozaki

In this article Jarzombek is discussing the semantics/epistemology and historicity of the term “Global” and how its rise relates to the consequential developments in architecture and culture. He does this primarily by examining one moment in which it is particularly apparent, that of the beginning of the publication “Global Architecture” - explaining with it the advent of the metabolist movement, to which the term was integral. He debates some interesting points of what axis this “global” conception relied upon, for it needs one in order to exist, and the two counterpoints were political vs geological, a dialectical conception of the world we live in. These two views become apparent as he explains works by metabolist architects such as Tange and Isozaki, as an example take City in the Air, on which Jarzombek writes: “In reality, the project of clustered capsules suspended in the air on giant cylinders rising from the ground references not just the timber bracketing system found in Japanese temples but also bomber formations or perhaps, even more ominously, mushroom clouds. What was being destroyed by this city in the air was not some old Japan, for beneath it, quite clearly, is the white modernist city. City in the Air, in military dispassion, cleanses modernism of its residual humanity. It is as if the engineers of global war have become the engineers of the city itself”. Jarzombek posits Isozaki’s global as a complex conception dealing with where creativity can exist in a post-nuclear and post-holocaust world.

CE

Koolhaas, Obrist, et al: Project Japan Metabolism Talks

The talk centers around a recent superbook of books about each of the Metabolist architects compiled by Rem Koolhaas and Hans Ulrich Obrist through a series of interviews with the figures of interest (with the exception of Kenzo Tange, who had just recently died around the start of the project). Kurokawa’s metabolism turned out to be a free-market version that is subject to the motivations of a capitalist economy; he ran for mayor of Tokyo with the goal of selling Tange’s Tokyo Metropolitan Headquarters to private investors, creating a bitter rivalry with Arata Isozaki in the process. His Nakagin Capsule Tower is also in a state

of limbo, where a building whose units were meant to be replaced every 25 years has not been updated since its initial creation and the current Japanese economy is the only factor in preventing its demolition. The metabolists, despite their emphasis of natural processes, nevertheless allowed a capitalist approach to consumption determine the nature of the architecture’s use, a condition in which spent capsules, after x years, would be disposed of to be replaced by newly manufactured units, not unlike the idea of plastic bottles in a vending machine. What underlies this attitude toward consumption is the understanding of nature as an infinite resource to be exploited, that natural processes remain independent and indifferent to raw material extraction and industrial manufacturing processes.

RK

Stewart, David: What was history for Kazuo Shinohara?

This lecture was given by David Stewart, history professor at Tokyo Tech, opening for the exhibition organized by Go Hasegawa and Kresten Geers and David Van Severen called “Besides, History: Go Hasegawa, Kresten Geers, and David Van Severen” at the CCA. The lecture was organized by dividing Shinohara’s career into four parts: the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Style. Stewart analyzes the different influences in Shinohara’s life and how his architecture progressively changed with regards to the history of Japan and the emotional effects that architecture can bring to its inhabitants. Stewart reveals Shinohara’s distaste for the Metabolist movement since he saw the group purely as an economic formation, a translation of economic conditions into lifestyle. The Metabolist were primarily focused on the radical reconstruction of the city and engaged with technology and cybernetics as a solution for the city’s reconstitution. As a fierce anti-metabolist, Shinohara mainly focused on using traditional ideas of architecture, and the merging of Western Modern ideals with Japanese architecture. He focused solely on houses, since he believed houses provided a safe haven for Japanese people who were coming out of the war. He considered the resources of architecture might be used to stake out a domain not only of the individual but also of the family and the dwelling itself- to combat the leveling effects exerted by the pressure of mass society and industrialization.

KL

Urban, Florian: Japanese Occidentalism

This article suggests that there was a western perception of postwar Japanese architects as the mysterious “other” to occidental architectural attitudes. Rather than adopting a placeless internationalism, Japanese architects were admired by the west for their ability to integrate old philosophical thinking and local tradition into their work to formulate a contemporary attitude towards architecture’s social role with distinctly Japanese values. The Japanese, writing for a western audience, posit their work within the framework of this west-east cultural dichotomy, emphasizing themselves as dynamic, fresh, and developing versus the west which was static, stale, and inflexible. Kurokawa in particular described a conception of Japanese space as distinct from western attitudes that focuses on “in-between spaces”, which relates to the Japanese method of composition of garden palaces where the spaces are organized as placements of distinct units on a landscape, creating relationships between the parts that do not exist when each object is isolated in space. The attitude is very much concerning the composition of many things as a collective whole, relating to the Buddhist ideas of En (fateful change) and Ma (buffer space) which allow the Metabolists to approach architecture from a novel conceptual relationship of parts to whole. Hence we see the beginnings of a synthesis of Metabolist ideas about noded towers, sprawling networks, and plug-in disposable units. These themes of consumption are evident in Japan’s attitude towards consumerism, a plastic-wrapped product culture of multiplicity and factory standardization in a post-war Japan drawing influence from the economic prosperity brought on in the west by free-market trade and capitalist economics. Florian argues that this shifted-attitude Metabolist movement as the eastern counterpart to western architectural thought was the necessary catalyst for the western break from late modernism into an age of pluralism.

RK

Kurokawa, Kisho: Metabolism in Architecture [intr. & Chpt 1]

The introduction to metabolism outlines the inherent paradoxes of the movement epitomized in Kurokawa’s architectural approach as concurrent notions of understanding Japanese history and identity, and competing/adopting Western culture. Jenks explores how metabolism originates

as almost propaganda to strengthen the nation after WW2. The movement parallels the industry in its search for expediting and enhancing various processes. Generally, the metabolists function as a blend of art and industry, understanding the city and architecture as a mechanical organism, undergoing systemic cycles of change. Buildings and cities become indicative of these temporal processes, and are created to adapt and reform. Kurokawa also suggests the relevance to Japanese tradition, where shrines are constantly rebuilt and destroyed. He explores the Japanese aesthetic of death, and understands buildings must function similarly. Yet, Jenks suggests this elicits another paradox, as the work actually pauses time, as the rebuilt temples are always built in the previous style, never shifted or recreated.

Kurokawa also illuminates his personal design thinking, exploring concepts of jiga (the capsule space) and engawa (the connection space) that is formed by the overlap of the capsule. There is a hyper emphasis on the formal and spatial layering that forms interstitial space that can be adapted and reconfigured.

BS

This reading jumps around a fair bit, and so is hard to summarize with one cohesive thesis statement. All sections deal with the ideas of the Metabolism movement. Primarily those on a larger scale, not as concerned with aesthetics, but rather the philosophy of change inherent in the movement. There are important distinctions made between rates of obsolescence, so that the components of a unit may be exchanged intermittently as the whole continues to evolve. The introduction and first excerpt deal with the famous architect and personality Kisho Kurokawa. A bit of a polymath or renaissance man if you will, Kurokawa was an extraordinarily talented and driven designer. He had strong polemic ideas about society, politics, and the built environment – and executed these to a degree of efficacy which is extremely rare to come by. The reading talks about his career and philosophy. A good summary of the tone of the piece is this: “When Kurokawa is criticized, it is because he is too perfect”.

The second excerpt explains new conceptions of urbanism, presumably directly resulting out of Metabolist thinking. It outlines different sizes of space and time modules which must be considered in the design of a flexible, metabolizing

polis. It prompts the adoption of a “meta-architecture”, and architecture which is recursive and aware as a part of a larger systemic feedback-loop.

I was somewhat familiar with the work and thought of Kurokawa before reading this piece, so what struck me as the most interesting portion of the first excerpt was the explanation of the leadership of his firm. Kurokawa exhibits a rare collision of servant and dogmatic leadership styles. He is at once controlling and requires absolute alignment to his personal design philosophies, and at the same time very much concerned for the advancement and performance of his staff. His firm has experienced success without sacrificing vigor or creativity, which seems to be the overarching case in the west.

The framework of meta-architecture and meta-polis from the second excerpt was also fascinating. The diagram on page 72 clarifies the thought, but seems to simplify it to a deceptively straightforward theory – fundamentally lacking the inclusion of a timescale. Theorists have pushed architects to consider the fourth dimension for a long time, with varying success, but perhaps it has stuck more so in urbanism. The ideas recall those of Gideon in *Space, Time and Architecture*; desiring the understanding of the intimate and sometimes invisible relationships propagating through space and time between architectural, urban, and cultural elements.

CE

Stewart, David: Recognition & Delineation, Situating Shinohara

Similar to the Lecture and QnA by David B. Stewart, he describes Shinohara’s oeuvre mainly focusing on Shinohara’s work in the Second Style. Stewart describes *House in White* (1966), as the landmarks of Shinohara’s work. The house is organized on a one hundred square meter plan surmounted by a strictly pyramidal roof endowed with nearly 1:2 pitch and extensive projecting eaves, which was an unusual paradigm for a Japanese residential-style. Stewart argues that Shinohara’s use of traditional elements were more so symbolic or abstracted, as they resemble the look of its tradition but never literally used.

In the *House of White*, traditional syntax was for the first

time replaced by what the architect refers to as newly independent spatial quality. Shinohara believed that a house need not respond to any minute concerns posed by contemporary society. Shinohara also believed that Japanese architecture was divisional than additive, as seen in Western-style building. By diving the house in section and plan asymmetricaly, opposing the symmetrical structure scheme- the house achieved a high vertical space that situates the central pillar of naked cedar in a off centered position. By imposing a false ceiling, which is distinctively not an element of the Great Buddha, or daibutsu yo style, which the house refers to, the rectangular white cube of the main living-dining-kitchen space resembles a European interior. Shinohara’s abstract expression emerges from the chrysalis of tradition in the ostensible guise of an almost purely western style interior.

KL

Maki/Ohtaka: Towards Group Form

Maki explores the concept of group form, of understanding the total image of a city instead of the singular building. The work of previous architects (Mies) is discounted as solely complex in its identity, not in its relationship to the city/total image. Maki and the metabolists are interested in the pursuit of an evolving form that represents its relationship to a changing whole and its parts. The identity of every node must be represented within the larger scheme. Maki suggests modern cities are places categorized by the “coexistence and conflict of heterogeneous institutions and individuals” and by an unpredictable and rapid social transformation. These characteristics necessitate architecture that functions dynamically and that embraces the totality and the elements simultaneously. It is in architecture designed for space within and without. Maki also rejects the notion of a masterplan, instead favoring a masterform that expresses the individual systems and energy of the city in its pursuit of a total image.

BS

This essay presents the more or less canonical view of metabolism, positing the conception of “group form” as an effort to conceive a form in relationship to an ever changing whole and its parts. They seek to reconcile modern characteristics of the city regarding the coexistence of extremely heterogeneous institutions and individuals and unpredict-

ably rapid and extensive societal transformations. Instead of creating the image of a single iconic, static, composition, they seek a diffuse, dynamic, and encompassing form.

CE

Petit, Emmanuel: Incubation and Decay

“The cube is an enemy” - Arata Isozaki

Isozaki’s attitude of cynicism lands his work outside the boundaries of the Metabolist attitude, which he viewed as flawed in its optimism and linearity. Isozaki confronts the realities of war not as an opportunist from conditions of *tabula rasa* but as a cautionary poet deeply reflective toward the destructive realities of a razed Tokyo; he sees “traces of death” where other metabolists see only rebirth. He approaches the issue of where to go using poetics and symbolic significance rather than the “immediate instrumentality” of metabolist theory. Analogies of body and architecture (and undertones of Mary Shelley) suggest themes of growth and decay, in contrast to the metabolist attitude of growth and endless renewal. The Metabolists deny decay through their immediate replacement of decaying parts, suggesting an architecture whose existence is characterized by endless youth. Leaves on an old tree that grow back anew each spring, but the metabolists fail to recognize the compounding piles of dead leaves fallen at its base. Isozaki’s architecture is upon this ground, while the metabolists work away in the canopy. “Confronting hospital gloom, I resolved then to make darkness and ruin the basis of my theories of space and time.”

Isozaki presents the body always as fragmented and open to external processes, never in a perpetual state of homeostasis. He sees the infrastructure of the city as adding a certain contradiction to his incomplete body, whereby the multiplicity of states between birth and death provide space for poetic paradox.

“Since change is half-destructive and half-constructive, it should be permissible for architecture to create the exact appearance of ruins.” (relating to European romantic thought) The German Jena Romantic writer Friedrich Schlegel suggests that “That which does not annihilate itself is worthless,” which suggests the inextricable temporality of the truth of any idea. “Art can only allude to perfection by expressing its aesthetic absolute in a state of decay,” i.e. Grecian ruins which depict the fallacy of instinctive greatness, in a

state of decay, entangled with the spontaneous polar state of natural growth.

“To be dreaming of architecture as a pleasure machine” - Retroactive manifesto

“The fall of ideas” with Isozaki’s *Electric Labyrinth* - ruined Hiroshima and Nagasaki landscapes with images of futurist designs by contemporary Japanese architects - the inevitable fall of utopianism

RK

Tsukamoto, Yoshiharu: Escaping the Spiral of Intolerance

“Void Metabolism,” a term coined by Tsukamoto is reevaluation of the 60s Metabolism, which based spatial development from a centralized core. However, Tsukamoto believes in the contemporary city of Tokyo, these metabolistic developments happen in the voids, the empty lots in between existing buildings. The 26 year life cycle of Japanese buildings, allows for potential changes in the neighborhood with the introduction of new building types and programs.

KL

Isozaki, Arata: Invisible City

There is an interesting conflict between the preface and the essay in this piece. I feel that the preface paints Isozaki as somewhat of a nihilist. Implying that he was lost after the war, and disappointed in Tange’s humanistic optimism, favoring a more pessimistic outlook, creating designs which referenced militaristic and dystopian forms and ideas. On the contrary Isozaki’s essay feels rather positive and forward looking, even if perhaps overly grasping towards a mechanistic / cybernetic perception of the city which could often be quite devoid of life. Like any good cyberneticist he sets out a series of rules with which to design future cities, if followed they will result in a system through which human beings can support an environment for city-style living through a full application of modern technologies. The city becomes not a physical manifestation necessarily, but a cybernetic environment full of invisible threads flying around and linking us together.

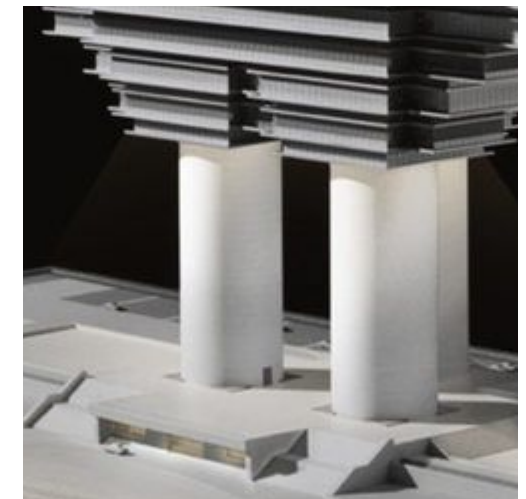
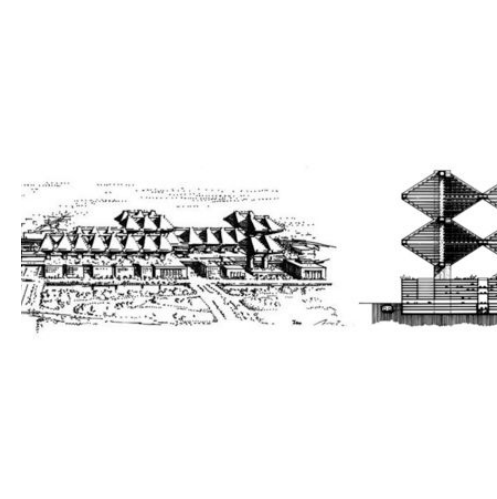
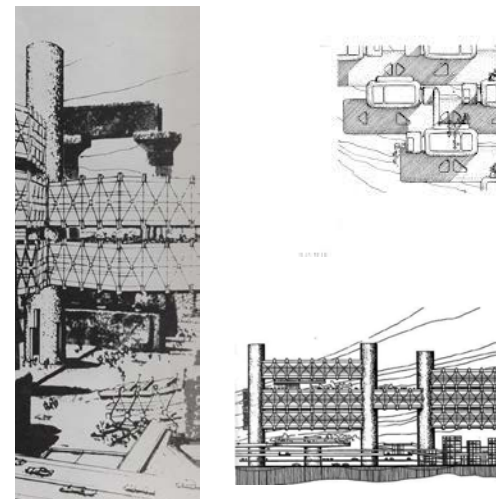
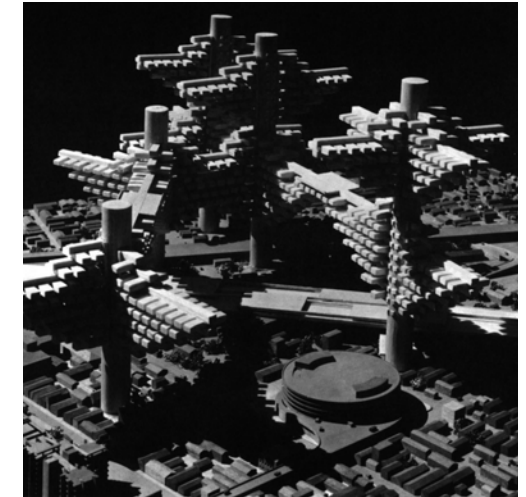
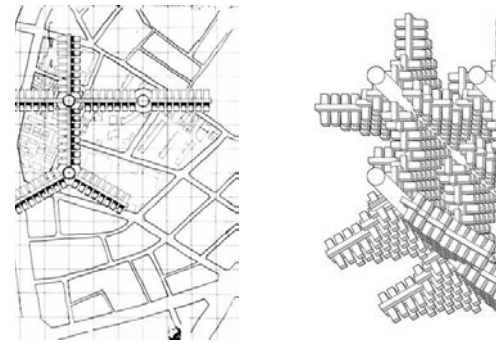
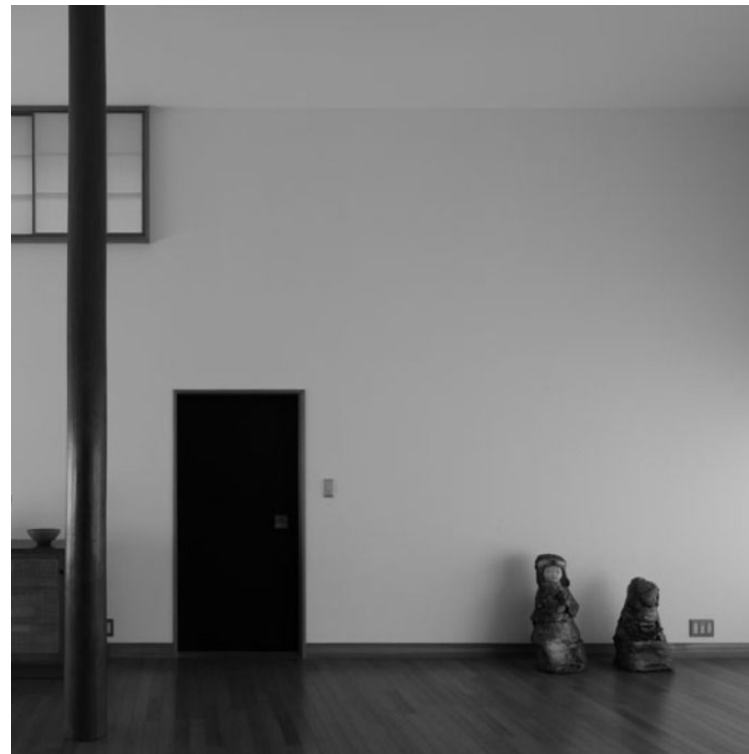
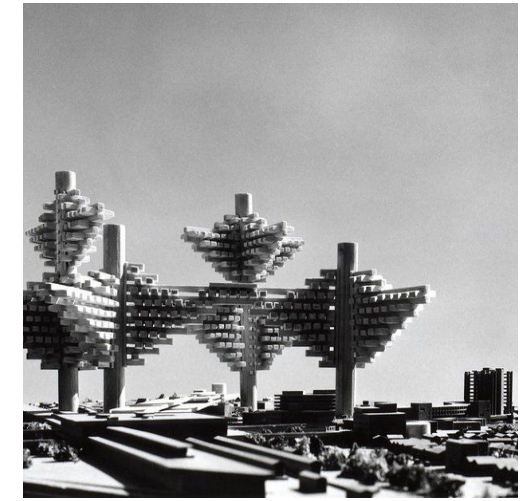
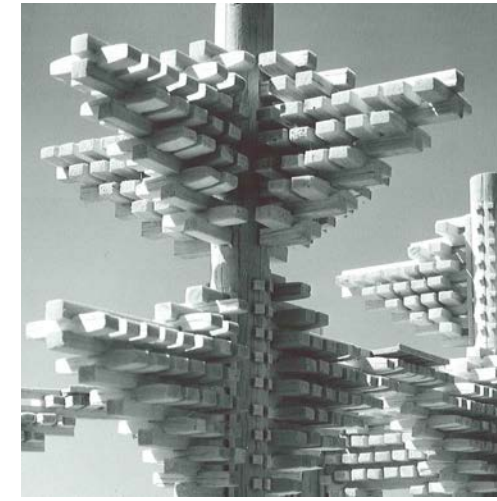
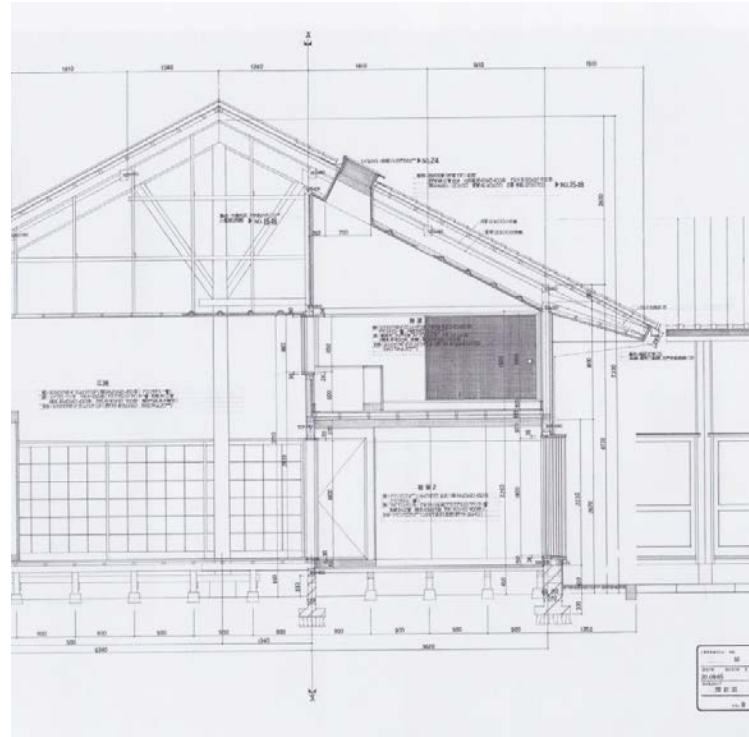
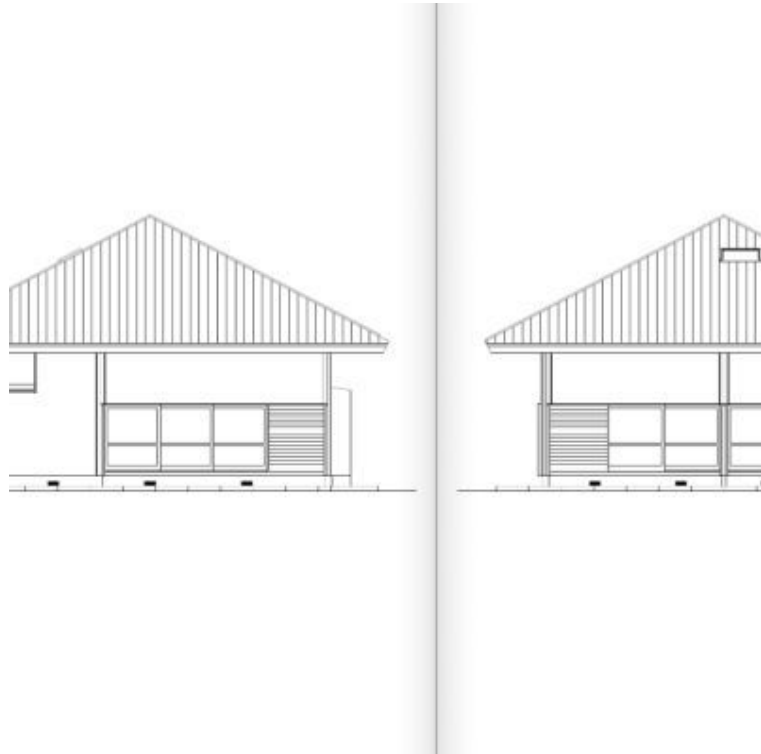
CE

identity

composition

the grid

utopianism



identity

composition

the grid

utopianism

alison & peter Smithson, team 10, and new brutalism

Team Ten ushered in a movement whose architectural language would develop to become New Brutalism. The group was highly socially-driven, emphasizing the importance of a holistic urban strategy that addresses issues of identity, connectivity, and mobility. Self-described as “utopian,” Team Ten aimed to reassert many of the social principles of modernism’s foundational ideas, driven in large part by a desire to liberate modernism from its continued bastardization through the rapid spread of an unthinking international style. New Brutalism, as described by Reynar Banham, became the architectural style that embodied urban mobility at multiple scales, from the individual to the family to the apartment block to the neighborhood to the city, a theme also evident in the ideas of the Dutch structuralists, several of whom were members of Team Ten. Its allure was in its drive to create localized identities within each community “based on the physical reality of place and occasion rather than on the abstraction of space and time (Team Ten Primer).”

readings

Boyer, Christine. *Not Quite Architecture: Writing around Alison and Peter Smithson* (2017).

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Smithson, Alison: Team 10 Primer

The essay begins with an expression of the inadequacy of existing modes of thought arising from the modern movement, their intent being that they would instill in architects “an understanding and feeling for the patterns, the aspirations, the artefacts, the tools, the modes of transportation and communications of present-day society, so that he can as a natural thing build towards that society’s realization of itself.” Team Ten is self-described as “utopian [about the present]” with the intent of using the act of building as a realization of their ideas about space, buildings, and the people inside them. Smithson speaks of the architect’s “responsibility towards the individual or groups he builds for,” suggesting that it is the human and logistical factors that are of a primary concern to the architect. Team Ten’s assembly is designed as a collective movement in a particular direction so as to maximize the impact and legitimize their mission by virtue of its collective inertia.

Team Ten identifies a lack of a clear holistic identity to the city as a main failure of modernism and suggests that an organizing ‘Urban Motorway’ is the solution, providing a clear visual and hierarchical indicator of the organization of the city. Team Ten has great interest in ‘mobility’ and legible networks of connections between parts of a whole. They stress organizational clarity at the micro and macro scales, and suggests a degree of localized identity to each community within the larger collective, both through their architectural expression as well as their infrastructural network organization.

‘Motorways as a unifying force’ played a central role in Team 10’s thinking, as well as the idea that dispersal is an inevitable result of mobility and that it is accompanied by a rethinking of urban density and locations of nodes in the network due to the development of novel methods of communication. Both English neighborhood planning and the Unite by Le Corbusier suggest an isolationist attitude towards community and connectivity which Team Ten wholly rejects. ‘Bottleneck’ planning only serves to disconnect a group from the larger framework of the city. The house is the quantized unit of the city, and it contains the basic unit of the family. The house is described as a shell, which “fits man’s back,” curves inward towards family and curves outward to society. This correlates with the rise of vertical living but the death of the garden city.

“Many ideas of the modern movement have found employment in society. . . . But disappointment is often felt in that the originators of ideas sometimes see much of their work used, not on the basis of love and understanding but on the basis of prostitution and exploitation. . . . People are confronted with a mass-produced way of living. . . . Comparison is essential to a democratic way of life.” Suggestions of the first hints of a pre-postmodern pluralism to combat the homogeneity of mid-century modern architecture. With this comes a renewed grounding in circumstance over the dominant conceptually abstract narrative described by Gideon’s notion of modernism, whereby Team Ten describes “A planning based on the physical reality of place and occasion rather than on the abstraction of space and time,” which also suggests the early workings of a (critical?) regionalism and situated-ness of architecture.

Team Ten speaks of the specificity of the client, stating that urban planning fails because it does not design for the individual but rather the empty slot of the individual, entirely anonymous and without indication of any particular value system. The identity is the root from which formal and organizational variation can grow.

The individually-owned motor car is the symbol of democratic freedom. Team Ten recognizes the capacity for urban infrastructure (in particular, roads) to create geographical but also social links or barriers between communities or regions. The system of mobility then is indispensable to the vitality of a community. Yet this does not discount the value of pedestrian access, as Van Eyck states, “To cater to the pedestrian means to cater for the child. . . . The child cannot rediscover the city unless the city rediscovers the child.”

Team Ten also suggests that an aesthetic goal is to find the appropriate expression to “mechanized building techniques and scales of operation,” suggesting the proud bones -and-guts exposure of plumbing, HVAC, and structure in a building and an unapologetic rawness to the building finish.

RK

The Team 10 Primer introduces narrative and examples regarding 3 conceptual notions of spatial planning: the urban infrastructure, the grouping of dwellings, and the doorstep.

The Primer introduces notions of historical analysis and a rigorous contemplation of how to integrate historicism

with modern needs. Urban infrastructure investigates how cities used to be structured around a natural unchanging large scale form but have now become liberated by the urban motorway and have become placeless, overly mass produced ways of life. The architect, according to the Primer, must be aware of the interrelationships present in the city. The architect cannot merely synthesize the city, but must introduce architectural ideas that tether the city to inherent means of motion and life. The grouping of dwellings explores how the individual house is structured within a community and a city, how the house must reconcile regional traditions with modern needs, how the city needs hierarchy and cannot function in isolation. The doorstep section interrogates the transitional spaces in the city, between the collective and the individual. It explores how architecture must extend the narrow borderline between two places and must recognize the duality of character not merely as a 2 inch door, but as a charged space.

BS

Risselada, Max: The Space Between

Risselada writes the introduction to the publication of *The Space Between*, the third ‘manifesto’ of the Smithsons which was published posthumously. It was intended as somewhat of a reference document, illustrating how their projects were situated in their contexts, using photographs of the buildings and the life surrounding them. I find it interesting that this “gentleness of intention” that the Smithsons express in their projects and reflection, is an attitude that many would not associate with the stylistic choice in brutalism or new brutalism. An attitude perhaps more readily associated with vernacular or critical regionalist architecture, the stark materiality of many of these projects leaves them in contrast to much of the surrounding built work - I understand in this case the situational sensitivity to lie in the spatial and programmatic organization of the projects, almost divorced from the material articulation of these concepts. The nascent principle of this essay seems to be a reflection on the organization of American cities in contrast to that of European, namely, that American cities (I think primarily they speak to the east coast) denote urban significance through a language of the interval between buildings. In the Smithsons’ work this concept is pushed further by juxtaposing conflicting elements or ideas and leaving a space for which curiosity and inference to reside. Risselada

remarks that the Smithsons’ work seems to lack a consistent language which feels contrary to what Banham was writing, although perhaps Risselada is referring to the entire oeuvre of work whereas Banham was focusing on a single building.

CE

In this text Risselada talks about “the space between” the Smithsons’ work and their conceptual understanding of the space. In Peter Smithson’s words “The charged void, we are thinking of architecture’s capacity to charge the space around it with an energy which can join up with other energies, influence the nature of things that might come... a capacity we can feel and act upon, but cannot describe or record it.”

Risselada also focuses on the Economist building and its organization. Square with canted corners, facilities center of the space with its offices and guest rooms are located at the periphery. The plaza space, an unoccupied space is understood as a neutral space, a gap that has not been designated a program or purpose.

KL

Risselada’s introduction of the Smithson’s *The Space Between* explores crucial thematic and intellectual curiosities that intertwine with all of their built and unbuilt work. The ideas presented suggest a careful articulation of the space between architecture, placing equal emphasis as to the architecture itself. For the Smithson’s, as evident in the titling of their book *The Charged*

Void, architecture functions as a systemic force influencing nature and life around it. Thus, the space between architecture becomes intensely designed and contemplated to render the architecture most successful. The Smithsons explore a sensibility about the places between place. Risselada also introduces the notion of space as contrasted to room. Room becomes specifically about definition and enclosure, space becomes more encompassing.

Risselada also explores an interesting concept about the spatial interval regarding American urbanism. For the Smithsons, the space between architecture must also be heavily designed and studied as a connecting flow of architecture. In America, however, they realize the space between is left

untouched, merely understood as an interval of distance. The only designed element becomes the variation of this interval; civic spaces require the largest, then galleries, then libraries, then fire stations, down to the doctor offices. Riselada comments on how this space between is generated by a flattening of temporal and spatial topography, so that place no longer is a sense of time or history, but merely as this 2D interval. The buildings become self contained, restricted forms. The Smithsons work, however, combats this anonymity, leaving space between for interpretation and varied usage. The Smithsons work attempts to balance identity and neutrality, separateness and connection.

Banham, Reyner. The New Brutalism

The emergence and eventual epidemic of 'New Brutalism' suggests a fundamental break from the architectural fixation on palladian organizational principles of geometric order. These ideas were visible in the Smithsons' first built work, the Hunstanton school, and Reynar Banham characterizes this form of new brutalism with three (four) defining qualities:

1. Formal legibility of plans
2. Clear exhibition of structure
3. Valuation of materials for their inherent qualities as 'found'
4. (Possibly) brutality

Banham discusses Louis Kahn's Yale Art Gallery as a contender for the position of proto-new-brutalism, yet he concludes that the Yale Art Gallery possesses a certain degree of detail refinement that does not align with the New Brutalist embrace of complete raw exposure and unapologetic lack of any identifiable embellishment. As the new brutalist aesthetic charges forward, Banham introduces a revised set of parameters to describe it after the Miesian formality of the Hunstanton school had been jettisoned in their subsequent works:

1. Memorability as an Image
2. Clear exhibition of Structure
3. Valuation of Materials 'as found.'

New brutalism had become a wholehearted rejection of palladian geometric order. Instead, the movement was carried by a new organizational vehicle: the image. New brutalism relied heavily on image to communicate a total image based not in the classical understanding of a geometric composition, but rather in a topological strategy which discards formality for an organizational idea about the gesture of the

exterior circulatory "flourish" and the acceptance of a lack of a singular unified geometric massing. This suggests a total break from classical ideas about geometric composition, placing new brutalism as a great contribution to architecture of the 20th century.

RK

Banham writes that New Brutalism existed as a native art movement, and was both a tag of recognition and an ideological banner under which to gather. He begins, interestingly, by taking a position on movements themselves as a classification method, finding fault with the terminology of a "new x-ism" and posing the difficulty in small circles of coalescing anything into a proper "movement". Banham posits the Hunstanton School and the house in Soho as the architectural landmarks with which New Brutalism can be defined, characterizing them with a brutal honesty / transparency and a rigorous adherence to certain principles of modernism which had since fallen away. He commends the Smithsons for their absolute consistency, and criticizes Kahn for his lack of it. One of the claims towards the end I'm not sure I fully understand - what is fundamentally the difference between formality and image? Banham states that to properly understand the movement we must first distance ourselves from the formalist reading, but one of the aspects he intends to focus on is the memorability of the architecture as image. Image then is perhaps the formal qualities of the building after the act of perception from the audience, but in that sense the only controllable portion by the architects is the formal qualities, making the difference for me hard to perceive.

CE

This article introduces the works of Alison and Peter Smithson, as a new emerging force in architecture that defies the previous generation for its historical and empirical design. Alison and Peter Smithson went against the traditional beauty of architecture. Banham calls them the New Brutalist, a term that was actually coined by Alison Smithson in an interview describing the project in Soho, purely because of its aesthetic quality that was adopted by Corbu's le beton brut. What is interesting in this introduction is that Banham establishes a history in Modern Architecture and that it is no longer in its infantile stage. What Banham sees unique in the duo's work is the material authenticity, the building is

made of what it looks like - concrete. This idea has been one of the main criticisms of the Modernist, because of the ideas that they preached often contradicted what they have built.

The qualities that the New Brutalist work is 1. Formal legibility; 2. Clear exhibition of structure; 3. valuation of materials for their inherent qualities as found.'

HL

The Smithsons: The Charged Void

CLUSTER

The search for groupings answering patterns of associations, patterns of movement; able to give identity, responsive to place, to topography, to local climate.

CONNECTION ALLOWS SCATTER

The individual can experience a new freedom ... and a change of sensibility.

For a cognitive society, one that would be in control of its direction, spaces need to be calm, urbane, even a little empty.

The feeling for change, the need for elbow-room, for opening up so that buildings, roads, and services can each develop freely.

Grass and trees, parkland, occupied by landcastles as a more relaxed and expansive image for the metropolitan city.

PAVILION AND ROUTE

Where the separate pavilions build-up to a group form with its concomitant group space to make a new kind of building sensible of both present and emergent urban patterns.

AGAIN CONNECTION ALLOWS SCATTER

The interchange as a nodal event in a connective network. The scattered city structured in depth by patterns of use. The need for a low density to the centers of the city so that traffic handling can be considered as part of the act of building.

COHESION

A greater sense of connectivity as well as actual ease of communication as corollary to a looser grouping of communities.

To lay down a road in a built-up area is a very serious matter, for one is fundamentally changing the structure of the

community.

Area cohesion as an aid to the comprehension of the city. A suggestion for the possible distancing of looser groupings of a community.

The city as a work of art ... reflecting on cities that are seen as works of art.

NEUTRALITY

A neutrality, or recessiveness, of urban form so that things can coexist .. the recover, the re-invention, of the essential formal techniques may take two generations.

The working together of the pieces of a city so that the spaces used by people support they city's legibility.

HOLES IN CITIES

A quietness that, until now, our sensibilities could not recognise as architecture at all.

The gap in the city, as if it were a missing tooth, created by a necessary change of function .. one function dying, another needing a location.

Working towards a very different view of individual and collective responsibility for open spaces.

The turning of confrontation by embracing reality boldly.

A device whereby an interpretation of tradition is used to indicate a language for regeneration.

Derelict holes have exacerbated the loss of urban nerve; until urban nerve is regained, holes in cities must be made purposeful.

The traditional service-hole in the city can be renewed to play a connective role by being given an appropriate lining.

PAVILION AND ROUTE FOLLOWED FURTHER

The inclination towards a celebration of the grown and the built: the green place as found, the mature trees, the building as incomer.

A catalytic gesture, a small insertion ... renewing connections, encouraging regeneration.

Old routes, existing ways ... new building types.

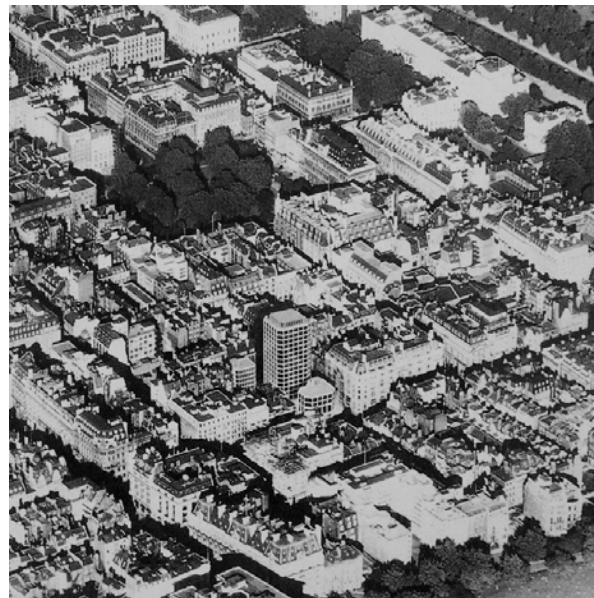
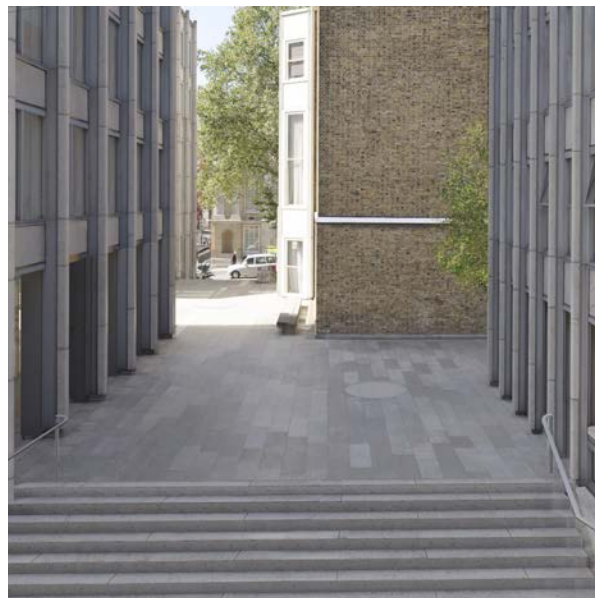
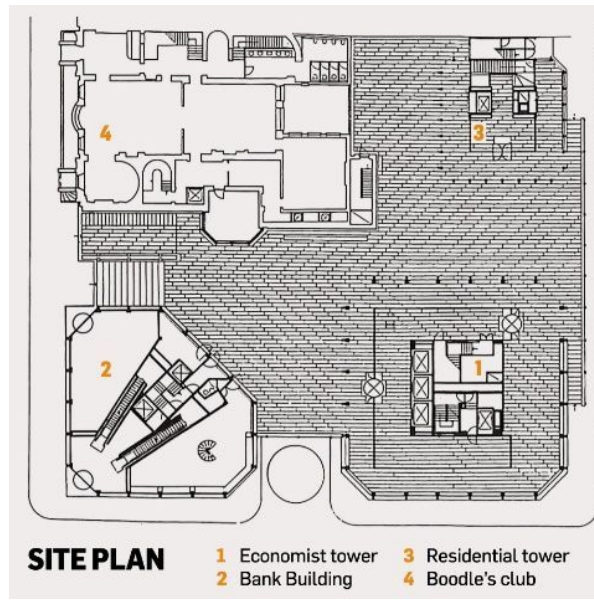
AND AGAIN THE SUN

Differentiation of the building's faces for sun acceptance and energy conservation.

Climate-responsive urban form.

THE GROWN AND THE BUILT

The grown, the fresh, and the quiet as necessary adjuncts to the built.



composition

composition

the grid

the grid

utopianism

utopianism

dutch structuralism

Dutch Structuralism is commonly known for its module base design, in which the aggregation of the module creates the larger system of the building. The fundamental principle of the movement was to create an open structure/system that could allow for future development and appropriation for future users. To anticipate the building's future development, architects like Van Eyck and Hertzberger emphasized a clear separation of the structure to the infill of the building. One interesting point that was brought up by one of the readings is the failures of Structuralism. The author talks about the fact that the movement was never meant to focus on the aesthetic or formal aspect of the building, however, many of Van Eyck and Hertzberger buildings developed a clear aesthetic that many have recognized as the Structuralist style. The author also mentions the fact that the Structuralist architects were keenly aware of this aspect and the architects believed that giving more agency to the users of the building did not directly imply that the architect or building must be mute but in certain instances requires aesthetic control.

readings

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Thomas Valena, Tom Avermaete & Georg Vrachliotis. *Structuralism Reloaded: Rule-based Design in Architecture & Urbanism* (Edition Axel Menges, 2011), pp. 6-17

Joan Ockman, "Van Eyck, Aldo. Steps Towards a Configurative Discipline." *Architecture Culture 1943-1968* (Rizzoli, 1993) pp. 347-360

Vincent Ligtelijn & Joseph Rykwert, *Aldo van Eyck: Works* (Birkhauser, 1999), pp.88-110

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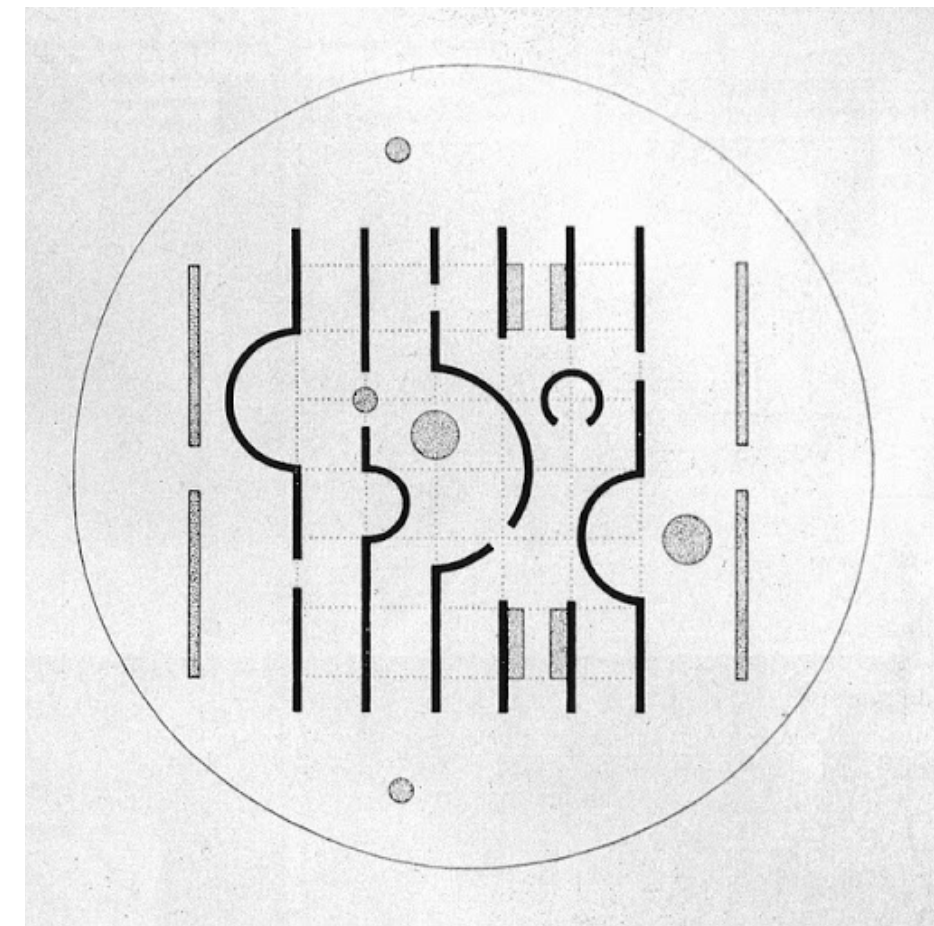
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Solomon Frausto. *Open Structures: An Introductory Dossier on Dutch Structuralism*. Vol 35: Everything Under Control (the Delft University, 2015)

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Robert McCarter. "Space and the Life-World: Lessons from the Experience of Architecture," Hermann Hertzberger, (nai010 publishers, August 2015)

Peter Blundell, "Aldo van Eyck: Orphanage, Amsterdam, 1954-59," *Modern Architecture Through Case Studies 1945-1990* (Architectural Press, 2007) pp. 35-47



Herman Hertzberger, Open Systems

Hertzberger outlines Dutch Structuralism's formal and social agenda of reconciling the reciprocal functions/needs of the individual and the community. Whereas modern architecture places sole priority on the individual, the private, Hertzberger emphasizes the necessity of the duality. Structuralism is central to post-war architecture in its complementary social and formal agendas, linking spatial organization with communal needs. Hertzberger further explains structuralism as the creation of a cohesive structural system embedded with individuality and nuance. This notion is a continuation of the conversation regarding the Miesian grid as either a freeing optimal structure or as a dictating nonorganic form. It also parallels development in Japanese metabolism through its manipulation of rigid, permanent forms that enable cyclical systems to populate within. Hertzberger similarly likens a building to a city, needed to adapt and be reused. Hertzberger also investigates the linguistic origins of structuralism as a depiction of how common language is evolved and altered by individuals.

BS

The author begins with the clarification of the Structuralist movement and its origins as one witnesses a renewed interest in the movement. The author states that Structuralism originates from linguistics and architecture adopts this principle of creating a basic vocabulary that could enable the designer to reconfigure vocabulary how they would desire. In the formal aspects of many Structuralist buildings, the buildings distinguish between structures and their in-fill elements. A clear spatial structure and infrastructure promises durability and anticipates for change internally and externally. Structuralism remains relevant as many of its buildings are able to withstand time and different circumstances. The author names a few examples of buildings like The school of architecture Nantes, France designed by the architecture office, Lacaton and Vassal, as this building demonstrates the principle of Structuralism to embrace change and different circumstances and not adopting the "style" of Structuralism.

HL

Feels quite connected to metabolist ideas, perhaps also in the eventual lineage of Christopher Alexander, or Bruno Latour regarding actor-network theory.

Connection to Matt-Building, or building as city

Structuralism is nurtured on the paradox that order in fact incites freedom

They were really trying to incite reinvention and change within a certain framework that was set up initially - ordered chaos perhaps?

CE

Peter Blundell, "Aldo van Eyck: Orphanage, Amsterdam, 1954-59," Modern Architecture Through Case Studies 1945-1990

Blundell in this reading focuses on Van Eyck and the orphanage he designed in 1954. Van Eyck was known for his interest in transitional spaces and anthropology. While many Modernists have stressed the difference in their architecture compared to their previous generation, Van Eyck, with his understanding of anthropology and the social behaviors of humans, argued the universality and timeless qualities in human behavior. Many of the geometries that he focused on, especially the circle, was a way to understand its social implications and how the occupant begins to react with others and the environment. His particular interest in urbanism is demonstrated in the design of the orphanage. He believes every building should consider its part to whole relationship. A building is a collection of rooms and this principle applies to cities - cities are a collection of buildings but can also be a collection of rooms.

HL

Solomon Frausto. Open Structures: An Introductory Dossier on Dutch Structuralism

This transcript focuses on the conversation between Tom Avermaete and Dirk van den Heuvel. They begin with the resurgence of structuralism and the renewed interest among the students, who are seeking different spatial agencies to

challenge the conventional ideas of space and to build an alternative idea to practice with a new lense into the Structuralist movement. One interesting point that was brought up by Dirk van den Heuvel is the failures of Structuralism. He talks about the fact that the movement was never meant to focus on the aesthetic or formal aspect of the building, however, many of Van Eyck and Hertzberger buildings developed a clear aesthetic that many have not recognized as the Structuralist style. He also mentions the fact that the Structuralist architects were keenly aware of this aspect and the architects believed that giving more agency to the users of the building did not directly imply that the architect or building must be mute but in certain instances requires aesthetic control. Structuralism allows one to think about the part and the whole.

HL

Van Heuvel, Wim. Structuralism in Dutch Architecture

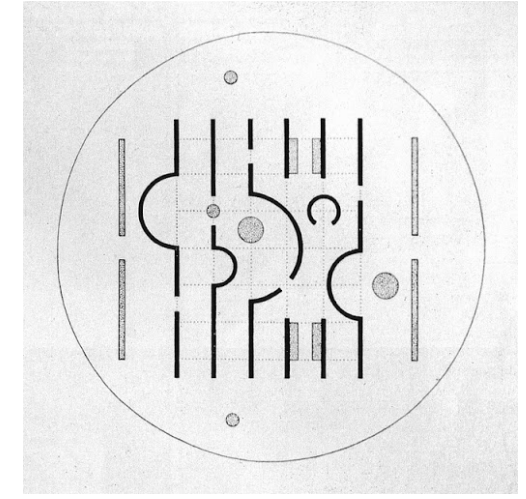
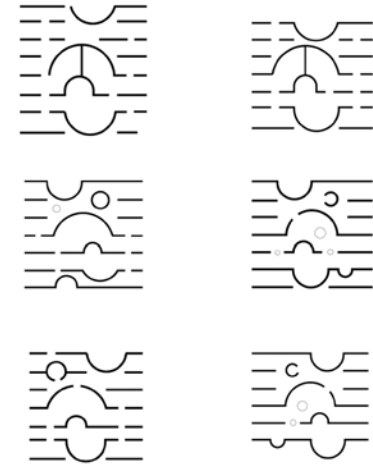
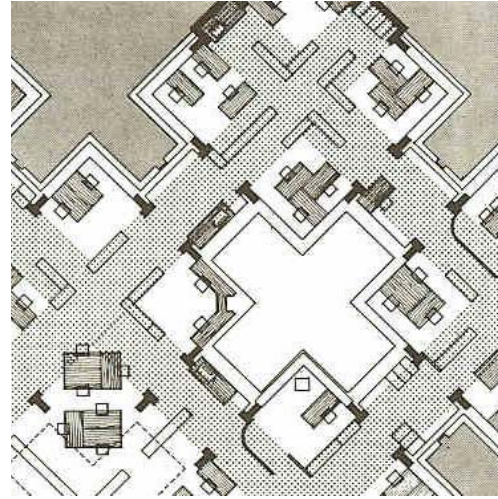
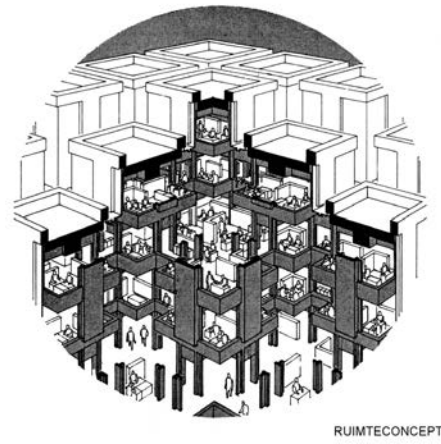
The Dutch structuralists came from a group of contributors to the journal Forum (later dubbed the "Forum group", revisiting the principles of early modernism from a position critical of the mid-century functionalism which came after the war. Berlage was a key player in the breaking of Dutch architecture away from the neoclassical tradition; his clear expression of structural iron gave way to two divergent schools of Dutch architectural thought; one older generation continuing the legacy of his earlier historicist work while the younger individuals pursued the new functionalism to a greater extent than Berlage managed in his lifetime. This second group's ideas would be fundamental in shaping the evolution of modern architectural discourse, principally via the De Stijl movement's emphasis on the abstraction and cartesian manipulation of space and surface. This movement, however, failed to integrate structural ideas into the synthesis of their conceptual framework, demonstrated best by Rietveld's Schroeder house, which, although novel in form, utilizes the same banal methods of construction which possessed no embedded material intelligence capable of reinforcing the ideological goals of the De Stijl movement. The Nieuwe Bouwen would introduce to architecture a more integrated method to design which addressed functionalism, structure, and program through a modernist expression of glass and articulated wall indents and outdents,

clearly signifying programmatic organization on the exterior. Ideas of the Nieuwe Bouwen would percolate into CIAM, influencing the ideas developing among Team 10 concerning organization and planning. The pre-war modernist interest of producing cheap, quality housing for low-income families had morphed after the war into a full-scale epidemic of cheap high-rise housing, as it conveniently allowed for the inexpensive development of dense housing for cities that had been leveled by bombings. Meanwhile, members of Team 10 were growing increasingly dissatisfied and critical of the now-default modernist response towards housing, and among them, several of the later-to-come Dutch structuralists. As a clarification, Van Eyck explained that "it was not 'La Ville Radieuse' which convinced the planning official, but CIAM's 'die funktionelle Stadt.'"

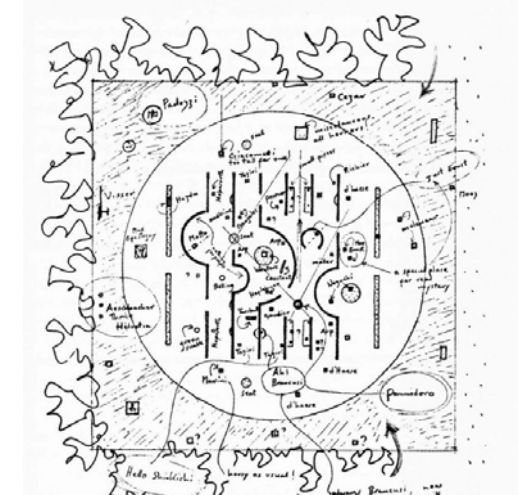
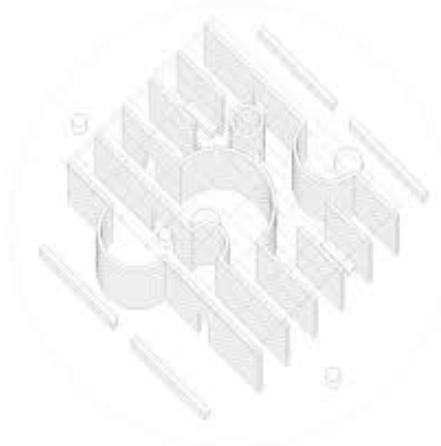
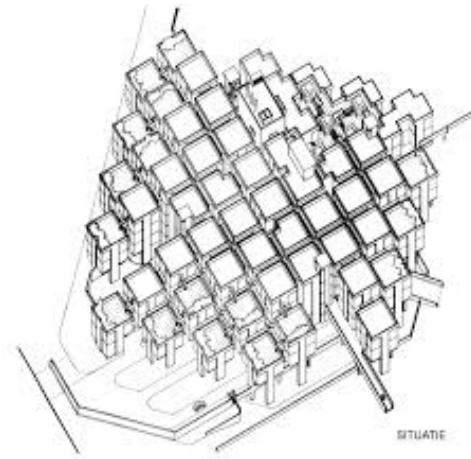
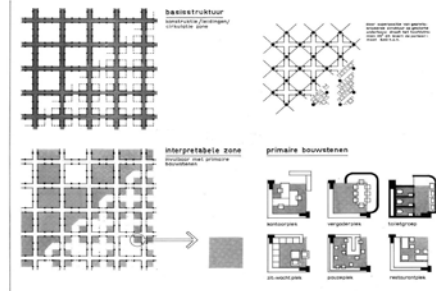
A new editorial board consisting of Dick Apon, Aldo van Eyck, Jaap Bakema, Gert Boon, Joop Hardy, Herman Hertzberger, and Jurriaan Schrofer (typography), later referred to as the Forum group, put into words their attitude towards Modernism's impacts with the exclamation, "Seldom were the possibilities greater; Seldom has a profession failed so badly," (Van Eyck). Their dissatisfaction with the deterioration of design quality and the inhabitability of housing led Wim van Bodegraven to write in 1952, "We support the need to create a structure of forms, which can develop with time; which remain a whole of forms in both their beginning and their further growth and maintain the coherence of the parts. The lack of this has led to self-destruction." Van Eyck's Burgerweehuis was the first expression of the Forum group's ideas and is an early example of what would come to be Dutch structuralism. The open community, the interior street, the clarity in structural expression, a fluidity of interior and exterior view, and the interplay of many opposites (big/small, many/single, unity/diversity, element/whole, individual/community, constancy/change, etc) are all ideas which permeate much of Dutch architecture of the preceding two decades.

RK

Valena, Thomas, Tom Avermaete & Georg Vrachliotis. Structuralism Reloaded: Rule-based Design in Architecture & Urbanism

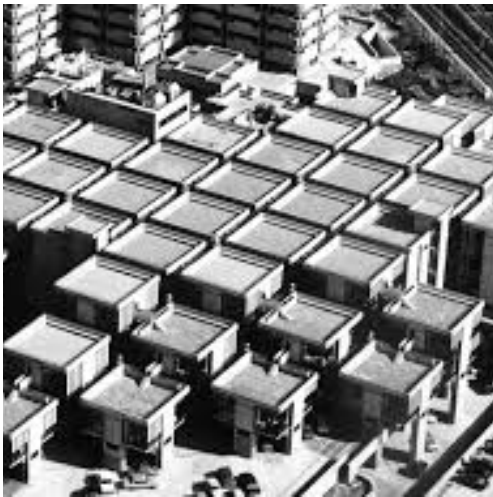


composition



composition

the grid



the grid

cedric price & archigram

Perhaps questionably grouped in this section, Cedric Price and the members of Archigram had a close working relationship. Operating mostly in paper or narrative architectures, both groups had a strong connection with academia and sought to inspire the global youth, Cedric in plain sight - and Archigram somewhat subversively. Ideas of cybernetics, systems theory, and utopianism course throughout their work, and are monumental influences in architecture and related disciplines to this day. Our consensus is that the paper/narrative work of both utterly outweigh the built work (even later by the former members) in terms of influence on the discipline. This provokes the question, particularly in relation to the parallel minds of the Metabolist movement, of whether it is best to test out one's ideas, or leave them permanently on paper - to be reimagined by generations to come.

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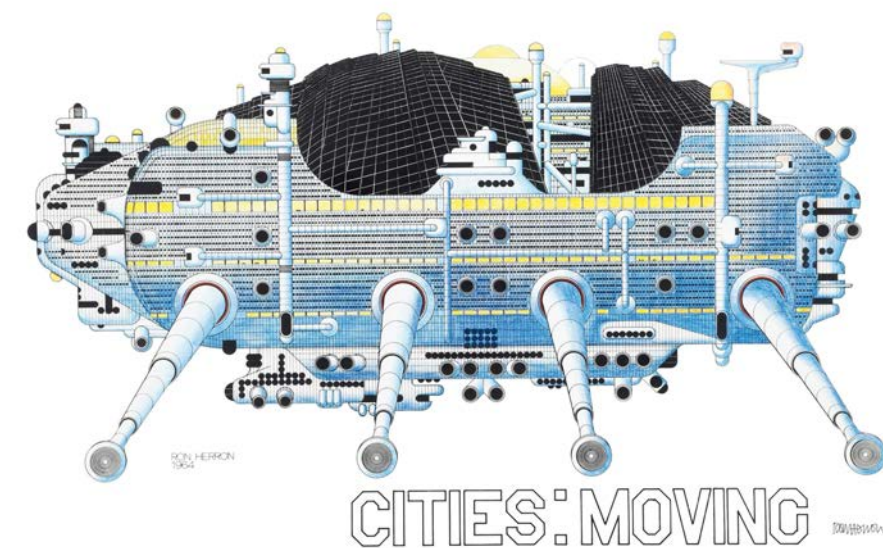
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Steenson, Molly: Cedric Price's Generator

Molly writes a short summary and reflection of Price's Generator project, looking mostly at situating it in a historical space to highlight the insight of the ideas behind it. She provides some interesting insight, in the sense that the project really wasn't about technological advancements or an architectural idea - but rather about agitating and provoking the users into unexpected experiences and conditions. An, apparently false, perception I had about Price was that he was somewhat of a technocrat, but Molly writes about how he actually avoided personal technology. He was seemingly much more interested in technology as a non-human actor in design methodologies and alterations upon the physical world.

CE

Higgot, Andrew: The Opposite of Architecture

A new generation of architecture must arise - with forms and spaces which seem to reject the precepts of 'Modern' REJECT - curtains - design - history - graphpaper [rejects standardization of dimension similar attitude towards history as early modern (De Stijl) as full rejection of historical principles rejects the facade curtain wall (preoccupation with aesthetics of skin)

rejects explicit design of all parts, embraces the variation facilitated by continuous processes]

DIG ACCEPT ENDORSE - homogeneity - travelers - Monk - expendability . . .

[a consumerist attitude that champions large-scale systems implementation and a bias for an agglomerative approach of mass accommodation rather than an individualistic approach of case-specific responsiveness]

WE HAVE CHOSEN TO BYPASS THE DECAYING BAUHAUS IMAGE WHICH IS AN INSULT TO FUNCTIONALISM. [reviving the 'true' value of functionalism in its original meaning and rejecting the bastardization of functionalism through the propagation of a generic international style]

You can roll out steel - any length

You can blow up a balloon - any size

You can mould plastic - any shape

[highlights the variability of material dimension - rejects the discrete Miesian grid whereby control is implemented purely through the reorganization of existing static elements within a predefined standard unit grid]

RK

Hobhouse, Alsop, Koolhaas, McAlpine: Cedric Price Disappears

A collection of eulogies in a way, all of the authors speak about their personal (or professional) connection with Cedric Price. This was really quite enlightening in a personal sense, framing the figure in a much different light than reading academically about his projects and his work. It becomes clear that Cedric was perhaps troubled and conflicted about his position within the architectural establishment, but ultimately was happy to develop his ideas and push theoretical boundaries for his own satisfaction rather than that of others. It seems like his clients acted more as patrons of an artist or thinker than a client as we typically conceive of them in relation to an architect or designer. I can't do the reminiscences justice in reinterpretation, but definitely worthwhile to read.

CE

Sadler, Simon. Archigram: Architecture without Architecture

Although Archigram is celebrated as an avant-garde sensation of the 60s, at the time of its inception it was perceived as a considerable nuisance to discourse preceding the post-modern because 1) it suggested a degree of visionary radicalism perceived as a repeat of early modernism's revolutionary break from the neoclassical tradition and 2) the extreme techno-futurism of its imagery questioned the very identity of architecture, a provocation too drastic or tiresome for critics to engage just 40 years after defining architecture in the modern era. Welcoming Archigram as the new radicals would have equated to projecting an attitude of frivolity towards the identity of a profession that should be considered eternal, fundamental at its core. Another revolution of architectural discourse would overturn all the metered progress of modernism as cities built in the gleaming international style were just beginning to be erected. Archigram proposed a return to a rejuvenated technological integra-

tion with architecture, a focus the group saw as a shortcoming of modernism, which had deteriorated from Le Corbusier's strong technological metaphor to a resignation towards glass and steel as industry's contemporary standard.

RK

Archigram: Instant City

An article published in Design Quarterly, explaining in drawing and text their project for an Instant City. The foundations for this are an embrace of the airship as a technological advancement that could pose an alternative for machines and structures bound to the ground which traditionally support our infrastructure. They hope to explore the act of the "drop" and the space between the blimp and the ground as a theatrical opportunity. I find it quite interesting to see the differences in drawing style between the members, and also simply the fact that they signed the drawings as individuals in addition to as a group is something I never noticed before - I suppose I had assumed they worked collaboratively on all the imagery.

CE

Steenson, Molly: Architectural Intelligence

Cedric Price was interested in the opportunities that architecture could open up for people. He saw buildings as particularly conducive to human learning, as well as the potential for the building to reciprocally learn from the occupant behavior. His interest was in redefining our relationship to buildings; the assumption of their static nature and our contrasting dynamic tendencies. Price saw a degree of fluidity between these two forces, seeing architecture and occupants as a system of decisions, responses, and opportunities. Price's drawings were less visually striking than those of Archigram, yet his vision was perhaps more immediate, more believable, less utopian. Rather than creating solid mass through discrete form, Price "sought to understand and justify the social function and role for the architectural project." What the project looks like was far less important than its role in facilitating open-ended activities, a priority most clearly expressed in the Fun Palace project. The project understood humans as agents in a cybernetic network, whereby unmodified agents would be input into the net-

work and modified agents would then be output.

Price's early work in architectural cybernetics lent weight to a growing British hi-tech architectural style, culminating in the centre Pompidou which drew from the aesthetics of Price's Fun Palace yet contained within a standard museum layout, gutting the design of the programmatic criticality the Fun Palace had to offer.

RK

Gannon, Todd: Return of the Living Dead

In this article Gannon seeks to drive home the importance of Archigram's continued influence on the discourse of the profession. Primarily that of their ethos, which has been taken up by different practitioners since, and is now being embodied in a new digital avant garde. My impression is that Gannon is a staunch supporter of paper architecture, or more so that he feels that this is the core of our profession - not necessarily the brick and mortar (something he feels is overly exalted and increasingly out of our control). The metaphor of the undead is weird, but I suppose it works... particularly given the quote "they just won't die!" as he speaks to the enduring ideas of thinkers like Price and Archigram which outlast traditional buildings in terms of disciplinary relevance. While I don't personally take as strong of a position/dismissal of built work, I agree with the extreme importance of theoretical work which provokes thought and reflection within and beyond the field.

CE

Sadler, Simon: Archigram's Invisible University

Sadler seeks to highlight a not very much talked about facet of the group, namely the continuous relationship with academia and the institutions of architectural education. Sadler writes that in a way the publications of archigram became a unifier of curious, ambitious, and rebellious architecture students, creating a sort of invisible university through information exchanges and the like (which seem to have had a profound effect upon the pedagogical style of major British institutions - i.e. drawing culture). The mid 1960s were such a crazy time it blows my mind every time I read

RAM
 EDITED BY PETER COOK
 DAVID GREENE AND I GOT TO KNOW MIKE AND USED TO MEET UP PRETTY REGULARLY IN A SWISS COTTAGE REASONS! SWISS COTTAGE

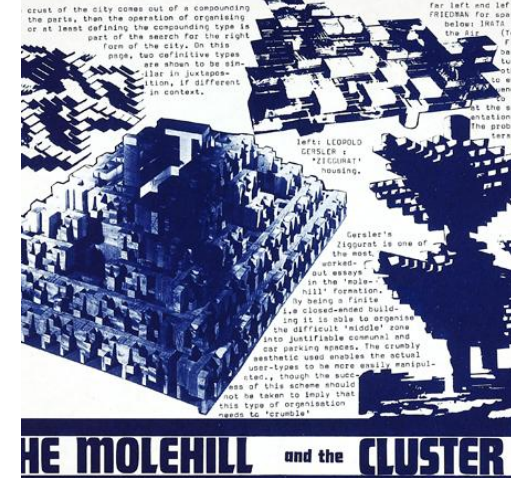
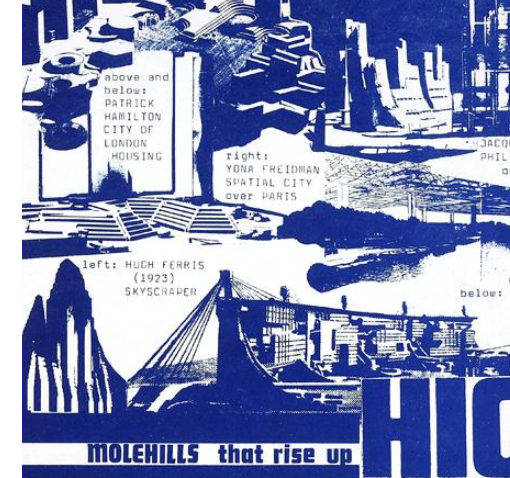
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 DAVID GREENE AND I GOT TO KNOW MIKE AND USED TO MEET UP PRETTY REGULARLY IN A SWISS COTTAGE REASONS! SWISS COTTAGE

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METROPOLIS

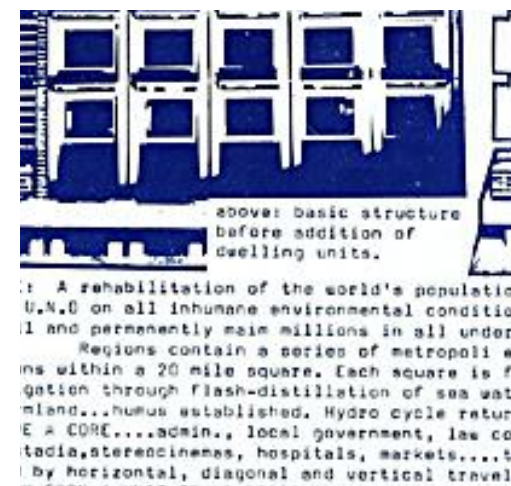
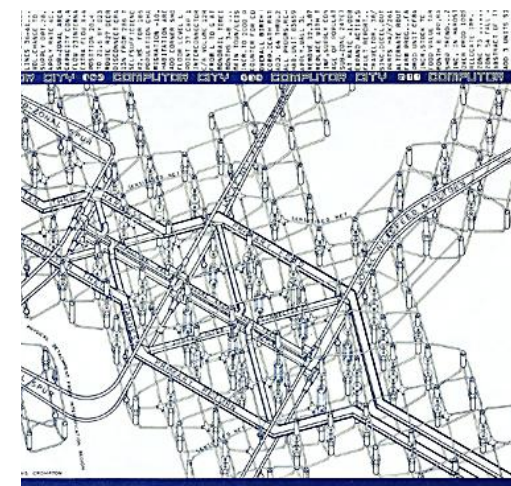
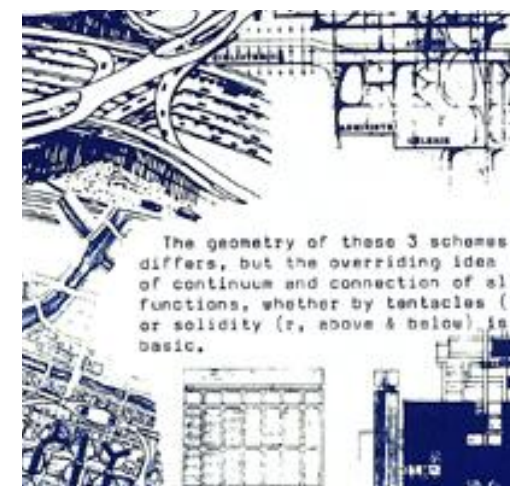
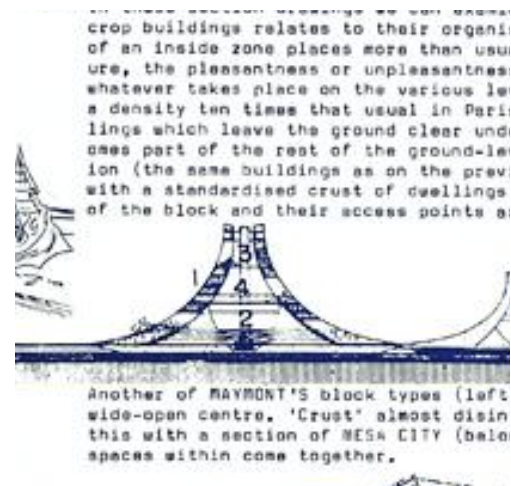
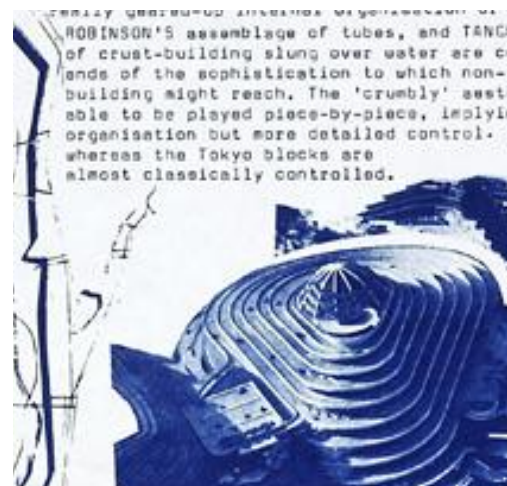
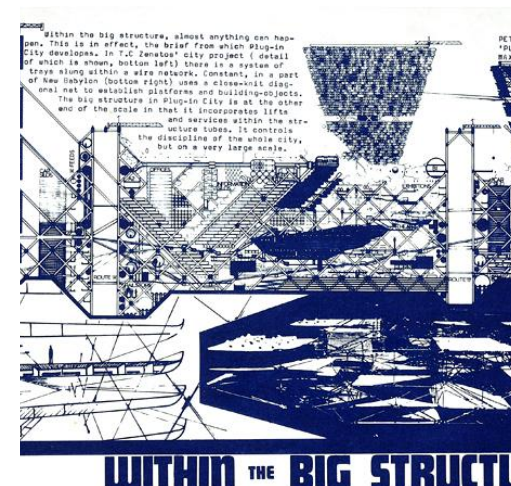
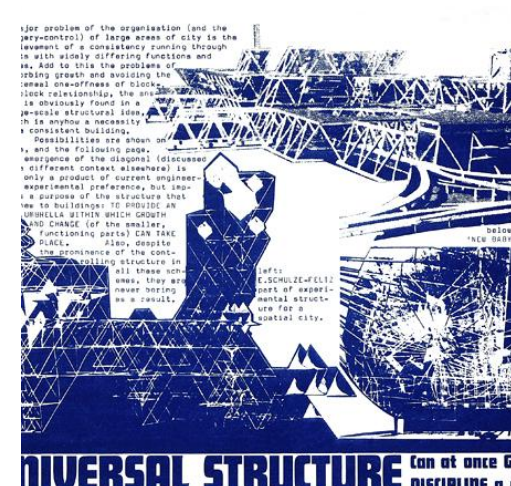
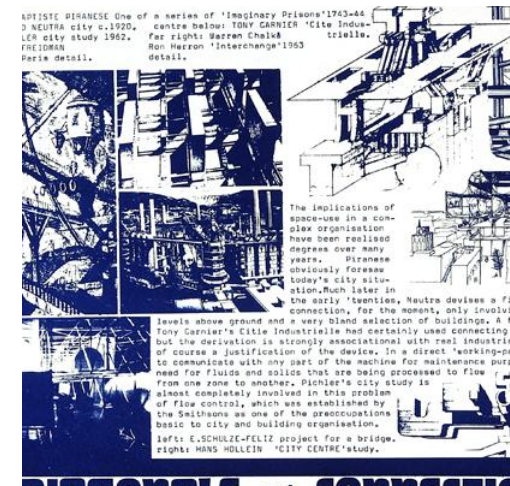
Archigram 5 metropolis archigram

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 59 Aberdeare Gardens - London NW6 (Cover designed by Roe & Ben)
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METROPOLIS ISSUE

Far this century, the Metropolis has held on to its position in the hierarchy of architectural concepts as the extreme situation in which sophisticated conceptions of life and action justify sophisticated solutions of space, an unquestionable metaphor for the successive stages, prototypes and images that have pushed architecture forward, urban architecture - the intensity of Metropolitan life has been sought and obtained as being somehow more conducive to all the great activities: creativity, manipulation, involvement, enlightenment and the rest. Metropolitan life is people, metropolitan architecture has become and continues beyond the satisfaction of a brief by the notion of a style, and a necessary gesture can be contained within a narrow context which itself is in quite a normal urban organization. Equally, quite normally identifiable building types can be found strangely juxtaposed to confirm a grand plan. Random situations have led from time to time generate urgency that has directly fed the development of architecture. The intellectual aim is always been found of solving the problem of 'The City', as a vehicle for something which is social, or perhaps by providing the people environmental context they can create the brief which will define their occupation. Suddenly all this has been called in question: are cities still necessary? Do we still need the particular of a metropolis to house the executive functions of a capital city? Do we need the approximation of five, ten, or twenty million people in order to learn, to entertain, to enjoy good food or take part in higher productivity? From an abstract point of view it can probably

the city can be thought of as an abstract notion...
 TO COVER THIS, ARCHIGRAM SHOULD SCOUR...
 THE METROPOLITAN CONDITIONS



italian radicals & tendenza

A highly charged post-war debate raged between two radical Italian groups active in the 60s and 70s known as La Tendenza, driven principally by Aldo Rossi, and the Italian Radicals, spearheaded by Superstudio and Archizoom. Both groups operated out a mutual respect for rationalism and heroic form with distinctly marxist attitudes, yet the two groups clashed in terms of the conclusions of their ideologies. While La Tendenza aimed to evoke the deep collective memory of being through the superimposition of historically charged architectural iconography, the Italian Radicals instead found that the only solution to the question of architecture was no architecture at all; that the idiosyncrasies of capitalist, consumerist cultural living could entirely define our relationship to the experience and occupation of space, as described in Archizoom's No-Stop City. There is a peculiar simultaneity of similarity of thinking and stark oppositional ideology that generates a wealth of productive tension between these two groups' theoretical frameworks to endow fruitful reinterpretation.

readings

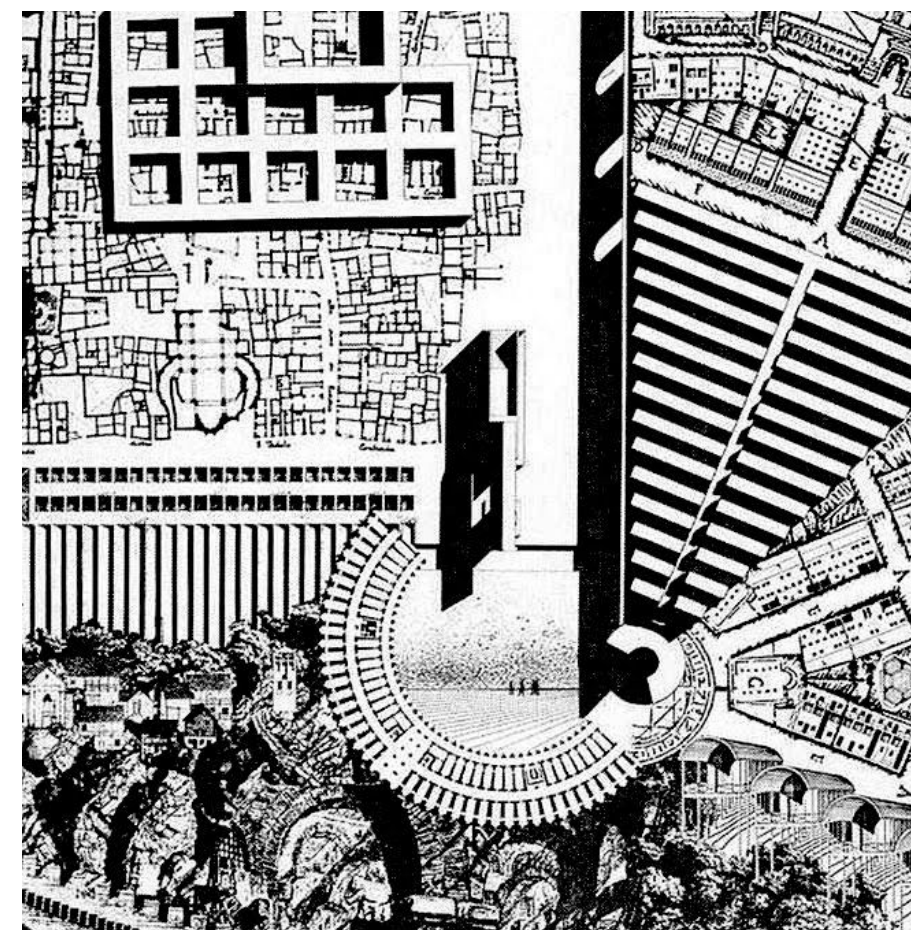
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Aurelio, Pier Vittorio: More and More about Less and Less

Vittorio argues that there is promise in subverting the growing preoccupation with the “figural excess” of architecture; structural complexity, formal redundancy, and image are the new Vitruvian triad (2009). He makes the point that there is much to offer in analyzing the nonfigural side of architecture - grammar as opposed to vocabulary. This is not a radically new idea - archizoom had tackled the issue forty years prior, in particular with the no-stop city project, which described a city in terms of the dimensional proximity among a variety of essential programmatic elements of the city, separating form entirely from the underlying structural relationships between nodes (structural in abstract terms and not in reference to structural loads). The grid of “a bathroom every 50 square meters” draws direct attention to our historical bias towards a cartesian understanding of space, from early classical examples to modern.

The grid is perhaps the earliest form of urban grammar. As an equally distributed system of organization it was an excellent rhetorical tool for modernism’s provision of universal impartiality in the abstract. Its roots go back at least to the axial, regimented planning of the roman agora and projects forward to include Renaissance ideas of Brunelleschian church layouts and Miesian grids which dictate the layout and dimension of all elements within the system. Vittorio highlights five distinct architectural interpretations of nonfigurative architecture.

- Orders
 - Alberti’s facade for Palazzo Rucellai which unites a series of disparate housing units acts as an interface between the public city and the privacy and irregularity of the private bourgeois life with an imposed grid independent of the load-bearing structure.
- Composition
 - Durand’s *Precis* accommodated a nonfigurative 3-dimensional layout that resisted planimetric figuration through poche, allowing for flexibility in programmatic distribution that a Baroque logic of hierarchical branching prevented.
- Plan
 - In Hilberseimmer’s *Hochhausstadt*, programmatic elements are distributed without an associated typological form with geographical bias, allowing the grid distribution network to accommodate a uniformity

of mobility, from all locations to all locations. “The city is reduced to its reproductive conditions.”

- Surface
 - Archizoom’s No-Stop City is an infinite surface populated by architectural elements such as beds, toilets, columns, effectively rendering the architectural form arbitrary and without programmatic significance.
- Limit
 - Mies’s repeated employment of the plinth as a limit to a delineated architectural intervention creates a condition where the architecture becomes distinct and separate from the continuous city.

RK

In this essay Aureli puts forward a conjecture about what non-figurative architecture could be, basing it off of Archizoom’s No Stop City, extracting the fundamental elements of the project, and pushing them forwards through an evolution of “publicness”.

The valuable quality of the grid is its indeterminacy, it is perhaps the only organizational system which can operate at scales from a single room to an entire city (or more). But does it not break down when we think about a global scale? It feels as if this essay is foregrounding the project of Stop City, arguing for the importance of “limit” as the architectural metaproject of this generation, rather than the previous kind of infinity.

I still struggle with understanding this point of view. He tries to propose a non-figurative architecture with mostly very figurative examples.

Question of the grid as emancipatory or confining (or neutral)

CE

Aureli, Pier Vittorio: The Difficult Whole and Less

In this article by Aureli, he explains the fundamental differences in Venturi’s idea of the “whole” to that of Rossi. In Rossi’s pov, he mainly concerned with the notion of city and the architecture, and architecture could participate in its development and morphology over time, which opposes the ideas of the Modern Movement, proposing only the new and non figurative architecture. Rossi was a strong advocate

of the idea of type or typology, which is understood as space embedded with history and politics. Rossi was interested in the part to whole relationship, in which by understanding the typology of space then one can begin to understand and speculate about the city. Rationalism and realism became inspiration for Rossi, as he advocated for the autonomy of architecture, as the discipline was on verge of dissolution.

HL

Aureli & Tattara: Stop City

The authors take a fascinating stance on questions of urbanism and the development of cities, writing that the bottom-up processes we came to understand as informal urbanism encapsulate an ideology which seeks to portray capitalisms inherent inequalities as the natural, acceptable, evolution of cities. The authors propose a counter to this trap in the form of a city with absolute limits. It is rather hard to summarize and describe without the images, so I will leave it with the statement that they are pursuing an architecture without qualities/attributes. It is in direct opposition to the ideas of limitless expansion that characterized the projects of archizoom, superstudio, and even cerda - instead it is purely a border. The form of the city is precisely defined and clearly demarcated as to what is and what is not “urban”.

As a statement I suppose this project works, but for me it doesn’t hold up well. I don’t think it exists as the alternative to all things capital that it presumes to be. Perhaps that is because I lack the imagination to see this outside of the system we live in - but I don’t find the imagery or architectural manifestation of the ideas to align with and support their written claims.

All of these works hope to achieve some sort of liberation - from the capitalist doctrine or qualitative definition, or just out dated societal values - yet feel so alienating. Why is this? It seems to be a scalar issue? Or is it intentional for reasons of provocation?

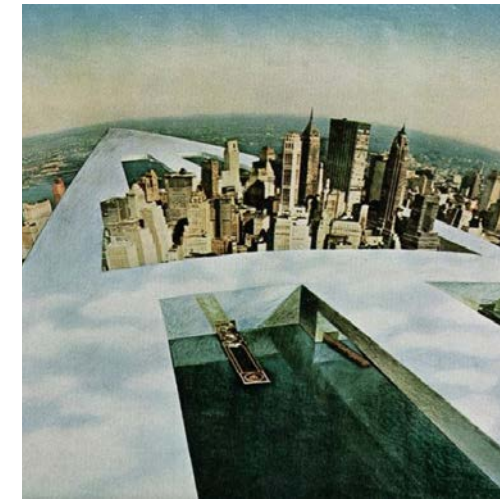
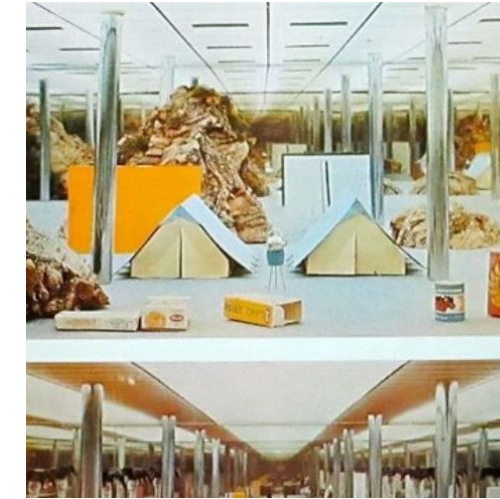
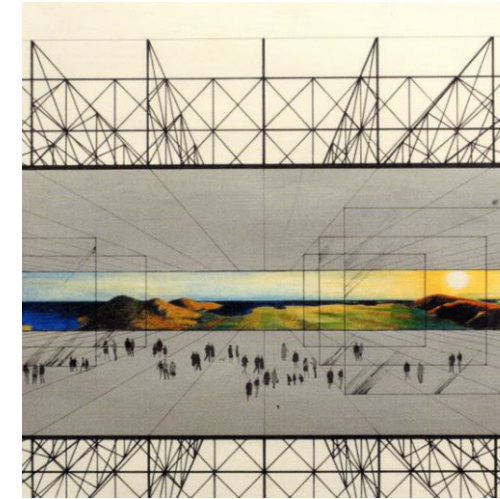
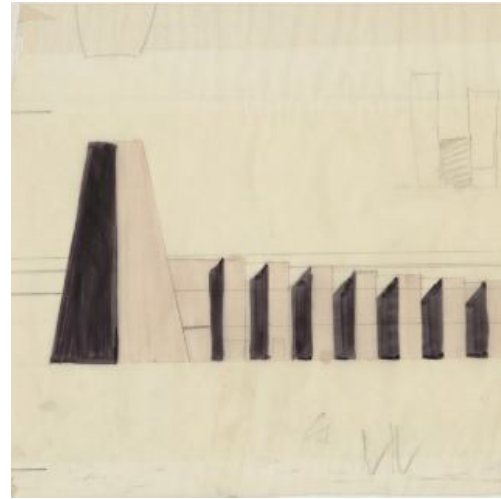
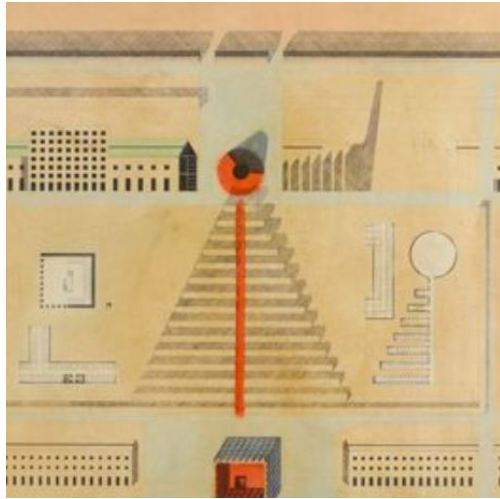
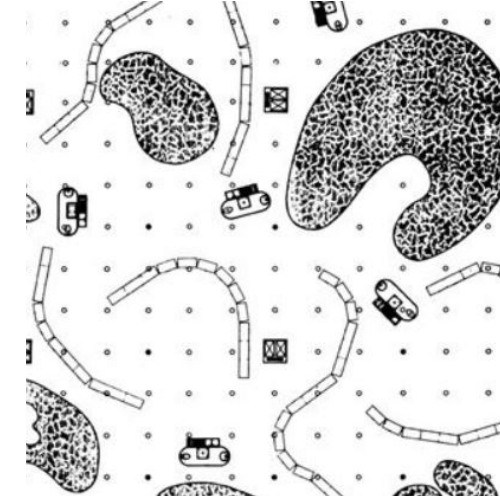
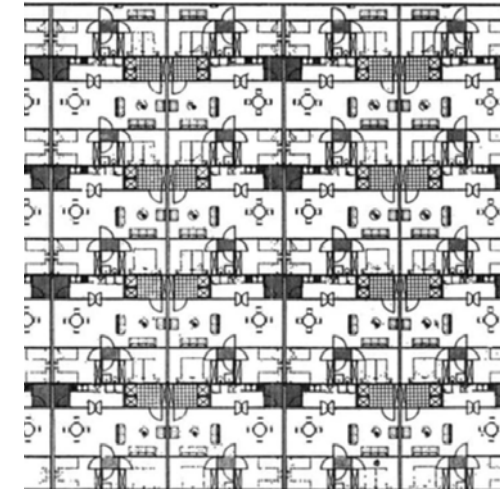
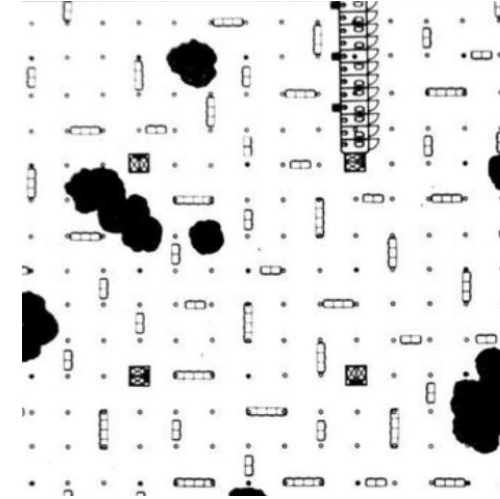
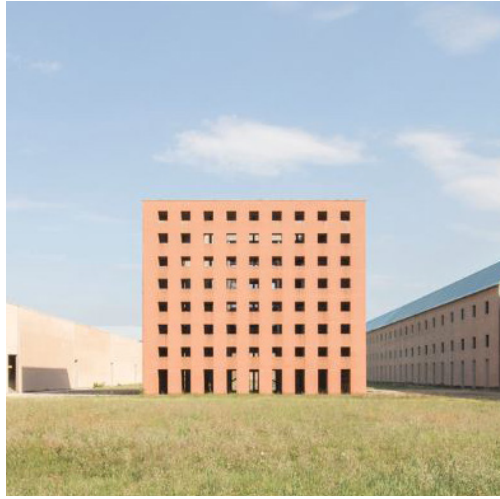
CE

Capdevila, Pablo: An Italian Querelle: Radical vs. Tendenza

The Radical Movement (superstudio, archizoom, Tafuri) and La Tendenza (neorationalism) were the two dominant italian voices in the 60s. Both were highly political, highly marxist, and both were influenced by Rossi’s concept of razionalismo esaltato (exalted rationalism (of Boullée) which employed herculean masses and a rationalist approach to spatial organization) and both shared a desire to “recover a mythical absolute rationalism that would destroy any act of arbitrary creation.” Superstudio, in their invitation to an exhibition at the Triennale by Rossi which was seen as an egregious act of abandonment of the Radical intent to debase architectural form, wrote “We believe in a future of rediscovered architecture, in a future where architecture will take its full powers back, abandoning any ambiguous designation and posing itself as the only alternative to nature.” The critic Scolari, who opposes Bruno Zevi’s reading of the architectural climate as a decision between pure regression and pop architecture (radical and tendenza), Scolari heavily criticizes the radicals, arguing that the group “aspires to architecture without managing to be structured by it,” and that their focus on consumerist culture was “a strategy for confusion.”

The oppositional attitudes of the Radicals and the Tendenza both can characterize a perceived “end of architecture,” where the former promotes a total rejection of history in favor of an atemporal mass-consumerist flatland, while the latter promotes a dreamscape of superimposed historical artifacts, carrying only their symbology and none of their contextual baggage in a condition which Nitzsche calls epigonism, or an “excess of historical consciousness that inhibits the formulation of true novelty.” Capdevila argues that the two strategies actually share many similarities of thought. Focusing in particular on the comparison between the No-Stop City and Cantafora’s *La città analoga*, Capdevila points out that the analogous city presents a fictional collage of disparate buildings assembled in a way comparable to the assembly of consumer products in Archizoom’s project; lifeless buildings simply replace lifeless objects. Both present the problematic death of architecture: the analogous city through its reliance on the cyclical symbology of a closed-circuit discipline endlessly jumbling and blending past memories, the No-Stop City repressing architecture to a state of neutral backdrop of an active consumer life. The eternal question of the autonomy of the discipline remains open to the present.

RK



identity

composition

the grid

utopianism

identity

composition

the grid

utopianism

german rationalism and expressionism

Postwar German architecture might be characterized as a disciplinary binary between a rebirth of a highly sculptural, gestural approach to architecture, drawing on the earlier work of figures such as Mendelsohn, Taut, and Steiner, in opposition to a contrasting rational, rigid, gridded approach developing in parallel. Postwar expressionism was best exemplified by the sweeping gestures of Sharoun's Berlin Philharmonic or the jagged peaks of Bohm's Mariendom, while rationalism favored the minimalism and geometric purity exhibited in O. M. Ungers' Apartment Building in Hültzstrasse or in his later addition to the Kunsthalle in Hamburg. Both camps asserted disciplinary autonomy but approached architecture from two highly polarized design philosophies.

readings

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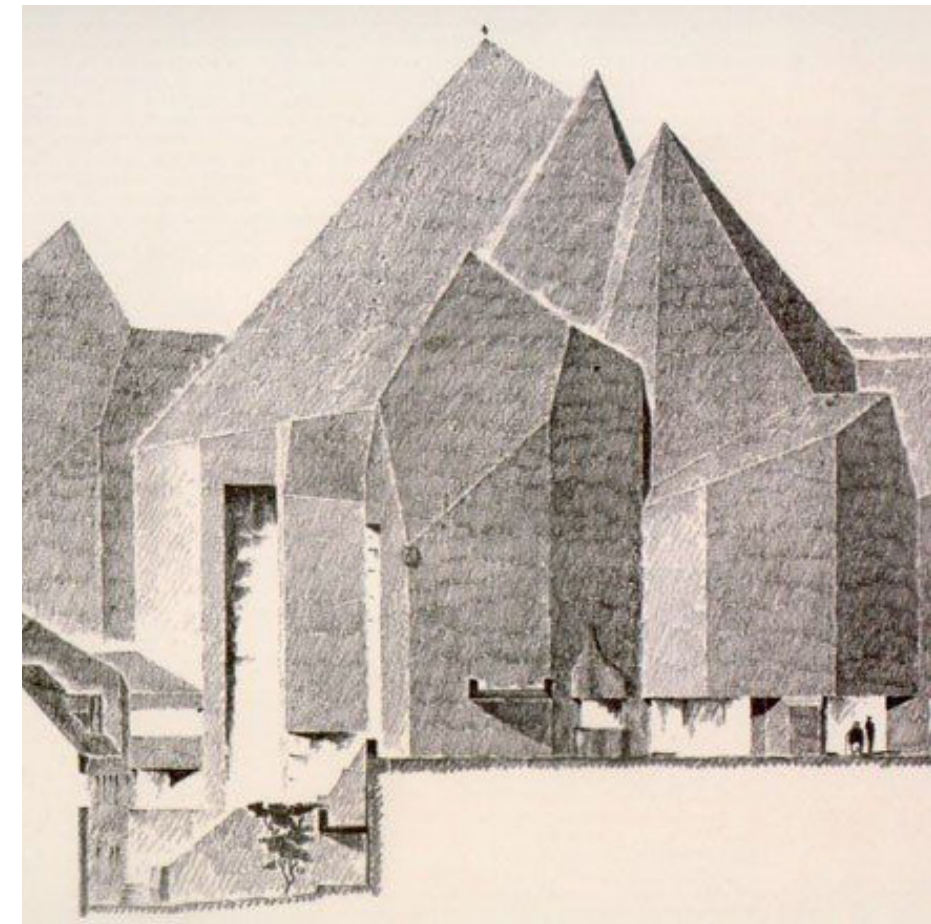
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Jones, Blundell and Canniffe, Peter and Eamonn: Gottfried Böhm

The authors begin by pointing out how understated of a figure Böhm is in the history books, and I can't help but agree given how hard it was to find any meaningful readings regarding him or his work. The rest of the essay is an excellent description of the Bensberg project, however it fails to extrapolate ideas behind the further reaching design sensibilities that I would be more interested in. My analysis of Böhm's style would be something along the lines of a regional inspiration, drawing from the rough hewn rocks and rolling hills of the Ruhr.

CE

Kathleen, James-Chakraborty: Modernism as Memory

Böhm's Neviges Mariendom is a dominant example of the expressionist camp of postwar German architecture. Drawing on the legacy of his father's modern expressionist work with the St Englebert church in Cologne, Gottfried Böhm developed a powerful language of faceted concrete masses that rise to accentuate the communal nature of worship. The church carries expressionism to its extreme, shedding the more rational approach that characterized Dominikus Böhm's earlier work for a highly gestural, less rigidly-geometric architectural approach. The work of Gottfried Böhm stands in stark contrast to that of another German architect, Ungers, whose highly rational approach presents the opposite end of the spectrum of the German dichotomy of the 60s. Böhm's Mariendom calls to mind the old origins of German spiritual architecture through a degree of abstraction which resists simple categorization among existing churches at the time. Many churches having been destroyed in the Allied bombings of World War II, there was much need for new worship spaces that might have embodied the zeitgeist of Postwar Germany. While many churches being constructed followed an austere modernist trend, Böhm's design stood in stark contrast, recalling the collective identity of the earlier Weimar Republic's expressionism (promoted by the work of Mendelsohn and Steiner) and an even more ancient medieval past of Romanesque churches.

RK

I had never really envisioned his work through the lens of expressionism, but that actually makes a ton of sense. He must have been on the tail end of the movement, but I now can see some similarities between his architecture and that depicted in films such as the Cabinet of Dr. Caligari. AND it could be some kind of expressionist reaction to the style of his father, whose architecture office Gottfried inherited, a jagged almost psychotic reaction to the smooth curves of Dominikus. The rest of the essay proceeds through a case study of the Neviges Pilgrimage Church.

Clearly there is inspiration/connection with Bruno Taut's Alpine Architecture

CE

Thomas, Weaver: Model Maker Grimm

A fascinating article describing the intimate collaboration between Ungers and his chief model maker Bernd Grimm. It begins with an excellent insight into the personality and architectural sensibilities of Ungers, and then goes to describe Grimm's personal story, explaining how his expertise and style of model influenced the way Ungers approached his architecture.

CE

Grimm was Ungers' means to realizing a personal, architectural, archaeological fantasy. Ungers had Grimm build 10 huge plastercast (with wooden substructure) models of the most influential buildings on Ungers' thinking -

The Parthenon
The Pantheon
Bramante's tempietto
Boullée's Cenotaph to Newton
Terragni's Casa del Fascio
Palladio's Villa Capra
Great Pyramid at Giza
Castel del Monte in Apulia built for Frederick II
Mausoleums at Halicarnassus
Palace of Theodoric in Ravenna

The project, thought it could have been constructed from wood, was decided to be plaster in order to preserve and prioritize the purity of the form over the contingencies of

wood, such as grain visibility and direction, a strategy analogous to Ungers' own work with the House without Qualities, just down the road from the personal library where the ten models are housed. Ungers' work draws from the geometric, planimetric order of the archetypical examples of the classical tradition, while also drawing from modern influences such as the Casa del Fascio in their regimented and highly rational approach to architectural reductivism. Clearly there is a strong influence of Platonic solids in the thinking of Ungers, as seen through his later rationalist buildings (exemplified by House without Qualities) and supported by his interest in works such as Boullée's Cenotaph and the Great Pyramid of Giza. It appears that Ungers may have shared certain values with La Tendenza in its fixation on classical and baroque sensibilities, in particular exhibited in the formal reductivism of Rossi's Gallarese, although the emphasis on a collective memory of a historical city is somewhat suppressed in Ungers' work in favor of a more abstract geometric and spatial understanding of the building as a geometric, rather than cultural or cognitive artefact.

RK

André, Bideau: Elusive Ungers

Interesting to think of *Verfremdung* as an integral concept in Ungers' work, I think the connection works extremely well. Also to note that this particular pursuit perhaps came out of an alienation with the architectural profession following a terrible experience with the Markisches Viertel. In a way he shifts from designing for everyone - in the sense of social housing at least - to designing for no one, i.e. a house with no qualities. The rest of the piece is more or less dedicated to describing Ungers' tumultuous relationship with Berlin, and the several larger scale proposals he developed for the city. Bideau uses these to extrapolate larger tendencies and moments in Ungers' life. And of course we can't forget the personal interest here in Ungers' involvements in the 1968 student revolts which drastically changed his life.

CE

Koolhaas, Rem: An Interview with O.M. Ungers

Ungers' early fascination with airplanes is something I somewhat recall from the tour we took, but didn't really

process as a connection to the way he designed - I fail to see much overt formal similarity, or even process wise for that matter, but perhaps it manifests itself with a fascination with rules of design and descriptive geometries. Ungers states that upon reflection he rejected Pevsner's initial classification of his work as expressionist, thinking that expressionist architecture is an impossibility because of the transcendental nature of expressionism. After encounters with Schwartz, he then developed a way of expressing the pictorial aspects of building through visual metaphor and rational expression.

His urbanism and form finding strategy becomes a dialectic between pure form and the context.

His war story is quite amusing.

CE

Hans Ulrich Obrist and Rem Koolhaas delve into the life of and thought developments of Oswald Matthias Ungers, drawing out his core beliefs through the formative events of his life. Ungers believes that architecture cannot solve social problems, only architectural ones. He was intrigued by descriptive geometry and airplanes early in life, leading to his eventual alignment with a rationalist approach to architecture, moving away from the Sharounian camp in the Amsterdam school in favor of an architectural strategy which accepts the constraints, site-induced or abstractly imposed, to make deliberate and rational decisions about the form of the architecture in contrast to the transcendental, expressionist tendencies of the time. It was the bipolar dichotomy of emotion versus intellect; the feeling versus the reality, emotional gesture versus pure geometry, to paraphrase Ungers. Yet Ungers' architecture is not acontextual. On the contrary, it draws its rationalism from context, arguing that he did not draw architecture from purely ideological sources. "It is a rationalization of the existing," he writes, emphasizing deductive rather than inductive thought processes. Deductive -> set of choices leading to a rational outcome (emergent from context), versus Inductive -> premises provide support for a general conclusion (imposition of a grand narrative).

Ungers speaks of how earlier work such as the Enschede project failed in their capacity to communicate and disseminate an underlying concept rather than only the formal

strategies of the project itself. As Rem Koolhaas reiterates, "What was adopted was the language, but not the content." The project's main idea was the confluence of multiple museum typologies into a single complex, yet many instead saw value in the exploitation of the specific forms and geometries of the architecture. With Ungers' work the architecture contains more than the pure value of its form.

RK

identity

composition

the grid

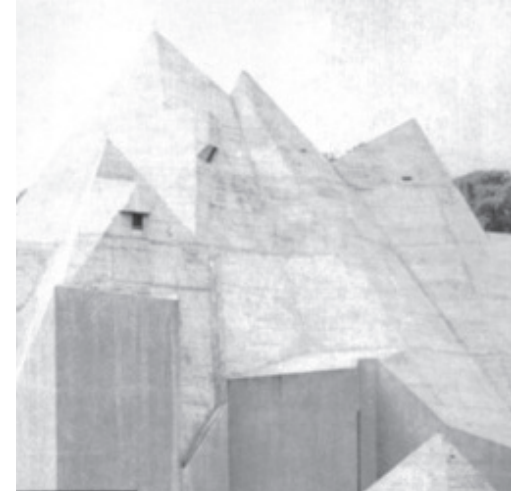
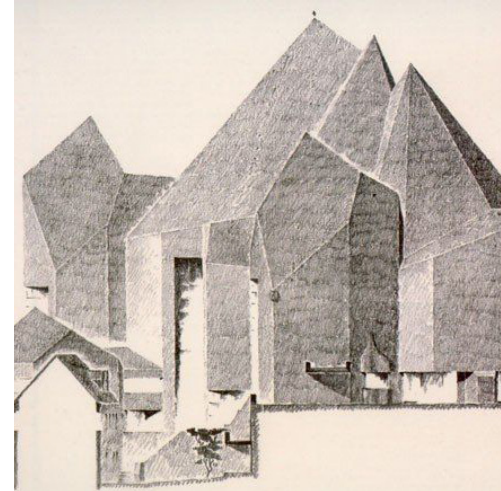
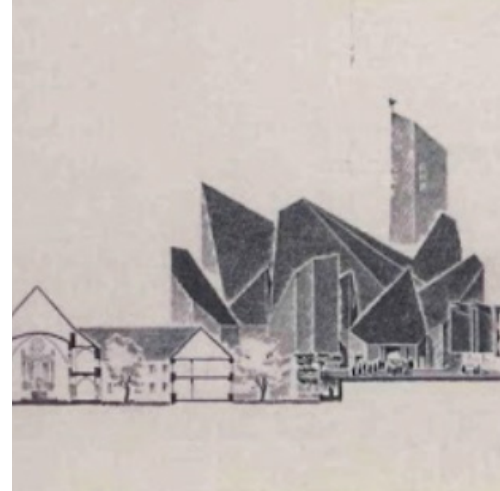
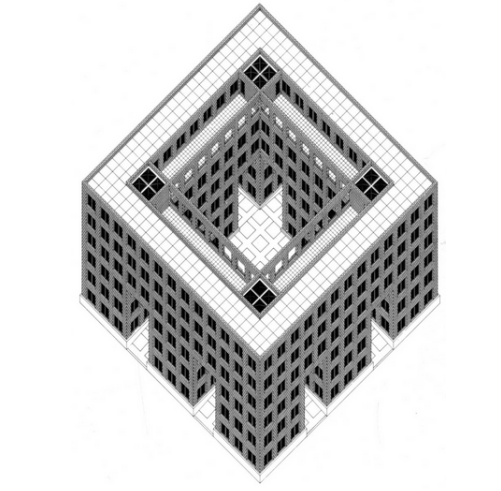
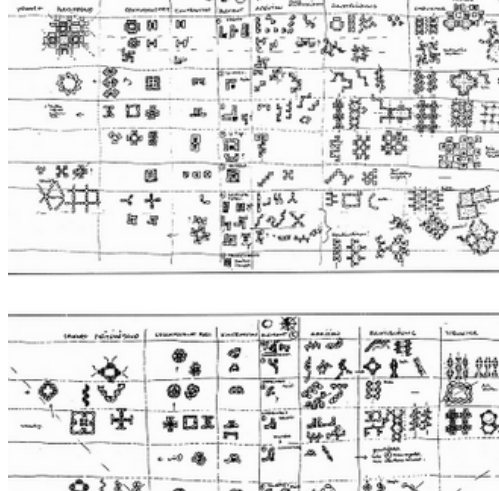
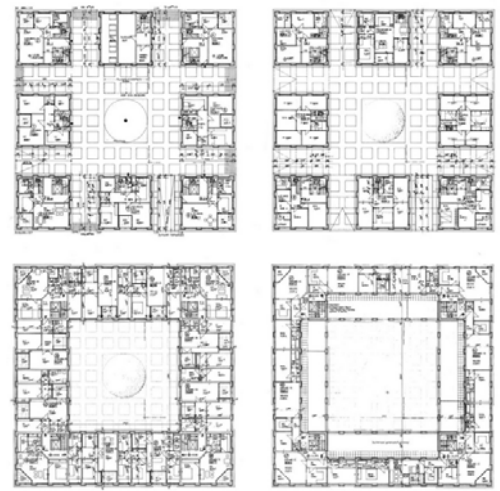
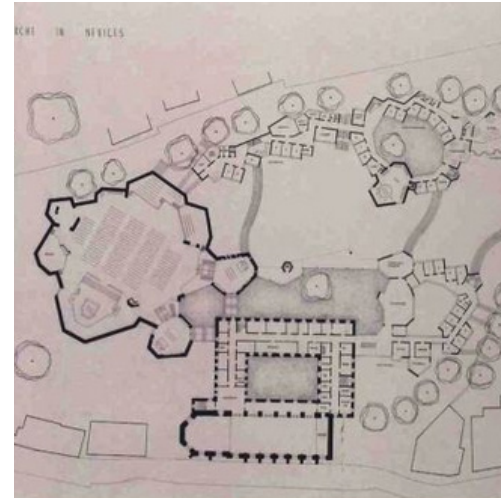
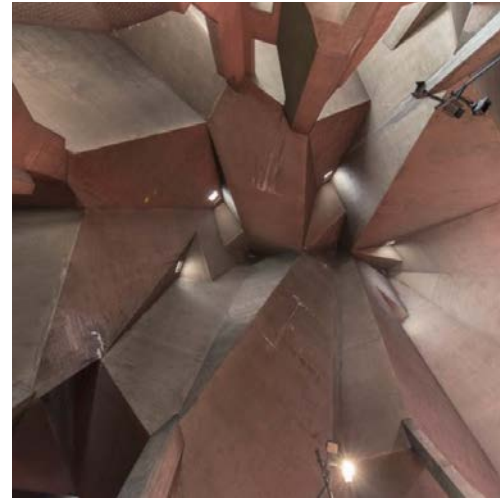
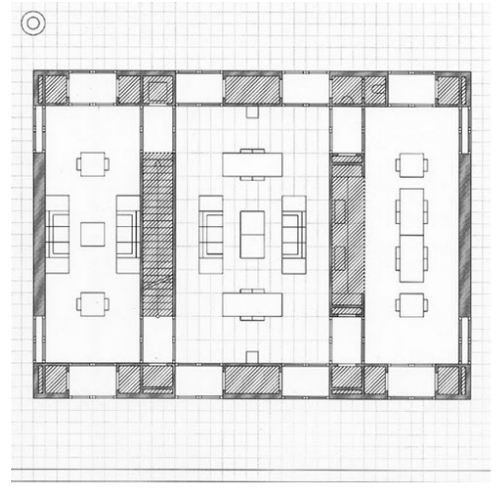
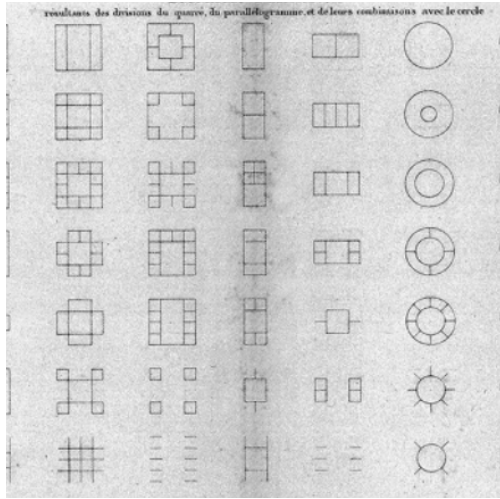
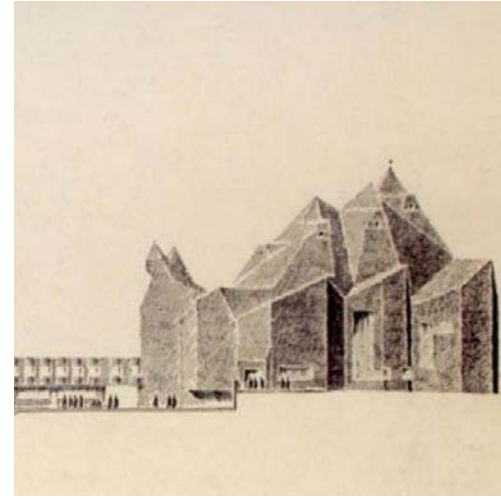
utopianism

identity

composition

the grid

utopianism



identity

composition

the grid

utopianism

identity

composition

the grid

utopianism

scandanavian modernism

Scandinavian architects like Sigurd Lewerentz and Gunnar Asplund were trained in the classical tradition and many of the works deal with balancing climatic conditions of Scandinavia and reinterpreting the traditions of Doric Classicism. Scandinavia provided a unique context for architects like Sverre Fehn to create work that is sensible to the nature that surrounds the architecture. Architects like Sigurd Lewerentz dealt with the dilemma of classicism and creating an architecture deviates from architecture that relies on its iconography and towards a material basis for architecture.

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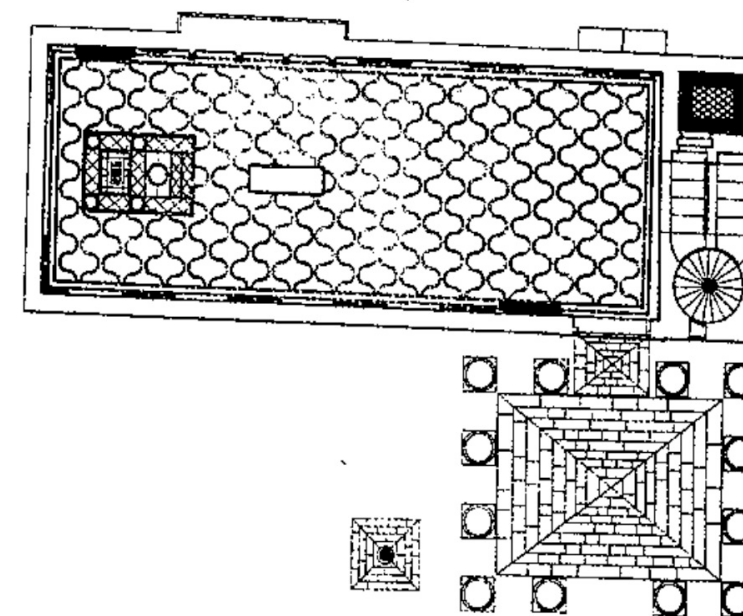
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Fjeld, Olaf, Sverre Fehn: the Pattern of Thoughts

Sverre Fehn approaches architecture with a fundamentally different view of nature than many modernist architects. Rather than a commodity to be consumed as an aesthetic image (exhibited perhaps most clearly in Mies Van Der Rohe's collages), nature can be all-encompassing and highly informative for the development of the architecture as much as for our own ontological repose. Fehn approaches each project with a metaphysical assertion about the human - that they exist in a poetic position between earth and sky, in a place he refers to as 'horizon.' There exists a tension inherent to our metaphysical placement that informs many of the decisions Fehn makes in his architecture. Each project draws heavily from the conditions of its site, likely informed by a lifetime spent in Norway, a country where landscape and nature are unavoidably ever-present. His ideas about the importance of horizon reveal themselves time and again in his projects through a variety of spatial configurations, each tuned to the unique conditions of topographical and cultural siting. "The land is the architect of my buildings," he states. Fehn brings these two elements of earth and sky together through mass and light - two elements that are most earnestly perceived through their mutual interaction. Perhaps his clearest response to earth and sky are in the Hedmark County Museum, where raised walkways and bridges span above an untouched archaeological site below, creating dynamic proximity between the occupant and the object of interest. The project functions to slow, but not halt, the weathering of the site, taking a firm stance against purity of preservation, which rejects the inevitable passage of time as intrinsic to experience. Fehn's attitude is cognizant of the acceptance of natural forces.

Villa Rotunda and Villa Savoye were two major influences on his work and thinking in relation to horizon and the dichotomy of earth and sky. Villa Rotunda was heavy, built of thick stone, a building where "Palladio forms the earth into a labyrinth" that leads one around the earth to come out at the start. Meanwhile, Villa Savoye is a rejection of the earth. The piloti embrace the sky and bring it to the occupant, destroying the mystique of an unreachable expanse and undoing the polarity of the traditional cellar and attic home. "The moment he conquered the sky we lost the mystery, and at the same time, we approached the earth in a new way." The

horizon Le Corbusier pursues through his ribbon windows in the five points of architecture is likely quite different from the horizon Fehn refers to. Le Corbusier's horizon is predominantly a visual reference point that references the acropolis, while Fehn's horizon is more concerned with the metaphorical in-between that positions one in changing relation with earth and sky. Le Corbusier's horizon is stable, romantic, visual, while Fehn's is dynamic, ontological, and synesthetic.

Fehn was also highly influenced by the work of Louis Kahn and Team 10 (in particular Aldo Van Eyck), individuals whose ideas can be traced through the chronology of Fehn's own work. Authenticity of material and structural expression (Honningsvag church, unbuilt) and structuralist organizational principles and accommodation of occupants of different proportions (Skadalen School for Hearing-Impaired Children) featured prominently in his projects, but always with a distinctly Norwegian attitude. Despite the strength of his regional influence, Fehn approaches international projects with great sensitivity, in particular with his proposal for the New Palazzo del Cinema in Venice, which reinterprets the Venetian gothic style in a contemporary Norwegian-flavored aesthetic sensibility.

RK

Blundell, Peter, Sigurd Lewerentz, St Peter's Church Klippan

Sigurd Lewerentz and Mies Van der Rohe represent two highly contrasting approaches to postwar modernism. Mies, with an authoritative imposition of the grid, strong symmetry and clear axial relationships, the embodiment of clean and ordered top-down rationality, the realization of idealized planarity and purity. Lewerentz, in contrast, with rough, uncut bricks and smeared mortar, detailing highly tuned to the ritual of its context, rough and impure and evocative of the scraping cavernous grotto. Perhaps their only similarity is their attempted dissolution of glass, Mies for purity of frame and Lewerentz for the rawness of mass. Despite living through more or less the same years on Earth, the two took modernism in entirely different directions, albeit Mies more actively both before and after the war versus Lewerentz's return to architecture in the 60s. Yet their comparison brings forth an interesting dichotomy - the issue of

dirt.

Mies Van der Rohe's architecture denies the existence of dirt. All surfaces are geometric, precise, and flawlessly reflective. The architecture relies on this purity of plane in its aesthetic in part due to the general modernist movement which rejected the crowded and diseased old cities for clearer air and transparent views through spaces. Its denial of dirt is just as much an assertion of its modernist ideals as its floor-to-ceiling glass. Perhaps the reliance on pedagogy that resists the messy realities of material behavior both made modernism so enticing but ultimately led to a growing suspicion in the 60s of sterile modernism that gave way to a branch of phenomenology in architecture that could be argued to have actively embraced imperfection. Around this time, Lewerentz was designing St. Mark's and later St. Peter's churches, two buildings that accepted the ugliness of construction and embraced dirt as deeply intrinsic to the authentic life. It is possible that, like Gunnar Asplund or even Sverre Fehn, his Scandinavian upbringing endowed him with a particular appreciation for expression of material qualities and the biases they bring to design that the peculiarities of the decisions in the churches might be, in part, understood.

Lewerentz and Mies both pursue purity relentlessly in their designs, yet to opposite ends. Miesian purity is the purest form of purity on the surface level. Pure in its consistency and materiality and form, yet he nevertheless includes non-structural beams on the exterior of the Seagram building as a purely aesthetic decision. Similarly, Lewerentz abides by a 'rough purism,' whereby he seems to maintain strictly to a conceptual rule of never cutting a brick and maintaining clarity of parts, yet he also decides to express elaborate rain gutters on the back of the building but hides them within the wall of the main sacred space. Thus there is a strange untruth that underlies seeming unwavering assertions by both architects, making for a more nuanced and complex understanding of a set of beliefs that accept impurity for the sake of maintaining the image of true purity.

RK

Blundell begins with the origins of Lewerentz's career and his early association/fascination with the Pan-European National Romanticism. Blundell mainly focuses on the contradictions throughout Lewerentz's building from a functionalist/modernist standpoint. He sees the Rib vault as an

archaic expression of construction that seems unusual for contemporary times. The central column of the church is asymmetrical when it demands symmetry. And his seemingly simple principles in ordering of the brick seems to cause more problems than it solves. His buildings are beyond functional and tells a story of its construction.

HL

Caruso, Adam, Sigurd Lewerentz & the Material Basis for Form

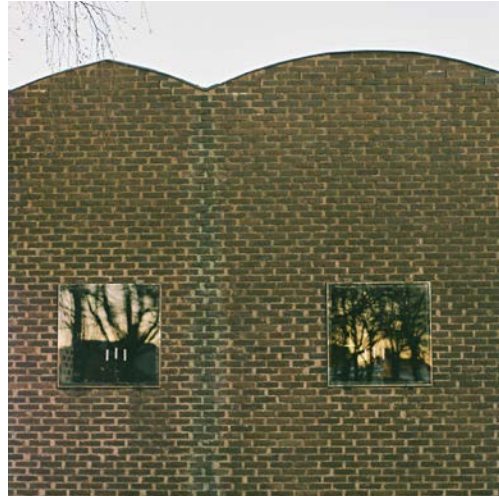
Caruso explores Lewerentz's architectural perfection manifested in his later church projects in Klippan and Bjorkhagen. Caruso interrogates this work, understanding Lewerentz's absence from teaching/writing and thus uses the tectonic expression of the projects to synthesize Lewerentz agendas and philosophies. In both churches, Lewerentz adopts a mastery of construction that becomes embedded in the spatial characteristics and form making. The spaces are inseparable from their tectonic details. Lewerentz builds with the stoic brick, rooting itself in a historic lineage of construction ethics. The brick becomes a network, a multidimensional fabric for Lewerentz. The brick becomes the floor, wall, roof, furniture creating silent, powerful spaces that understand the brick not as a single unit but as a spatial aggregate.

BS

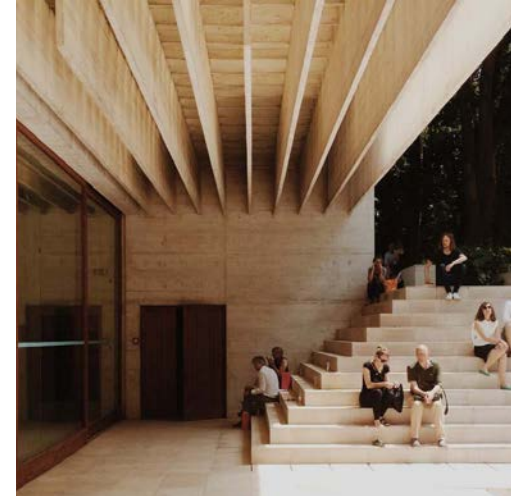
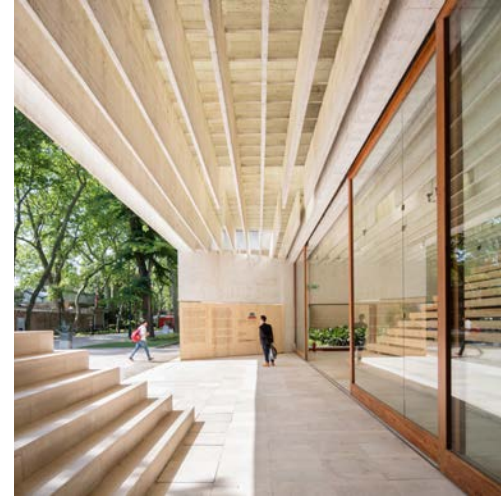
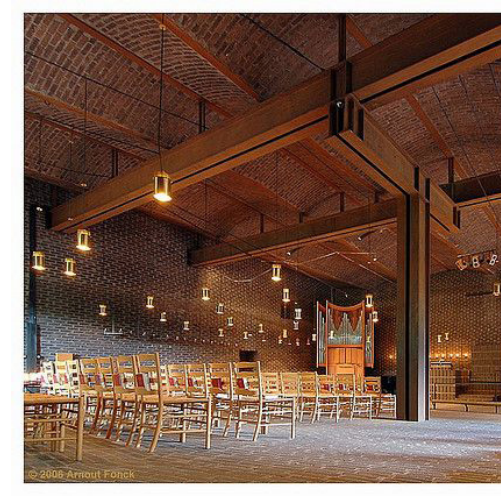
Caruso focuses on the clarity of construction in Lewerentz's work and how Lewerentz privileges a subjective and shifting experience of the world over iconography as a basis of form. Classical architecture that depended on the conventions and iconography to hold a certain ontology of architecture was no longer desirable for Lewerentz as his interest in architecture was dignifying the material and creating a language in its construction that does not go against the integrity of the material. Lewerentz sets up his own rules for brick construction in St. Peter's Church in Klippan. Although it may seem that the building heavily focuses on its construction and may appear austere, St. Peter's church has highly decorative and ornamental elements in the patterning of brick.

HL

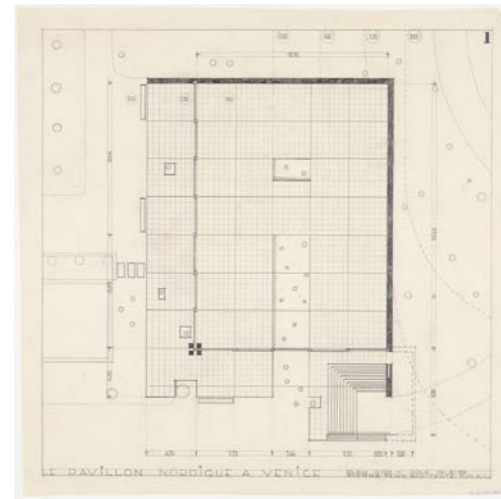
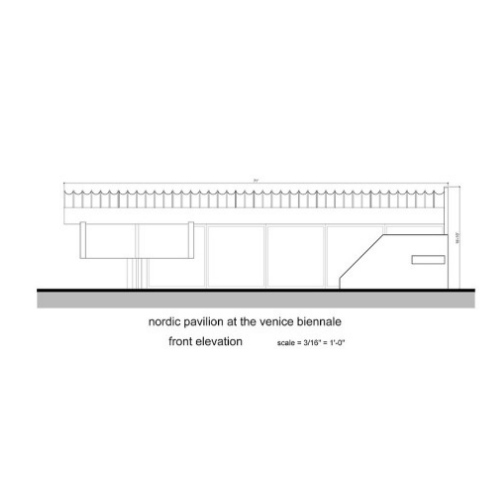
identity



composition



the grid



identity

composition

the grid

switzerland and identity

Post-war architecture in Switzerland is characteristically distinct in the clarity of expression of its own swiss-ness. A careful blend of stylistic, formal, material, textural qualities, swiss architecture draws from the neue bauen as much as from Le Corbusier's machines for living. Swiss architecture does not succumb to the flamboyant and impulsive gestures of post-war german expressionism or the sculptural artistry of Ronchamp chapel. Swiss architecture is highly tuned, precise, simple, careful, and calm. It is reserved, restrained, extremely ordered as well as orderly. Despite the cultural blending that has taken place by virtue of Switzerland's geographical position nestled between Italy, Germany, and France, its architects of the postwar era maintain an aura about their work that nevertheless persists in the maintenance of a distinguished cultural identity. It would, however, be a fallacy to suggest homogeneity among all swiss architecture; rather their similar affords the opportunity to dissect the subtle flavors of regional influence that permeate Swiss architecture.

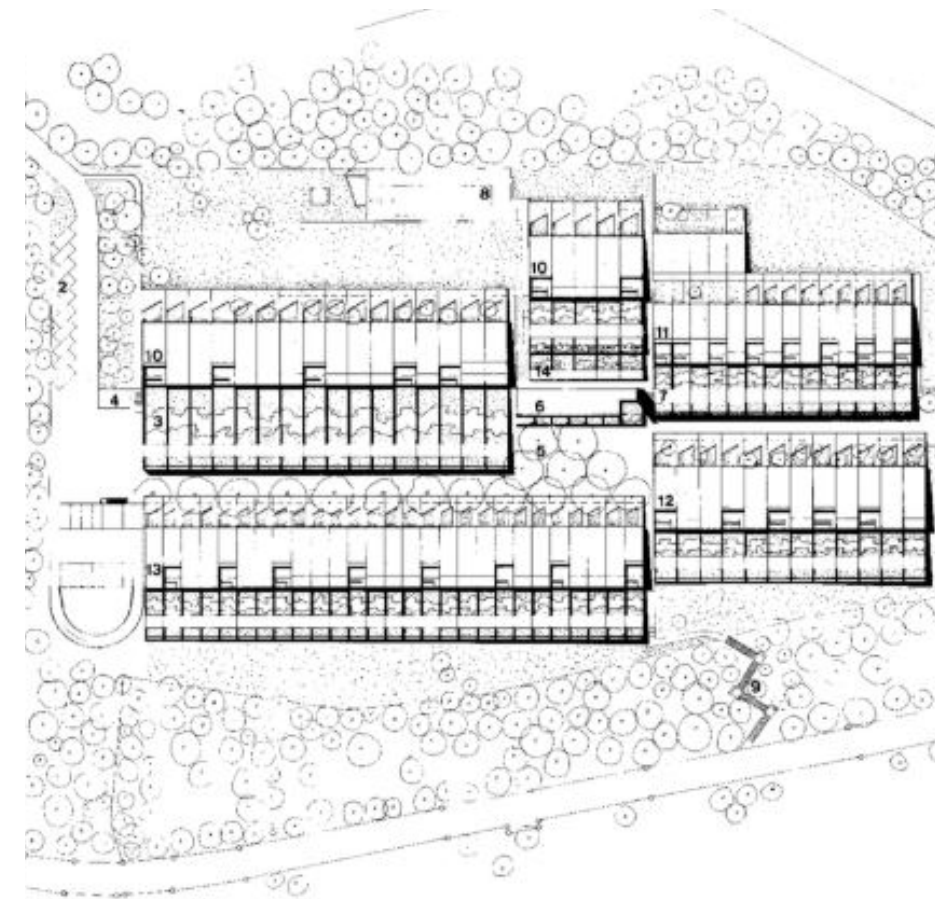
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Spier, Steven: The Swissness of Swiss Architecture

The architectural sensibilities of Swiss architects is frequently recognized as a distinct and unmistakable Swissness. Swiss architecture of the 20th century has been described as: austere, conforming, regular, strict, bland, adequate, comfortable, tidy, unremarkable, conservative, rigorous, detail-oriented, sterile, stable, solid, permanent, practical, functional, simple, truthful, sober, genius-less, economical, abstract, puritanical, rational, timeless, and safe, to name a few. Expressionism finds few suitors in Swiss design culture. By and large, it seems this Swissness is attributed to the cultural identity of the Swiss people, both by outsiders as much as by the Swiss as a badge of pride. The multicultural nature of the people and by virtue of the centrality of its geography within Europe, Swiss design seems to stem, to some degree, from this resistance toward a singular overbearing attitude. Consensus and compromise characterize Swissness in place of the typical ambition and grandeur of other countries seeking to establish or maintain a clear national identity. In avoiding controversy, they paradoxically develop a quite distinct aesthetic bias. Others point to the ways of life of the Swiss as being a major contributor to this emergent national consistency, with Sigfried Giedeon referring to the architecture being a balance between the “individual rights and collective needs [that] mirrors directly the way of life of the mountain peasant. He is free master in his isolated house, yet dependent on the help of his neighbors and of the community” suggesting that some archetypal Swiss memory of the pastoral peasantry bleeds into the psyche of the generic modern Swiss architect. While romantic, this explanation leaves much to be desired.

Similar to the Nordic countries in its truthfulness in materiality but far less ambitious in its scale or intensity, Swiss architecture continues to occupy a niche area of European modern design. Yet two recent Pritzker prize winners seem to deviate somewhat from the stereotype of Swissism - Herzog and De Meuron, who claim to be entirely un-Swiss despite their Basel-based practice and education at the ETH, and Peter Zumthor, who relates more closely with the Swiss pastoral recluse but presents architecture far more provocative than typical. Despite their formal deviations from the traditional Swiss model, the architecture of both HdM and Zumthor nevertheless embodies the richness of materiality, extreme rigor with details, and clarity of

concept and form characteristic of their Swiss association.

RK

“A disposition to pragmatism, a mistrust of utopia, mastery of moderation, solidity, 52 amongst braggarts the genial exemption, and more generally the honest man; a farmer-like wariness even from the educated, a refusal to be impressed and, in relation to our own accomplishments, a deeply ingrained, almost masochistic fondness for “understatement” drawn from our republican education, etcetera.”

“Highly relevant is again a capacity for compromise, the ‘general tendencies and continuous developments that are relatively immune to fast-moving fashions but assimilate the most diverse influences... Precisely this amalgamation, supported through a lively discourse in a number of magazines, is a fundamental quality of Swiss architecture”

“We rarely originate but are skilled at adapting; we are reluctant to push ahead, preferring to wait; we don’t like abandoning the familiar, being sceptical of anything new. If it’s different, then it’s suspect: the exceptional is unwelcome and genius is ignored”

“‘all of their work maintains throughout the stable qualities that have always been associated with the best Swiss architecture: conceptual precision, formal clarity, economy of means and pristine detailing and craftsmanship’... Herzog & de Meuron buildings are ‘solid, serious, and so costly built that in spite of all their simplicity they are still identifiable as Swiss product”

CE

Allenspach, Christoph: Architecture in Switzerland

Allenspach, in contrast to Spier, stresses the multicultural influences of Swiss architecture as a generator of stylistic variability, as opposed to homogeneity by the same primarily geographical reasoning. Switzerland’s shared borders with Italy, Germany, France, and Austria produces regional variations on the classic Swiss stereotypical architecture, a phenomenon which has only accelerated in recent years

with the outward opening of Swiss competitions to foreign applicants. While previously such competitions were internal and often fiercely regionally biased, now a great variety of architects have buildings developing within the country, among them Nouvel, Gehry, Coop Himmelblau. Allenspach acknowledges a Swiss fixation on artisan construction techniques, whereby the process of skilled craft building precedes the aesthetic affect of the building itself. Historically Switzerland has been (with the exception of Le Corbusier, who had no public projects in Switzerland) far removed from the architectural ideologies of early to late stage modernism, with schools instead focusing attention on the skilled crafts as a continuation of a cultural tradition of building. Yet this careful attention to detail is threatened by Switzerland’s own newfound porosity, whereby new building competition pressures and efficiency-oriented contracting threaten the continuity of the Swiss quality of building detailing. Perhaps the insulatory nature of the country’s architectural work was its strength in producing highly tuned architectural crafts. Postmodernism’s fixation on the image seems to have inundated Switzerland with an uneasy reorientation of values and motivations that render its traditional technique-based values value-engineered from the equation. The architecture of the postmodern era is embodied in the final artefact and not in the means by which to craft it.

RK

The Architectural Review: Atelier 5

Atelier 5’s projects all seem to draw heavily on projects developing in parallel in neighboring countries. The structuralism of Holland, in particular the aggregative and scalar principles of Herman Hertzberger, seen in the Asyl Gottesgnad Old-Age Home and Hospital, as well as the brutal rawness of Le Corbusier’s postwar work exhibited by Atelier 5’s Flamatt 3 housing project. Theo Bosch’s rhythmic modern housing blocks are also a clear influence on the work of Atelier 5. The firm’s projects seem to be far removed from the more contemporary understanding of Swiss architecture as relying upon a simplicity of form and a fixation on the craft of building. The Flamatt housing in particular embraces the wild and unruly nature of climbing vines and vegetative growth among the concrete walls, clearly drawing from and possibly pushing forward the romantic ideas of living in connection with nature that Le

Corbusier pursued more viscerally in his postwar works, epitomized in La Tourette’s grown courtyard interior. This embrace of nature’s ‘disorder’ is a somewhat rare decision in early to mid century modernism, with most pioneers in early modern functionalism allowing nature to function, at most, as an aesthetic consideration available to be consumed, usually through floor-to-ceiling window panes that transport nature into the building. Prewar Miesian grids and Corbusian machines for living wholeheartedly assert architecture’s dominance over nature as the ultimate object of rational expression. Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye on the flat green lawn in Poissy is a symbol of the resistance to vegetative overgrowth for its capacity to spoil the image of the idealized built form. Yet Le Corbusier’s postwar work signals a dramatic shift in attitude towards nature, the efficacy of which was felt directly in Atelier 5’s work, among many others. This embrace of nature, albeit never left entirely unaltered but given greater autonomy allows for the development of Frampton’s later critical regionalism to shed the tabula rasa site response of early modernism completely and engage the geographic and biotic contingencies of context that can enhance, rather than subvert the efficacy of the architecture.

RK

They clung to Corbusian typologies for their sculptural strength, trusting perhaps that the natural roughness would come back into fashion. The Halen project is almost as if someone took Unite and spread it out on a hillside. The expanding of the firm has made them perhaps critically less relevant, although a much more established and impactful practice. To some criticism apparently they stuck to the Corbusian aesthetic too much, even at the time of writing in 2013. It became perhaps more of a dogmatic pursuit than an ideological one.

CE

Caruso, Adam: Whatever Happened to Analogue Architecture

I find great pleasure in the phrase: “Herzog, de Meuron, Diener, Sumi, Meili, have all recounted in interviews the traumatic effect that the arrival of Aldo Rossi as a visiting professor had on their formation as architects.” Interesting

identity

that this generation of architects who really have a recognizable and very well received mentality were bred through a juxtaposition of Rossi and Venturi. Their work does often play with kind of basic forms, but in a much more tectonic way than either of the two previous influences. Caruso is making a claim that I wholeheartedly support - the idea of a mystique shrouded architect who is in service of nothing and no one other than the autonomous form of architecture is 1) pointless and 2) non-existent.

CE

the grid

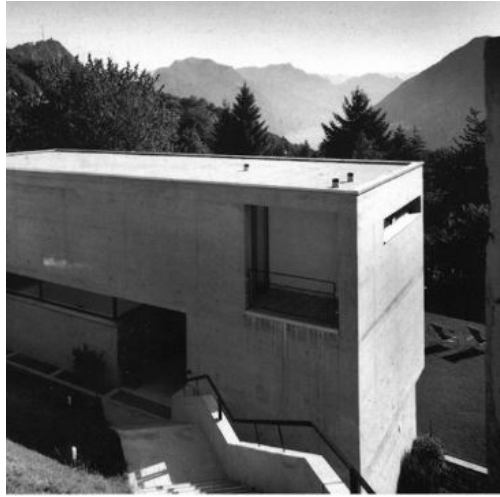
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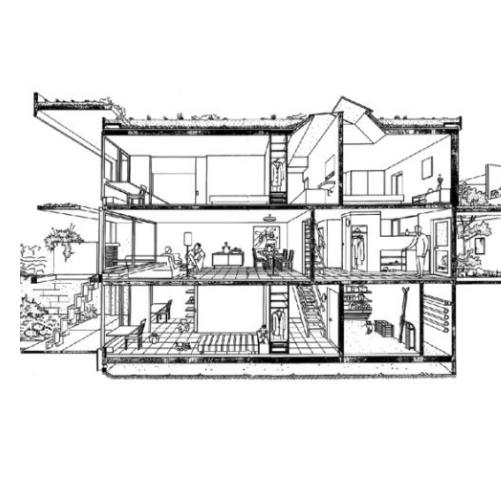
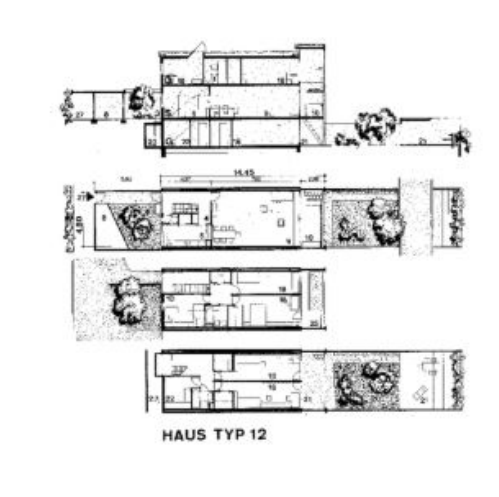
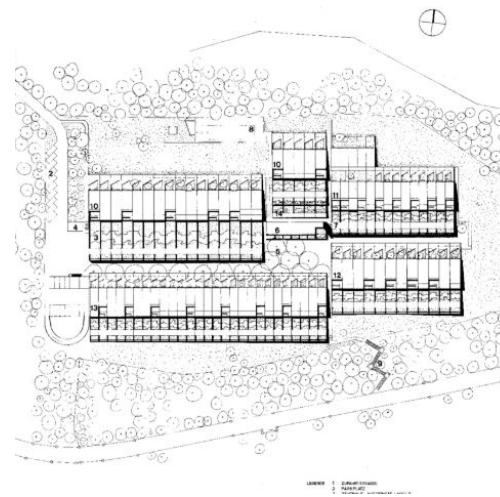
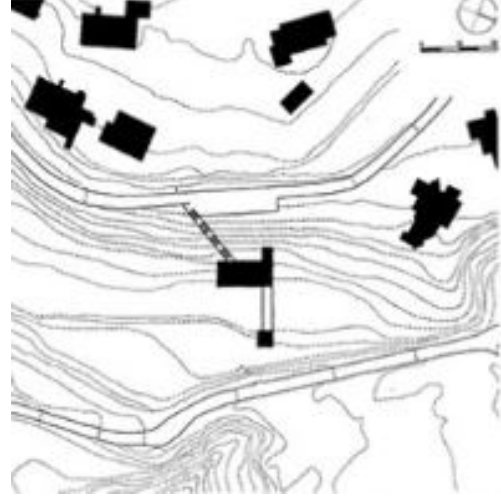
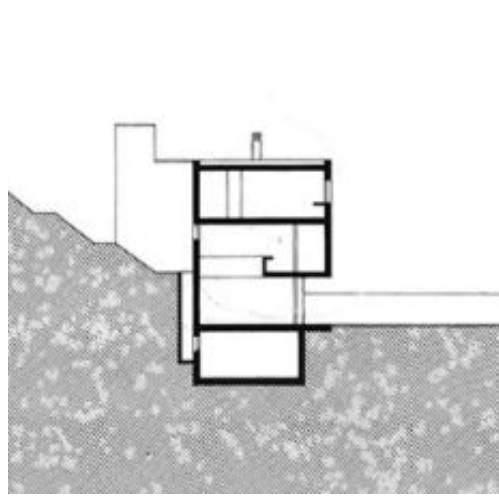
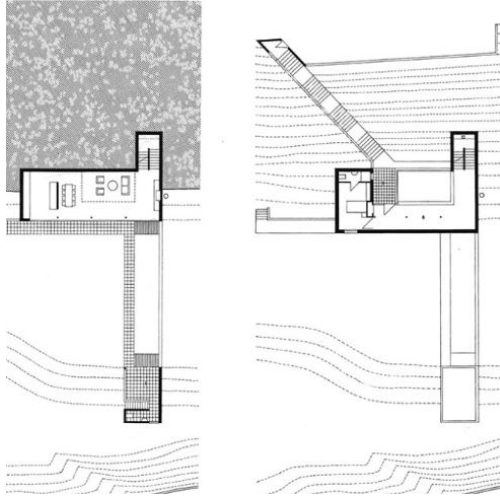
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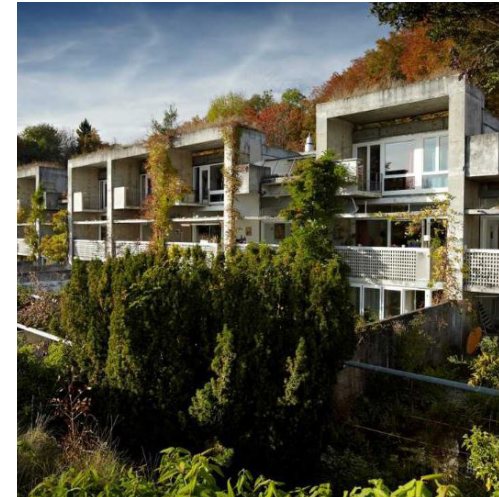
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extended bibliography

This independent study course revisits buildings and theories of the post-World War II period, with particular emphasis on the dialogue between past and present. The course aims to understand the contesting ideas that came from post-War and the dissemination of ideas into different regions around the world, and the lineage of these ideas through time. We will also be exploring the lineage of architects active during the post-war period, surveying different schools of thinking and how their influence carries through to contemporary architectural discourse. The course will include a survey of various post-war movements around the world and their associated manifestos, critical writings, and buildings, with emphasis placed on new reframings of the post-war era work by contemporary architects, theorists, and writers.

The course will utilize critical writing, drawing, and artefact analysis as tools for developing a strong comprehension of the influencing factors and long term impacts of significant post-war era architects and their potential to continue to influence a rapidly evolving 21st century architectural discourse and practice.

The desire for this course came from an observation of the remarkable frequency to which architects and works from this time period are referenced in contemporary discourse today. In order to gainfully participate in this we need a deeper understanding than provided to us in previous courses, and hope that this course can satisfy that desire while allowing enough freedom to be adaptable to changing interests.

Week 1: Introduction / Overview

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Week 2: Mies + Corbusier

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Week 3: Louis Kahn & Material Authenticity

Louis Kahn explores the poetic expression of tectonic architecture, utilizing rigorous material and light studies to craft articulate, eternal spaces. Kahn's civic work suggests an investigation of the creation of order through highly articulate construction systems and spatial organization. The result architecture is of both humanist and material purity.

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Week 4: Japanese Metabolism

Metabolism in Japan was spearheaded by a group of young architects disillusioned with the post-war trajectory of the country and national architectural discipline. Influenced largely by the social idealism developing in the west with Marx and others, they fused ideas for urban megastructures with principles of organic growth, evolution, and recombination. There is a clear affinity between the ideologies of this group and those of somewhat contemporary western collective such as Archigram and Superstudio, although the tentative ventures into physical realizations set the Metabolists apart from many other utopian movements. The big question perhaps, is did these attempts at realizing their visions ultimately undermine their idealism, or reinforce their claims that this future was reachable?

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Week 5: The Smithsons, Team 10, & New Brutalism

Team Ten ushered in a movement whose architectural language would develop to become New Brutalism. The group was highly socially-driven, emphasizing the importance of a holistic urban strategy that addresses issues of identity, connectivity, and mobility. Self-described as "utopian," Team Ten aimed to reassert many of the social principles of modernism's foundational ideas, driven in large part by a desire to liberate modernism from its continued bastardization through the rapid spread of an unthinking international style. New Brutalism, as described by Reynar Banham, became the architectural style that embodied urban mobility at multiple scales, from the individual to the family to the apartment block to the neighborhood to the city, a theme also evident in the ideas of the Dutch structuralists, several of whom were members of Team Ten. Its allure was in its drive to create localized identities within each community "based on the physical reality of place and occasion rather than on the abstraction of space and time (Team Ten Primer)."

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Week 6: Dutch Structuralism

Dutch Structuralism is commonly known for its module base design, in which the aggregation of the module creates the larger system of the building. The fundamental principle of the movement was to create an open structure/system that could allow for future development and appropriation for future users. To anticipate the building's future development, architects like Van Eyck and Hertzberger emphasized a clear separation of the structure to the infill of the building. One interesting point that was brought up by one of the reading is the failures of Structuralism. The author talks about the fact that the movement was never meant to focus on the aesthetic or formal aspect of the building, however, many of Van Eyck and Hertzberger buildings developed a clear aesthetic that many have recognized as the Structuralist style. The author also mentions the fact that the Structuralist architects were keenly aware of this aspect and the architects believed that giving more agency to the users of the building did not directly imply that the architect or building must be mute but in certain instances requires aesthetic control.

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Week 7: Cedric Price & Archigram

Perhaps questionably grouped in this section, Cedric Price and the members of Archigram had a close working relationship. Operating mostly in paper or narrative architectures, both groups had a strong connection with academia and sought to inspire the global youth, Cedric in plain sight - and Archigram somewhat subversively. Ideas of cybernetics, systems theory, and utopianism course throughout their work, and are monumental influences in architecture and related disciplines to this day. Our consensus is that the paper/narrative work of both utterly outweigh the built work (even later by the former members) in terms of influence on the discipline. This provokes the question, particularly in relation to the parallel minds of the Metabolist movement, of whether it is best to test out one's ideas, or leave them permanently on paper - to be reimagined by generations to come.

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Week 8: La Tendenza & The Italian Radicals

*A highly charged post-war debate raged between two radical Italian groups active in the 60s and 70s known as La Tendenza, driven principally by Aldo Rossi, and the Italian Radicals, spearheaded by Superstudio and Archizoom. Both groups operated out a mutual respect for rationalism and heroic form with distinctly Marxist attitudes, yet the two groups clashed in terms of the conclusions of their ideologies. While La Tendenza aimed to evoke the deep collective memory of being through the superimposition of historically charged architectural iconography, the Italian Radicals instead found that the only solution to the question of architecture was no architecture at all; that the idiosyncrasies of capitalist, consumerist cultural living could entirely define our relationship to the experience and occupation of space, as described in Archizoom's *No-Stop City*. There is a peculiar simultaneity of similarity of thinking and stark oppositional ideology that generates a wealth of productive tension between these two groups' theoretical frameworks to endow fruitful reinterpretation.*

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Week 9: German Expressionism & Rationalism

Postwar German architecture might be characterized as a disciplinary binary between a rebirth of a highly sculptural, gestural approach to architecture, drawing on the earlier work of figures such as Mendelsohn, Taut, and Steiner, in opposition to a contrasting rational, rigid, gridded approach developing in parallel. Postwar expressionism was best exemplified by the sweeping gestures of Sharoun's Berlin Philharmonic or the jagged peaks of Bohm's Mariendom, while rationalism favored the minimalism and geometric purity exhibited in O. M. Ungers' Apartment Building in Hültzstrasse or in his later addition to the Kunsthalle in Hamburg. Both camps asserted disciplinary autonomy but approached architecture from two highly polarized design philosophies.

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Week 10: Scandinavian Modernism

[[Kai note: Perhaps each week could be introduced with a paragraph of important ideas, sensibilities, etc, I would include here: Phenomenology, Christian Norberg-Schulz, Juhani Pallasmaa, Steen Eiler Rasmussen, Archaic, non-practical, Nordic, light, wood, whiteness (these are qualities that Plummer identifies as unifying Scandinavian modernism)... This could be done in hindsight, after the week's discussion, but might help organize thoughts about the week and the coherence of the pieces...]]

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Week 11: Swiss Identity

Post-war architecture in Switzerland is characteristically distinct in the clarity of expression of its own swiss-ness. A careful blend of stylistic, formal, material, textural qualities, swiss architecture draws from the neue bauen as much as from Le Corbusier's machines for living. Swiss architecture does not succumb to the flamboyant and impulsive gestures of post-war german expressionism or the sculptural artistry of Ronchamp chapel. Swiss architecture is highly tuned, precise, simple, careful, and calm. It is reserved, restrained, extremely ordered as well as orderly. Despite the cultural blending that has taken place by virtue of Switzerland's geographical position nestled between Italy, Germany, and France, its architects of the postwar era maintain an aura about their work that nevertheless persists in the maintenance of a distinguished cultural identity. It would, however, be a fallacy to suggest homogeneity among all swiss architecture; rather their similar affords the opportunity to dissect the subtle flavors of regional influence that permeate Swiss architecture.

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- Manabu Chiba, *Lessons from Education at Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich)*
- Marianne Burkhalter, *Accademia di Architettura Mendrisio*
- Jul Bachmann, Stanislaus Von Moos, *New Directions in Swiss Architecture, 1969*
-
- Irina Davidovici, *Forms of Practice: German-Swiss architecture 1980-2000*, 2018
- Christa Zeller, *Schweizer Architekturführer = Guide d'architecture suisse = Guide to Swiss architecture : 1920-1990*

Mapping the Post-War