



#55

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A10

new European
architecture

#55

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The future as a turtle

INDIRA VAN 'T KLOOSTER

People in Kiev have been on the streets since the beginning of December protesting their president, Viktor Yanukovych, who abruptly walked away from an association agreement with the EU, a week before it was to be signed. It has been, as the French newspaper *Le Monde* dryly remarked, quite a long time since we witnessed a pro-European protest. It is difficult to say how things will develop in a country where the most important opposition leader, Viktor Klitschko, is also a national boxing champion, where the church and oligarchs are both in favour of Europe (though for different reasons) and where Putin takes more time to speak with Viktor Medwetsjoek, a conservative businessman and lawyer, than the president himself.

Young and progressive Ukrainian designers and architects are also protesting, but they don't seem to expect major changes soon, either in general or for architecture. 'The collapse of the Soviet Union in the beginning of the 1990s,' says A10's Ukrainian correspondent, Kseniya Dmytrenko, 'was a catastrophe for the existing social institutions in the Ukraine, including architecture. During the '90s there was a huge decline in the economy; people who studied architecture just could not progress their careers.'

After the Orange Revolution in 2004 there was a building boom, but it meant a very fast and unreflective consumption of imported products and technologies, rather than a gradual and sophisticated breeding of architectural culture. The situation worsened because of the corruption of state and city authorities, a lack of open educational policy and a monopolized building market.'

And now that the most important and urgent architecture made in the Ukraine consists of barricades and road blocks, the PinchukArtCentre (PAC) in Kiev scheduled a debate about the role the first generation to come of age in a free and independent Ukraine could play. 'Are they prepared to shape their own future? Or will [the future] just slowly ride towards eternity as if on the shell of a mythological turtle?' Architect Anton Oliynyk (Buro O) is positive: 'I know that contemporary architecture is possible in a democratic society without corruption. I know a lot of Ukrainian architects who take part in peaceful protest.' Possible? Yes. Now? No, says Kseniya: 'Among the young generation we have promising practices, like FORMA and Buro O, Drozdov&Partners, Yuriy Ryntovt and Zotov & Co. The latter initiated an international architecture festival, CANactions, which is now the main public educational event in Ukraine. But the local young scene is weak, and I am not sure that the situation will change in the next decade.' PAC itself decided to cancel the debate because of the protests in the streets. Gradually, Ukraine must find new roots, or the future will remain stranded under the turtle's shell. <

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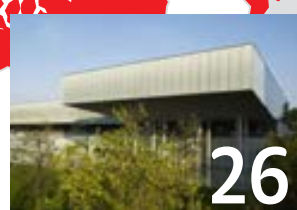
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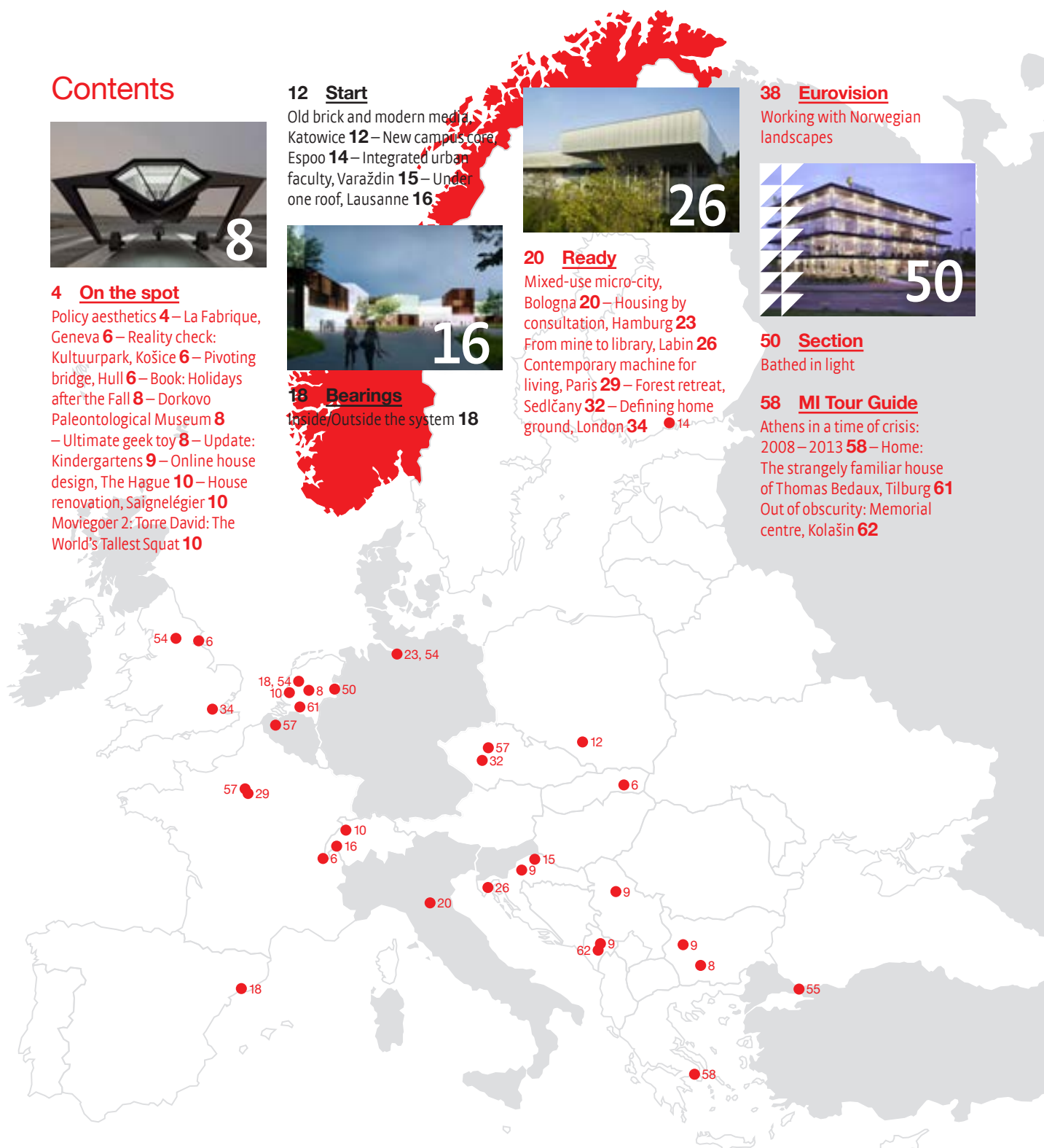


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Policy aesthetics

✚ TBILISI (GE) — This private villa is currently under construction in Tbilisi, the political, cultural, economic and social hub of Georgia. It is just one of over a dozen ambitious projects that Jürgen Mayer H. has been commissioned to build in the South Caucasian nation since 2009. Having seen images of his Metropol Parasol in Seville, the Georgian government invited the German architect to discuss a project in the centre of Tbilisi. Although the project never reached fruition, since →





(Policy aesthetics)

then buildings he designed have been sprouting all over the country, including a border station in Sarpi (2011) and a courthouse (2012) and airport (2010) in Mestia. Yet it seems that this influx will soon come to an end. The presidential election that took place on 27 October 2013 marked the end of the nearly decade-long rule of Mikheil Saakashvili, the outgoing president, and of the country's presidential system itself. Moreover, it is not at all certain whether the new government also has an interest in stimulating new architecture. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

Serious playfulness

GENÈVE (CH) — La Fabrique (The Factory) draws inspiration from Buster Keaton's 1920 film *One Week*, a silent comedy about a recently wedded couple, their wedding gift — lot 99 on Apple Street, along with a box containing a demountable house and numbered instructions on how to build it — and the challenges they face when a man turned down by



the bride decides to boycott the success of the enterprise by repainting the numbers of the various boxes of parts.

The Factory attempts to rely on this dichotomy of seriousness versus playfulness in an impulse to contradict the difficulties of spontaneous building in today's cities. Built with window frames collected from building sites, it allowed Bureau A to squeeze all the joy of architectural practice into a very small period of time. A stark contrast to the newlyweds' home, which was not as pleasant or easy to build as it seemed, and was run over by a train in the end.

Beautiful as it is, the appeal of The Factory lies not in its aesthetics, but in the reminder that architecture is actually not really about conventional aesthetics, in the same way it is not a metaphysical craft accessible to a select few. A demystification, perhaps, of the status of the architect in society that could sometimes help architects to position themselves in the context of their practice, unlocking a world of possibilities for creativity in the process. (LUÍS CASTANHEIRA LOUREIRO)

Info www.a-bureau.com

Reality check

Shining peninsula

KOŠICE (SK) — October saw the opening of a new cultural park located in the former barracks of Košice. Architect Irakli Eristavi and his team, zerozero studio, have spent the last few years planning, designing, supervising and, to a great extent, fighting for this space (see A10 #34). The decaying complex is now successfully transformed into an area that has the potential to become the new social and cultural centre of the city.

'The greatest triumph for an architect is, more than building a house, designing a working public space,' declared Eristavi, standing on a late October evening before the recently completed Kulturpark in Košice. The dazzlingly white concrete area, the centre point of the investments driving Košice 2013, European Capital of Culture, is populated by a few skateboarders; other than that, the square is empty as no cultural events are scheduled for today. The strikingly pure white reconstructed facades of the historicized barracks stores are reflected in the shining, mirrored camouflage of the simple new pavilions. Without compromise, Kulturpark can rank with any project carried out as part of the European Capital of Culture programme, and not only from a formal standpoint.

Zerozero has managed to unite the conceptual and functional multi-layering of this extensive area with the rational network of an urban concept emerging from the idea of a central park surrounded by a public area, the square. This redefinition of a public space was precisely the point that convinced the competition jury to choose this project, and it is also the aspect which, from the beginning of its implementation right up to today, has been under threat.

The vision of a cluster with an 8 × 8-metre module, which the architects abstracted from the historical structure of the barrack stores and from which the individual new structures have emerged in logical constellations, was intended to define one consistent unit, an island of public and cultural space. The regulated strictness of the white historical buildings and the new cubist structures with shiny metal facades that were successfully executed stand in sharp contrast to the benevolent access to the offices in this zone. The private owners of parts of the holdings and buildings in the area of the former barracks have already rebuilt, and plan to continue to rebuild, their properties with absolutely no understanding of their neighbour's concept. The city, too, looks on without interest at these incursions into its top-quality cultural area and turns a blind eye to attempts to preserve its integral shape. Instead of the planned island of positive deviation in an environment of increasing and massive privatization of public areas, the result is only a peninsula. Yet it is a peninsula that shines with quality architecture, and a fitting image of a city's public space. (PETER SZALAY AND MARIA TOPOLCANSKA)

Kulturpark, 2010–2013 **Architect** zerozero studio **Address** Košice
Info www.zerozero.sk



Going places

HULL (UK) — While rivers were often a key reason for the foundation of towns and cities, the decline of river trade can make a river become a dividing rather than a uniting feature. But new bridges across rivers, particularly those for walkers and cyclists, have often become key players in the process of the renewal of cities. Perhaps the most striking of such bridges is Wilkinson and Eyre's Millennium Bridge in Gateshead. But a new bridge in Hull — like the Gateshead bridge, both a striking object in itself and a new route — may also have a big impact.

Designed by McDowell+Benedetti, with Alan Baxter Associates as structural consultants, the bridge connects the developed west side of the River Hull to the lesser developed east side. Approaching from the west down Scale Lane, a new series of stepped gardens (designed by Grontmij) lead to a public square at the river's edge. From here, either a short flight of steps or a sloping walkway, both wrapping around the bridge's pivoting hub, take you up to the deck of the bridge. The slight arch of the bridge's 35-metre cantilevered steel arm allows small boats to pass underneath, but for larger craft the entire span can swing round completely. The movement is so gentle that pedestrians can not only remain on the bridge while it swings but also step on and off (at its west end). The impending movement of the bridge is announced by a sequence of the sound and light work installed as part of the bridge by artist Nayan Kulkarni. The structural spine of the black steel bridge provides south-facing seating for people to enjoy being on the crossing, and the bridge's pivoting hub will one day house a restaurant. (ANDREW GUEST)

Info www.mcdowellbenedetti.com

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Shown from left to right: Gira RDS radio, Gira surface-mounted home station video, Gira push button sensor 3 Comfort, 3-gang, Gira Event green/pure white glossy



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Shown from left to right: 2-gang combination push switch/socket outlet, Gira Event Clear, white/pure white glossy, aubergine/anthracite, brown/cream white glossy, sand/cream white glossy, black/pure white glossy



Book

Elke Beyer, Anke Hagemann and Michael Zinganel (eds.)
Holidays after the Fall: Seaside Architecture and Urbanism in Bulgaria and Croatia
Berlin, Jovis Verlag 2013
272 pages, ill. b/w and colour
Softcover with flaps, 17 x 24 cm, € 29.80
ISBN 978-3-86859-226-9

Soon after the opening of a trial in Munich some weeks ago concerning the disastrous purchase of Hypo Alpe-Adria Bank by Bavaria's state bank (Bayern LB), a book was published in Berlin entitled *Holidays after the Fall: Seaside Architecture and Urbanism in Bulgaria and Croatia*. Although the connection may not have been apparent to outsiders, the two events are significantly linked. In the 1990s, Hypo Alpe-Adria, once the state bank of the Austrian federal state of Carinthia, played an important role in privatizing the Croatian coastal region, the area focused on in *Holidays after the Fall*.

Besides being well-written and smartly designed, the book also provides plenty of food for thought thanks to its comparative approach. As well as comparing Bulgaria and

Croatia, whose holiday resorts underwent constant development under state socialism since the 1950s, with direct links to the Western European tourist market, there is also an introductory chapter with an overview of the tourist industry in the 20th century (from mass tourism under totalitarian regimes to post-war package holidays) which also reviews the urban development of Europe's coasts.

Through their detailed analysis, the authors come to an astonishing conclusion: state planning in Eastern Europe actually ensured compact developments that created a balance between the conservation of nature, leisure activities and an interest in foreign currency, and since the collapse of the old order, which was also an intellectual and moral turning point, precisely this balance has been upset. Privatization, uncontrolled growth, destruction and tastelessness dominate the book's second section, which deals with developments in the tourist trade since 1990, offering some rather grizzly revelations.

In Bulgaria, this involved denationalization and corruption, for example, in the form of Russian construction firms whose apartment complexes intended for sale to enthusiastic holidaymakers not only caused a real estate bubble but also led to architectural pollution. This rampant development culminated in the decommissioning of a na-

ture reserve, against which a citizens' movement successfully protested, using the courts to secure sanctions from Brussels. This victory for the emerging civil society was a new, important experience for many Bulgarians, as there was no question of the Bulgarian state's intervention.

In connection with Croatia, the book mentions the Carinthian state bank which, under the management of neo-Nazi politician Jörg Haider, ensured the smooth transaction of dubious and highly lucrative deals to privatize coastal regions, including the sale of former military training grounds. The real estate bubble, inflated by swift, multiple resales of land, was already about to burst when Bayern LB took over Hypo Alpe-Adria. There is no doubt that a closer examination of the bank's portfolio by the Bavarian bank's supervisory board would have disclosed the dangers. Interestingly, this back story is rarely mentioned in reporting on the subject. In this book, however, the reasons for the disaster are explained by Norbert Mappes-Niediek, a prominent expert on Balkan entanglements of every kind.

Holidays after the Fall makes worthwhile, agreeably light reading, with much to interest even those readers who have yet to visit the coasts of Bulgaria or Croatia. (CHRISTIAN WELZBACHER)



Ultimate geek toy

SOESTERBERG (NL) — You would be forgiven for thinking that Soesterberg, a former military air base, was the set of the latest James Bond film. After all, the only thing missing was the theme song. Instead, there was an ear-splitting siren. The doors of the aeroplane hangar swung open, and there it was: 'Secret Operation 610'. A mysterious stealth object drove outside on caterpillar tracks and an aeroplane tyre. For months, RAAAF and Studio Frank Havermans worked in secret on this ultimate geek toy that would have Bond twitching with envy. The air of mystery surrounding the project was intended to evoke feelings of the Cold War, the period when the aeroplane hangar was built by the Americans. But this 'secret mission' entails more than that.

The architects built this mobile office space for researchers as a way of generating discussion about vacant historical buildings. Their message is that adaptive reuse takes too long and costs too much money. It would be better to find an innovative way to temporarily use this kind of cultural-historical monument. Soesterberg Air Base was one of the buildings recreated in the giant blue foam model that Ronald Rietveld made for the 2010 Architecture Biennale in Venice. The high-profile exhibit was called Vacant NL, and it reproduced every vacant building in the Netherlands. This past year, the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam started a Master's degree programme, also called Vacant NL, which trains students as specialists in temporary use.

There are already plans to turn the air base into a nature area, which will open to the public in late 2014. The munitions depots, shelters, bunkers and landing strips will be kept, a residential area will be created, and a National Military Museum will be constructed. 'Secret Operation 610' can be rented via the air base by designers, researchers and scientists. (KIRSTEN HANNEMA)

Info www.frankhavermans.wordpress.com, www.raaaf.nl

An unexpected museum

DORKOVO (BG) — Mammoths, tourists and a sexy museum seems like the most unusual combination that could be found in a tiny Bulgarian village of less than 3000 residents. But Dorkovo boasts all of the above, and has unexpectedly created a buzz in the surrounding Pazardzhik region. While the five-million-year-old Pliocene Park nearby has drawn tourists for years, now people are travelling 150 kilometres from Sofia to Dorkovo just to take a look at the freshly completed paleontological museum.

Dorkovo has been on the map for European scientists since a joint Bulgarian-French expedition in the 1980s revealed concentrated fossils of at least nine groups of ancient mammals, including the oldest mastodon specimens in Europe. The Dorkovo paleontological site thus marks the beginning of the Pliocene Epoch in Eastern Europe.

The idea for a museum was first proposed 30 years ago, but came to life only recently. The building was officially opened in September 2013 following three years of design and construction, and with the financial support of regional development EU funding. It is a small and simple dome-like structure of 300 m², wood-clad both inside and out. An intricate, custom-made metal skeleton supports 1.5-metre-thick walls with all the installations housed within. Yavor Yordanov, architect of the museum, attributes the primitive simplicity of the form to the sacred character of the exhibits inside. Whether the Pliocene landscape diorama and the four-metre sculpture of the ancient, elephant-like *Anancus* will turn into a new temple of science in Dorkovo is yet to be seen. But the flocks of tourists who fill the parking lot nearby every weekend seem to be an accurate assessment of this unusual piece of architecture in the rural Bulgarian countryside. (ANETA VASILEVA)

Dorkovo Paleontological Museum, 2010–2013 **Architect** Yavor Yordanov
Client Municipality of Dorkovo **Address** Dorkovo, Pazardzhik region



Update: Kindergartens

Across Eastern Europe, new preschool centres are popping up, signalling a renaissance in kindergarten architecture. Social change, updated regulations and new technologies have transformed this typology and established new approaches.



BIJELO POLJE (ME) — Bijelo Polje is a town of about 25,000 inhabitants in north-eastern Montenegro. Since the 1980s, no significant building activity has taken place there. However, an increasing demand for nurseries in the town has made an extension to the built environment essential. Initially, the Ministry for Spatial Planning and Environment commissioned architect Rifat Alihodžić to renovate and extend an existing kindergarten to meet current European standards. Yet it turned out that constructing a completely new building would be a more sustainable, and thus more economical, solution. Later, the project received a gift from the government of Azerbaijan, which hopes to strengthen bonds with Montenegro – a European Union member candidate – by investing in several projects, including a luxury tourist hotel complex in the Bay of Kotor. Sited in a rather dense residential area, the building stands out with a sloping facade that makes it seem larger and taller. The variegated colours decorating the building both inside and outside give the surroundings a cheerful touch and make it interesting for children. In addition to this, colourful nest boxes are mounted on the corner of the diagonal facade. On the whole, the building is conceived as a spatial ensemble of diverse environments, as opposed to most existing kindergartens in the vicinity, which are a collection of uniform playrooms. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

Kindergarten, 2013 Info www.rifat-alihodzic.com



→ SOFIA (BG) — In the 1990s, the birth rate in Sofia was low, privatization of state-owned property was at its peak and kindergartens were the first to disappear, especially from the more attractive areas of the city. They were reconstructed into restaurants, clubs and shops, and their vast modernist grounds hosted a number of newly erected buildings, even including residential and office blocks. About ten years later, however, the birth rate shot up and Sofia started to suffer from a shortage of childcare institutions. Troubled by public discontent and facing at least 4000 children a year unable to enrol in the city's kindergartens for lack of free positions, the municipality of Sofia frantically started to build low-cost and low-quality buildings. Nowadays, this has led to the fact that the generally well-planned socialist kindergartens still look better than their younger counterparts. The recently completed Kita kindergarten is the first exception to the rule. Designed by Conveyer, a young and relatively unknown architectural studio, this small private kindergarten in the southern outskirts of Sofia provides facilities for only two groups of children. It is boldly colour-coded to emphasize spatial distinction between the groups ('Red' and 'Yellow'). The small schoolyard is carefully landscaped to escape the standardized factory playground look, and the level of detail and finishing of the entire building has been executed without compromise. (ANETA VASILEVA)

Kita kindergarten, 2010–2013 Info www.conveyer.bg



→ ZAGREB (HR) — Characteristic of praised and frequently published kindergarten projects from the past decade of contemporary Croatian architecture is the fact that they were designed distinctively due to the unenviable environment in which they emerged. The locations of those kindergartens brought about different organizational plans and design ingenuity due to their shapes, surroundings and oversized neighbouring architecture, which in turn indirectly generated innovative and brave solutions. Emerging from a completely opposite basis, this kindergarten and day-care centre in Vrbanj, on the south side of Zagreb, had contrary yet fortunate circumstances due to the fact that it is built on an almost ideal plot for the logical organization of such an educational facility. The site stretches from east to west, with a perfect amount of space to form yards in front of the southern facade. The structure numbers twelve units, evenly distributed on the ground and second floors. The kindergarten, designed by Davor Mateković, directly communicates its purpose through nuanced tin elements on the facade, shaped in the form of puzzle pieces, implying play. Although ornamented, the building is colourist monochromatic and avoids imposing upon the hectic environment around it, while the right amount playfulness with colour occurs in the interiors, 'serving' the children. (IVAN DOROTIĆ)

Kustošija kindergarten, 2013 Info www.proarh.hr



← BELGRADE (RS) — In 2010, the city of Belgrade announced an architecture competition for five new kindergartens in the city. It was an important step, marking a new period of social stimulus and childcare in Serbia, which for the last two decades has seen minimal investment in its youngest citizens. The first of the five kindergartens, named Stardust and designed by the young Belgrade-based architectural team of Marko Petrović, Petar Bojović and Miloš Paunović, is situated in Bežanijska kosa, an urban neighbourhood of New Belgrade. Stardust is a building of compact volume with an almost square floor plan, intended for around 250 children. It is organized around a central atrium that serves as a buffer between interior and exterior. On the ground floor is also located the multi-purpose hall, which together with the atrium forms an integrated space for play in protected and supervised conditions. The atrium is further connected with the outer space and the playground over tribunes and a green slope, usable for summer classes and plays. The architects have therefore achieved a light and friendly kindergarten characterized by a continuous and subtle flow between diverse functions and spaces. (VESNA VUČINIĆ)

Stardust kindergarten, 2013 Info www.petarbojovic.com



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We build homes
 — THE HAGUE (NL) — On the north-east edge of The Hague, building preparations are underway for twelve terraced architectural homes designed by several different architectural firms under the supervision of Amsterdam-based office space&matter. The design for the terrace was created from the online 'house design library' of WeBuild-Homes, an integrated partnership between developers, architects, and contractors initiated by space&matter. The website currently offers consumers a choice of more than 40 different home designs. For the first phase, the terrace of ten homes utilized a total of six different designs. The designs by denieuwegeneratie are very popular. Their 'Brickhouse' will be built twice in the first phase and a third time in the second phase of the project. The second phase entails building on five separate lots on a side street. The 'SET' design by architect Luud van Ginneken, which costs about the same as 'Brickhouse' and is similar in size, will also be built three times in the neighbourhood. Most buyers have chosen a house with as much floor space as possible (approx. 135 m²), a logical and sensible choice given the high cost of land in the Netherlands. The 'Grow House' design, also created by denieuwegeneratie, will be built in the first phase as an end-of-terrace. In this design, the ground floor extends out further than the upper floors, allowing for the possibility of creating additional rooms by extending the upper floors to the same length as the ground floor. If the extra rooms are not necessary (for instance, because the house is owned by people without children living at home), it is also possible to extend upwards instead, creating a high ceiling in the living room. Following the success of the project in The Hague, other municipalities in the Netherlands will be offering locations for project construction as well. (EMIEL LAMERS)

Info www.webuildhomes.nl, www.spaceandmatter.nl



↑ Grow House ↓ Terrace concept



Moviegoer 2

Torre David: The World's Tallest Squat *****
 In the *Moviegoer* series, Wies Sanders, director of the Architecture Film Festival Rotterdam (AFFR), reviews films showing at European architecture (film) festivals. A short documentary about the Torre David, a 45-storey skyscraper in Caracas, Venezuela, built during the oil-rich country's boom years, is the focus of this instalment.

In 1989, an Austrian television crew filmed Hong Kong's Kowloon Walled City, an informal settlement on a plot of land that evolved over several decades from a fort into the most densely populated city in the world, a three-dimensional, 20-storey labyrinth full of criminals, prostitutes, families, traders, and refugees. Barely a year after filming, the city was razed to the ground, leaving the television crew with unique historical footage of a city that had never been filmed before (other than for a chase scene in a Jackie Chan movie). Informal vertical cities capture the imagination. How does a city like this come into being, without plans, organization, or money? And what kind of fascinating

Green strangeness
 — SAIGNELÉGIER (CH) — Set in a small municipality of the Jura Canton close to the French border, the house renovation by 2dB relies on the conceptual principle of mimicry, wherein facades interpret the materiality of its immediate surroundings. Eternit fibre cement cladding covers the roof and all facades visible from the road, with heavy frames surrounding the windows. Artificial turf and



↑ The house prior to transformation



↑↓ The rather conventional new interior



simple glass planes face the garden at the back. While the green coating's purpose is quite clear, the grey material covering the remaining facades draws inspiration partially from the adjacent road, but also from the region's contemporary farm sheds. It is a gesture that reflects upon the urban development of an area once marked by the traditional farm typology of the Jura mountains. Interiors, on the other hand, are in strict contrast with the eccentricity of the home's appearance. White coating, light floors and occasional wooden furniture



↑ Rear facade covered in artificial turf ↓ View of the facade facing the street



effectively seem unexpected in such an unfamiliar domestic image. As a result of this approach, in the words of the office, the construction distances itself from the rural domesticity expected from residential building in the Jura, which often draws from the traditional aesthetics of the mountain farms. The result is rather unconventional, as if while absorbing the quickly changing nature of its surroundings it could not help but embody the very strangeness of what is happening around it. (LUÍS CASTANHEIRA LOUREIRO)

Info www.db.dbarch.ch

are fascinating, but unfortunately the film stops right at the point when the viewer wants answers to the questions it raises. It takes more to make a good documentary than just a montage of the footage that U-TT collected in the course of its investigations. The film is lacking structure and background, and it is hard to escape the feeling that it is merely an extended trailer for a documentary that never materialized. That is truly a pity, because the concept deserves a full-fledged cinematic treatment to bring the tower and its background to life. The experiences filming in Kowloon show that it is important to take these chances while you can.

The film-makers saved the answers to the compelling questions raised by the film for a coffee table book entitled *Torre David: Informal Vertical Communities*. The book contains background stories and a few proposals for increasing the sustainability of the tower, interspersed with an impressive series of photos by Iwan Baan that were previously displayed at the Architecture Biennale in Vienna. In this case, don't judge a book by its film — and the reverse is true as well. (WIES SANDERS)



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Start

New
projects

→
A vacant
structure
on the site,
initially slated
for demolition,
will be
integrated
into the new
faculty
building.



Old brick and modern media, Katowice

BAAS and Grupa 5 collaborate in making a conversion and extension that blends historical materials with contemporary urban nuances.

POLAND — TEXT: MACIEJ CZARNECKI AND MARTA GONZÁLEZ ANTÓN

The planned site for the University of Silesia's new Faculty of Radio and Television is set in a dense urban area. This clearly defined context did not limit creativity, but rather allowed the architects to be able to interpret both history and the surrounding urban environment to a greater extent. An international collaboration between Barcelona-based BAAS Arquitectura and Warsaw-based Grupa 5 Architects, the winning proposal continues the old urban structure, a product of the 19th-century industrial boom, and introduces a modern touch at the same time.¹

The complex occupies a formerly empty structure within an established block of buildings. The proposal plans to preserve the existing building, which will be converted into a

library, and add an extension while protecting the character of the old. This becomes evident in the facade, which has been created based on the original concept of a perforated wall made with bricks from demolished old buildings. Behind this brick screen will be situated a modern glass facade. This solution allows for the restricted access of sunlight, reducing excessive interior heat. Likewise, the re-use of historical material will create a better connection between the modern and historic facades of the building, the latter being retained by the architects at the front. The interior patio has an enclosure similar to that of the exterior facade, an openwork structure of bricks. The ground floor is fully glazed, permitting better integration of the interior with a recreational space in the courtyard.

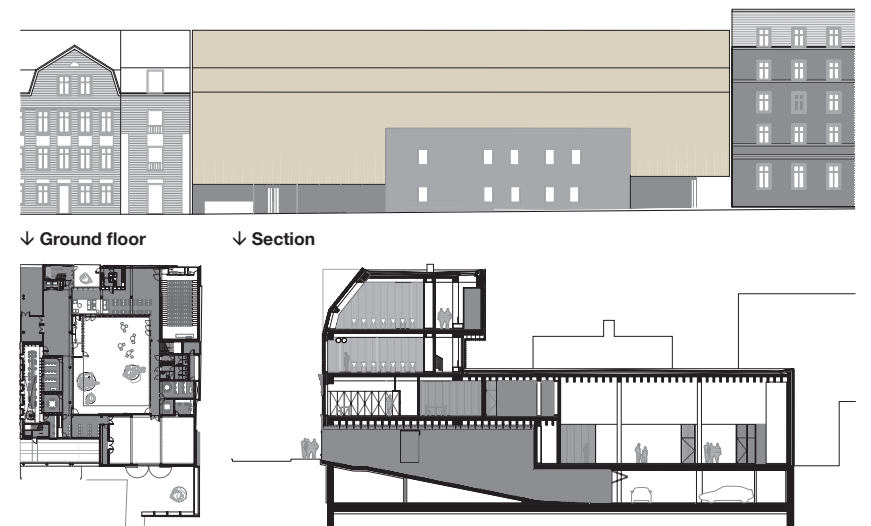
The Faculty of Radio and Television will educate film directors, cameramen, producers and other industry roles. As with many educational facilities, contact with natural surroundings is favoured for its beneficial effects on the concentration and productivity of both students and professors. The building itself is original and perfectly illustrates what we expect from modern media. Not too flamboyant a manifestation of new architecture, it keeps in touch with reality while maintaining a certain distance from its environment, respecting the context and dedicating its space to creativity and innovation. Besides being an important facility for the university and city alike, it will bring a new quality to the immediate neighbourhood as well. (MC)



↑↓ A low-level building fills the site and opens within to form a large courtyard.



↑ The existing building will be converted into a library. ↓ Elevation



Interview with Jordi Badia, founder and director of BAAS Arquitectura

What do you think caused the jury to opt for your proposal among nearly 40 participants?

Quite important for them, I think, was the decision to maintain the old, existing building, which the rules suggested demolishing. Maintaining it and materializing the rest of the new volume using the same material – a dark brick widely used in old buildings in the city – allows us to keep the soul of the street without changing the spirit of the place too much. This is the way we love creating architecture; analysing a place and trying to find out what is the exact piece of the jigsaw we need to complete within that part of the city. For that reason, the overall shape adapts to

its neighbours, aiming to keep the continuity of the two roofs and, ultimately, that of the street. A few people from the jury told us that our proposal was the most 'Polish' project. This is probably the nicest comment the project received.

What has been the main challenge when designing in a context that is different than that of previous projects, in this case, the Polish city of Katowice?

We try to work in the same way we do in our own city. Trying to look at the place with open eyes in order to see what is there, hidden, that deserves to be revealed. For us there is no difference between this project and the rest of our architecture because we don't have a style. We just try to design the building that fits in each place, to

create new architecture in continuity with the past.

Once built, what will be the value that this particular project aims to add to the city?

Many people in Katowice are critical of their city. They think that it is only an industrial city without a special interest. With this project, we are trying to tell them that this is not true. For us, the city has many details that make it unique, different from others.

Since its foundation in 1994, BAAS Arquitectura has signed significant projects, most of them built in Catalonia. What is the significance of this particular project with respect to the rest of your work?

This is the first project that we will build abroad, since all these years we have been

focused on building near our office. Now we think that our practice is prepared to create architecture in other countries with the same quality that we have achieved in Barcelona. From an architectural point of view, this project is related to others that are currently being developed in our studio; they share the same strategy. (MGA) ←

FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION, 2013–

Architects: BAAS Arquitectura and Grupa 5 Architects
Client: University of Silesia
Address: St. Paul Street (Św. Pawła), Katowice
Info: www.baas.cat, www.grupa5.com.pl

¹ The project was supervised by a partner of Grupa 5, architect Mikołaj Kadhubowski, who passed away suddenly in June 2013. He was a highly talented and very sensitive architect educated in Waterloo, Ontario and Warsaw, Poland. Kadhubowski also had considerable practical knowledge, which can be seen in the logical and clear functional aspect of the building, and its attempt to capture the *genius loci*.



↑ A key starting point for the design was the geometry of the neighboring buildings by Alvar Aalto.

↓ Lower floors provide areas for public interaction; upper floors are dedicated to study.

New campus core, Espoo

A design by Verstas Architects to restructure the spatial qualities of this renowned university is set to cause more than a mere ripple.

FINLAND — TEXT: TARJA NURMI

Organized by Aalto University Properties Ltd., an ambitious open international competition in two phases was held with the goal of structuring anew the former University of Technology. Also addressed was the need for a new core building for the Arts. The winner, Verstas Architects, a Helsinki-based office founded in 2004, is already known for two school buildings in Espoo: Kirkkojärvi, completed in 2010 (see A10 #37) and Saunalahti school (2012).

The architects – Väinö Nikkilä, Jussi Palva, Riina Palva and Ilkka Salminen – all studied at the department of architecture in the world-famous main building designed by Alvar Aalto. With the realization that they would be building next to such an architectural icon, conceiving a new core building on their home campus became a welcome challenge.

Brave gestures have been made on the campus before. The expressionist Dipoli building by Reima and Raili Pietilä was, for some extremely purist architect colleagues, a true disgrace. The Otaniemi campus, however, became a legend, and its students belong to the elite of Finnish architecture and engineering. Many new buildings have been added to the whole, but only a few of them come close to the quality of the buildings by Aalto and Pietilä.

The new 'Väre' plan has been designed with a special focus on creating 'new places'. It borrows its coordinates from the lines of both the main building and the library. The clearly defined building masses, when seen from the outside, give the feel of hillside Ital-

ian towns and villages. Red brick, combined with contemporary glass, prevails in the exterior architecture. The plan also includes a new plaza, with the main entrance located on the side of the old main building. In addition, an underground metro line will finally stretch all the way to Espoo, with a station built especially for the campus. The metro entrance will be connected with some commercial services, placed discreetly on the west side of the building. The idea is to bring a new kind of urbanity into the university campus.

The interiors are created to be communicative and flexible, so much so that it is partly possible to observe from the outside what is happening indoors. Interior courtyards are formed as well, offering sheltered environments for the colder months, since the campus has to function year-round. The higher one goes, the more peaceful the spaces will become.

In their proposal, the architects have attempted to interpret Aalto's original architecture and, in a way, they try to continue the story. They have succeeded in fitting a large, multifunctional building into the campus context, especially with a view towards creating new 'places', both in- and outdoors. Even the names have a certain connection: *aalto* means 'wave' in Finnish, and *väre* can be translated as 'ripple'. ←

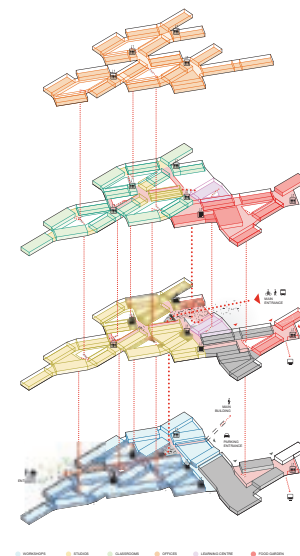
AALTO UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, 2015–

Architect: Verstas Architects
Client: Aalto University Properties Ltd.
Address: Värmemansgränden 2, Otaniemi, Espoo
Info: www.verstasarkkitehti.fi

↓ South-east elevation



↓ Spatial diagram



↓ Site plan



↑↓ The building is defined by four volumes arranged in such a way that they produce a mixture of open and semi-open spaces.



Integrated urban faculty, Varaždin

Vanja Rister and Tin Sven Franić incorporate openness, infrastructure and green public space in a balanced ensemble.

CROATIA — TEXT: IVAN DOROTIC

In Varaždin, a city 81 kilometres north of Zagreb, Vanja Rister and Tin Sven Franić have won a public competition to design a new building for the faculty of Organization and Informatics (FOI) of the University of Zagreb. They triumphed over 25 entries from Croatia and one from Slovenia in the competition, which was launched in summer 2013. The winners, who happen to be assistant professors at the University of Zagreb, have worked together for the past ten years, already gaining some experience in designing for educational institutions. Their design for a building housing both the faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences and Teacher Education recently saw completion in Rijeka.

According to the jury, the architects were exceptionally successful in their perception of the location's wider context, and sensibly considered the building's connection to the existing surroundings and urban paths. The dominant idea in the awarded project is utilization of the site, which, unlike the existing FOI building, is located outside Varaždin's city centre. The area where the new university faculty will be built is secluded and 'enclosed' in the city's existent configuration. The architects turned this fact into an advantage through their decision to use a maximum amount of area for open space and its ambiance. Seemingly restrictive input has been compensated for by using given advantages: the equanimity, calmness, greenery and vernacular architecture that the plan entails, as well as the specific atmosphere it creates.

Integrating the city and its pedestrian and bicycle paths into this new area was a primary goal of its authors, and directly influenced the project plan. A longitudinal hall, the focal point of the new faculty, is oriented on the plot from east to west, and all the structures incorporating necessary facilities (library, auditorium, lecture halls, study rooms) are connected to it. By walking through the newly planned pedestrian path, one enters buildings where repetitions of open and closed are continued.

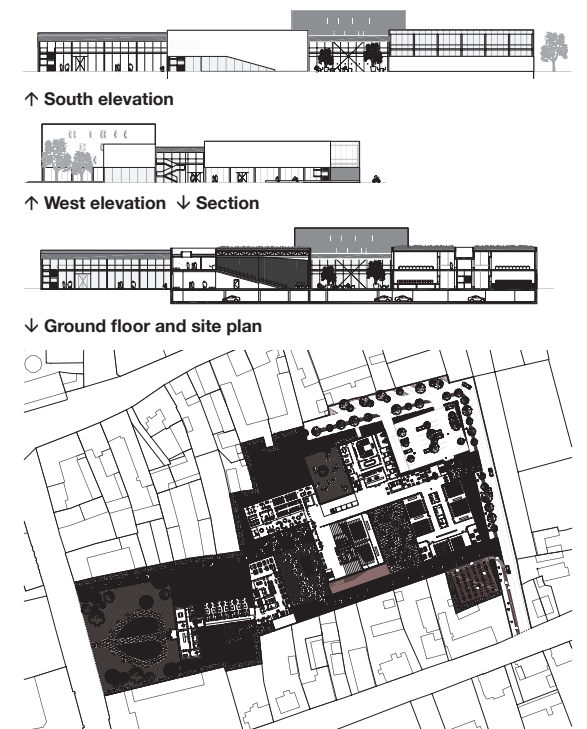
The various wings of the faculty are divided by open spaces that form outdoor public zones, with new 'faculty square' manifesting as the largest and most important of these. A hotel will be built next to this square, connected to the existing Oršulić Palace. Thus with the completion of all the planned buildings,

an interposition of this ensemble of new architecture into the old town will be achieved.

Characteristics that describe the formal type, scale and organization of the project are subtlety and harmony, visible in the height of the objects (ten metres, with a maximum of fourteen metres), and ensuring the faculty's unobtrusive incorporation in its surroundings. Furthermore, judging by the promptness of procedures following the conclusion of the competition, the realization of the winning project, which depends upon EU funding, is expected to commence rather quickly. The faculty is set to open in 2016, offering a new 'study home' for around 4500 students. ←

FACULTY OF ORGANIZATION AND INFORMATICS, 2013–2016

Architects: Vanja Rister and Tin Sven Franić
Client: University of Zagreb
Address: Kralja Petra Krešimira IV, Varaždin
Info: www.foi.unizg.hr





↑ Connecting science and culture, the campus 'backbone' will enhance pedestrian experience. ↓ Bird's-eye view



↓ Inside the Art & Science Pavilion



↓ Inside the Exhibition Pavilion



Under one roof, Lausanne

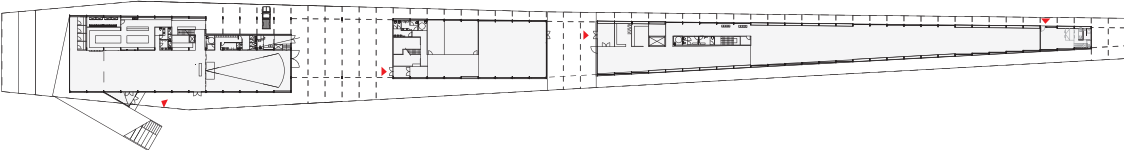
Kengo Kuma's simple solution combines three campus programmes in a single, bold gesture.

■ SWITZERLAND — TEXT: LUÍS CASTANHEIRA LOUREIRO

Recently, the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) has been challenging our notion, not to mention image, of what higher education should be. Pushing the boundaries of scientific research, it recognizes the need to attract the very best scientists from around the world. One of the university's strategies to do so is by incorporating high-profile architecture, including the Rolex Learning Centre by Japanese office SANAA (2010), the EPFL Innovation Park (2011) and the Swiss Tech Convention Centre, set to open in spring 2014.

A competition was launched in 2012 for the integration of three new pavilions in EPFL's Cosandey Square, across from the Learning Centre: the Montreux Jazz Lab, the Culture & Arts Pavilion and the Welcome Pavilion. The project is a public-private partnership, financed by the Swiss federal government and the Gandur Foundation for Art.

↓ Floor plan (left to right): Montreux Jazz Lab, Welcome Pavilion and Culture & Arts Pavilion



The Montreux Jazz Lab arises as a natural result of the Montreux Jazz Festival Heritage, a digitizing project developed in close collaboration with the school. The pavilion will feature a Montreux Jazz Café – a franchise with predecessors in Geneva, Zurich and London – and an auditorium. Here, through technology developed in EPFL laboratories, the audio-visual archives of nearly 50 years of the festival's history will be made available to the public.

The Culture & Arts Pavilion will act as an experimental laboratory for design in futuristic scenography. It will house artists-in-residence and a biannual exhibit where, besides works from Swiss and international collections, that of the Gandur Foundation will be presented. Finally, the Welcome Pavilion will serve as a venue for the EPFL's achievements in science and technology.

Comprehending that the best way to coordinate the three pavilions was to unite them 'under one roof', Kengo Kuma and Associates secured unanimous support from the jury. The pro-

ject has since been developed in collaboration with Zurich-based Holzer Kobler Architekturen, who have helped in aligning the concept with Swiss norms and acted as liaison between all parties involved.

Kengo Kuma's approach is beautifully simple. A roof of lauze stone will confer a single identity to the three pavilions. A metaphor of the vernacular Swiss roofscape, the exaggeratedly stretched roof section reflects the dialogue between vernacular and contemporary while bringing closer the Esplanade, one of the main gathering points at the EPFL, and the South Access.

The potentially prohibitive scale of the building is dissolved in transversal crossings created by the separation of the pavilions. The programme also punctuates pedestrian experience, as users crossing the campus under its shelter become aware of what is happening along the structure. But it is the orientation of the solution that makes its approach so gentle. Perpendicular to Lake Lemman, seemingly shy to the edge of the square, the new building helps to frame beautiful views towards the Alps, disguising its scale in a certain domesticity it conveys. ←

UNDER ONE ROOF, 2013–2015

Architect: Kengo Kuma and Associates together with Holzer Kobler Architekturen
Client: École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL)
Address: Route Cantonale, Lausanne
Info: www.kkaa.co.jp, www.holzerkobler.ch

↓ Elevations



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November 2013

Inside/Outside the system

CATALONIA (ES) — The Institute of Advanced Architecture in Catalonia (IAAC) set up a self-sufficiency lab in the hills of Valldaura, some 20 kilometers outside Barcelona. Eight young Dutch professionals in the building industry met eight Spanish counterparts to see whether the Valldaura principles could be implemented in Dutch building practice. 'We live in an age of non-linear and illogical order in which we explore new eco-renovating and interactive environments,' said Manuel Gausa (Dean of IAAC), while explaining the context of the Valldaura territory that was bought by the institute to explore the possibilities of self-sufficiency first-hand. 'I don't believe in autarchies, but we have to find out more about the metabolisms of urban areas.'

The four-day workshop organised by Architectuur Lokaal raised debate on various levels: How can one fully close the circle of water, energy, food and waste in the middle of an urban area? How can self-sufficiency be a political instrument? What are the moral implications of self-sufficiency? On what scale do we invest to create self-sufficient communities?

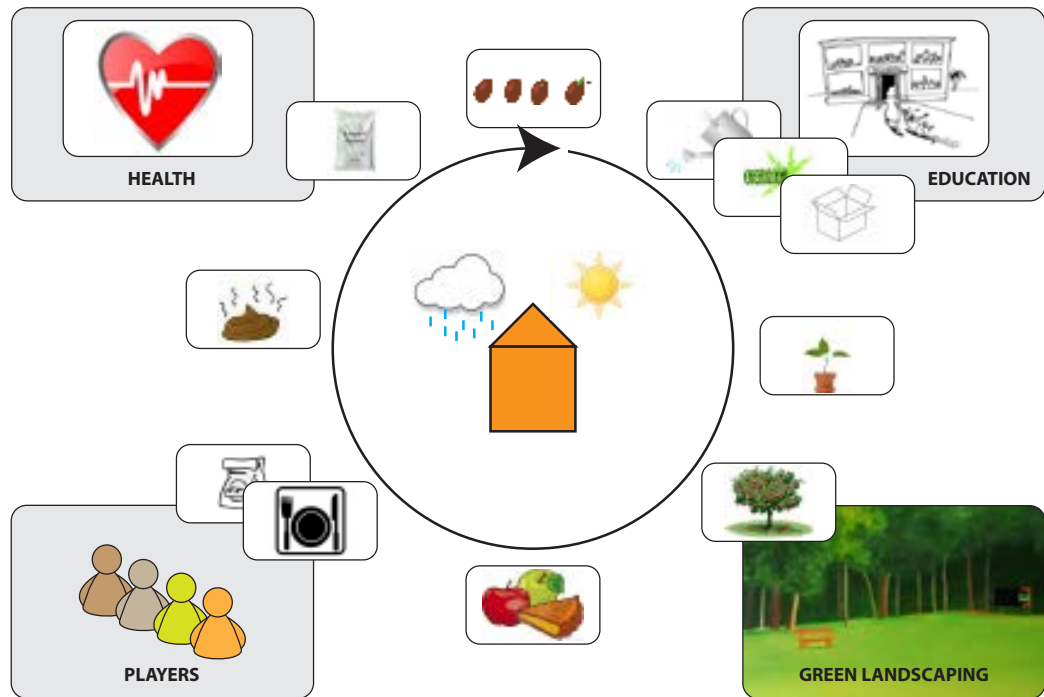
The participants adjusted a pavilion at Sloterdijk Station (Amsterdam) to go full circle. The Pier in Scheveningen was transformed from an unloved icon of Dutch beach life into a vibrant place for urban living. Difficult, as the municipality does not want to support the project and private investors have invariably gone bankrupt over the exploitation of the Pier. The answer needs to be found somewhere between the political layers of public and private space. IJburg, a suburban island on the outskirts of Amsterdam, was meant to have a few more islands until the crisis hit. Would it be possible to find a strategy for slow growth that includes floating houses and market-places, regional food supply and gradual land-winning, and at the same time, create a sharing society?

To apply the Valldaura principles, old definitions of 'the architect' or 'the developer' must be shoved aside. The Dutch, who are used to working within a system of politicians, investors and policymakers, discovered the advantages of thinking outside the system. The Spanish, who are inclined towards thinking outside the system, as hierarchy in society makes it very difficult to reach the powers that be, discovered that self-sufficiency can only become urban once we find ways to connect it to the grid, both literally and metaphorically. All this does not need to happen within a few years' time. As Vicente Gualart, city architect of Barcelona, said, 'The process of self-sufficiency is a long one, but we can start with 20 or 30 per cent and slowly work our way upward.'

↑ The self-sufficiency lab is located in Valldaura, in the hills outside Barcelona.



↑ Young Spanish and Dutch professionals visit IAAC. ↓ Manuel Gausa introduces the themes to participants.



↑ Sloterdijk Pavilion made self-sufficient by going full circle



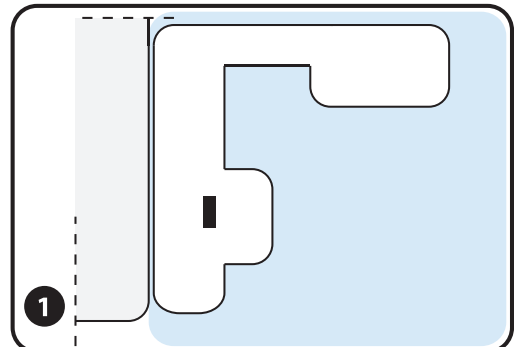
↑ Participants collaborate on the IJburg case



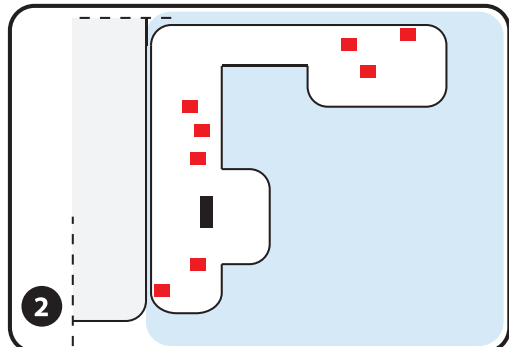
↑ Proposal for a self-sufficient island



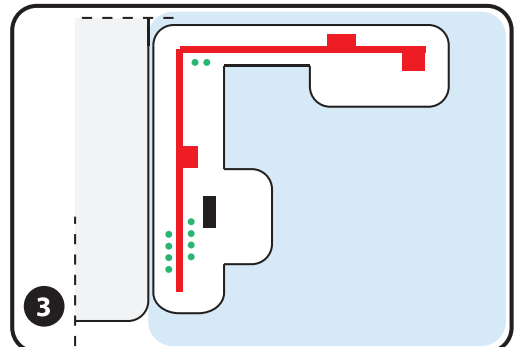
↑ IJburg is a newly built district on the fringes of Amsterdam. The area at the lower right is still awaiting development.



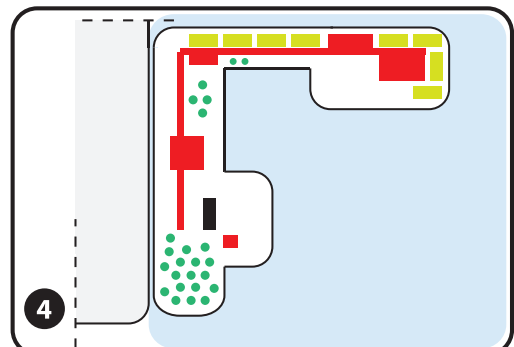
↑ 1st phase: Simple settlement generates food



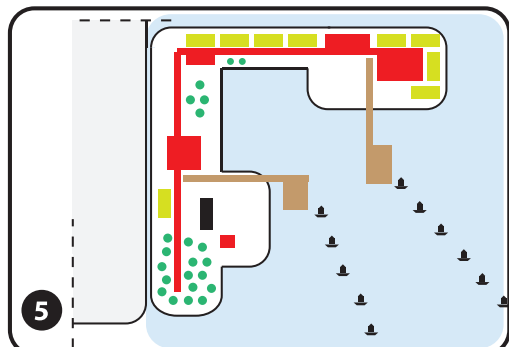
↑ 2nd phase: Small houses begin to appear



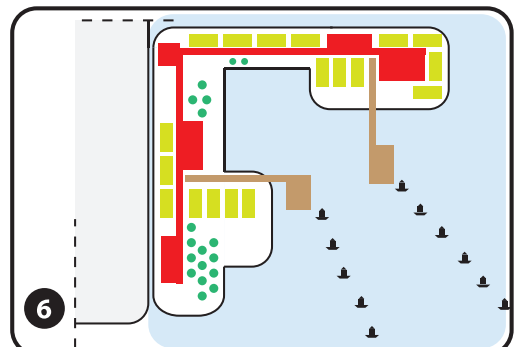
↑ 3rd phase: Implementation of infrastructure



↑ 4th phase: Food market and community settlements



↑ 5th phase: Extensions to accommodate houseboats



↑ 6th phase: The self-sufficient island is complete



↑ Presentation of the project



↑ Model of the pavilion concept

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Ready

New
buildings

→
Dual ramps
extend from
the core
of the build-
ing, giving
access to the
exhibition
space on the
first floor.



Mixed-use micro-city, Bologna

Labics designs a corporate campus that reflects a special relationship with art, culture and philanthropy.

ITALY — TEXT: ZAIRA MAGLIOZZI, PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRISTIAN RICHTERS

Technology, experience, art and innovation are the key words of MAST, a new mixed-use complex and headquarters of the Coesia Group, an innovation-based industrial solutions company, located in the suburbs of Bologna. The building is the result of a restricted private design competition held in 2006 and won by the Italian architectural firm Labics, founded in Rome in 2002 and led by Maria Claudia Clemente and Francesco Isidori. The competition, launched by Coesia president Isabella Seragnoli, sought the development of a series of buildings across the company campus, thereby providing staff facilities as well as public spaces.

The project is not only a new headquarters, but also a shared space for the community. In fact, the MAST Foundation is a cultural and philanthropic institution that focuses on art, technology and innovation, favouring the development of creativity and entrepreneurship while also cooperating with other institutions in order to support economic and social growth.

In a way, the project carries on the tradition of important Italian entrepreneurs who pushed and supported growth during the economic boom in Italy following the Second World War. The most influential figure of this generation was Adriano Olivetti (1901-1960). His experi-

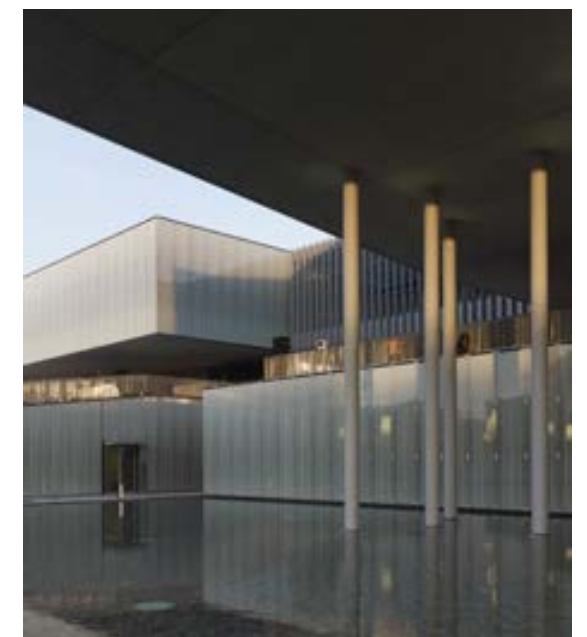
ment in Ivrea, a small town near Turin where Olivetti set up his manufacturing company headquarters, remains the cutting-edge of a perfect mix of clever business politics, good architecture and a positive urban and social impact. Today, what the MAST Foundation shares with Ivrea is a public aspect and the strategic choice for a contemporary architectural language. But the social aspects of the project still remain in doubt due to the period of prolonged crisis in which this laudable business and social venture is set.

What is well-defined are the intentions of the architects: the final output is a composite →

↓ The facade is composed of two layers, a transparent curtain wall and screen-printed glazing.



↓ South-west elevation opening onto the city and park



(Mixed-use micro-city, Bologna)

building, a sort of campus manifested as a compact micro-city from the outside, but articulated in pathways and multiple functions on the inside, the total area of which is 25,000 square metres. On the ground floor is located a company canteen, exhibition hall, service rooms, gym and a large nursery with its own garden. At the first level is an exhibition space and cafeteria, and the top floor is occupied by various classrooms, a foyer and an auditorium that can accommodate 400 people. Two main fronts represent its connection with the surroundings. The private and regular front relates to the existing company buildings, whereas the public and more communicative front, thanks to long ramps, encourages the public to get into the heart of the building. Here, the monumental red sculpture by Mark di Suvero, Old Grey Beam, establishes a strong dialogue with the cantilevered auditorium. This is just one example of a number of special relationships devised by the architects. To underline this strong link, the entire building, from the external ramps to the multiple internal foyers, is conceived together with contemporary works of art in each of its areas. Permanent installations include large sculptures by Anish Kapoor, Donald Judd and Olafur Eliasson that reinforce the power of the spaces and create a stimulating contrast.

In its fragmented urban context, the building responds as a mediator, also thanks to its double configuration: a solid and translucent body that becomes transparent at night – a bright urban object. This occurs thanks to the double-skin glass of the facade, which itself is composed of two layers: a transparent curtain wall and a glazed layer, screen-printed with a pixelated

photographic design. ‘The power of this architecture is in its simplicity and in its openness. It is a melting pot of different activities and potentialities. And we hope all the citizens will feel it as their own place,’ affirm the architects.

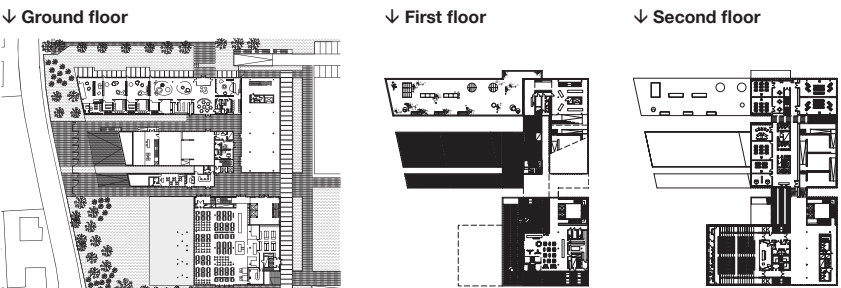
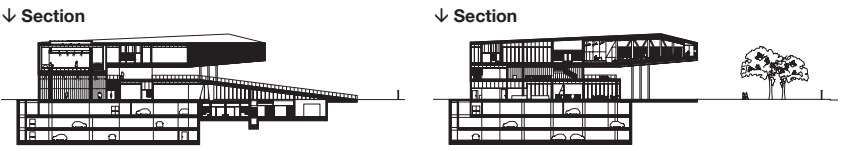
It is undeniable that the success of a building like this is strictly related to the response of the public. The project represents the outcome of a very virtuous process, something not always taken for granted in a country like Italy, where international competitions end up inconclusive in the majority of cases. The timing is extraordinary as well, an exception in the Italian panorama where a combination of delays, political changes, and now the economic crisis usually leads to a stalemate. The contest was launched in 2005, the winner announced in 2006, the building site opened in 2009 and the official opening was held in October 2013. It is an almost unique instance that demonstrates the excellence and the will to persevere that, nevertheless, still exists in Italy. ←

MAST FOUNDATION, 2009–2013

Architect: Labics (Maria Claudia Clemente, Francesco Isidon)
Client: Coesia Group
Address: Via Battindarno 91, Bologna
Info: www.labics.it



↑ North-west elevation ↓ South-west elevation



↓ Auditorium



↑ A continuous path runs through the entire building. ↓ Nursery



↓ High-ceilinged exhibition space



Housing by consultation, Hamburg

Applying the popular Baugruppe model, the architects at LAN arrive at a flexible and affordable living solution.

GERMANY — TEXT: CHRISTIAN WELZBACHER; PHOTOGRAPHY: JULIEN LANOO



People getting involved in the building of their own homes is a phenomenon with a long history, and not just among the upper classes. In Germany and other European countries, housing cooperatives had their golden age in the 1920s. In the 1980s, architects opened up to their clients, allowing them to join in the planning process. Participatory residential properties of this kind were built as part of the famous International Architecture Exhibition (IBA Berlin, 1984/87) using planning procedures that still serve as models today.

Over the last fifteen years, however, the trend in Germany has turned towards the ‘Baugruppe’, a cooperative requiring a minimum of management, founded for a single, usually small-scale project, and built for its own members (see *Tour Guide* in A10 #46). The model can also be inverted: architects join with business partners to acquire a plot specifically for a Baugruppe-type project, develop the property, and then look for the right people to live in it.

The merits and pitfalls of this approach are clear: shared financing, respecting many individual wishes, and close group cohesion on the one hand, and compromises to the group, financial and social pressure (if things go badly) on the other. A particular kind of person is drawn to the Baugruppe model, one who has always wanted to get involved and who strives for autonomy, yet does not want to forego life in the city. Most of them work in the creative industry as artists, media practitioners and even architects. The rank and file of homebuilders remain unaffected by all of this, continuing instead to have prefabricated houses erected for themselves on the edge of town; dull and unimaginative, with tiny gardens and gigantic carports.

After Berlin, where there are now entire neighbourhoods full of Baugruppe developments (although the city authorities impose quotas on plots available for them), Hamburg is Germany’s second-largest location for such projects. The recently completed ‘Neue Hamburger Terrassen’ shows that Hamburg, too, is interested in upholding the Baugruppe model as a contemporary form of living, and included the project in the current IBA Hamburg 2013. Paris-based LAN (Local Architecture Network) won the competition in 2008, and building work began in 2010, which was completed on time within the framework of the IBA.

The typology of three- or four-storey U-shaped blocks, all clad in wood, comes as a relief in this heterogeneous suburban setting (characterized by a sprawl of detached houses). The plain →



↑ The location of each stairwell and its material structure was chosen by the individual occupants.

(Housing by consultation, Hamburg)

facades—their strict rows of upright windows looking almost like military barracks on the plans—underscore the architects' desire to design flexible units (33 in total) to house apartments of different sizes and layouts to satisfy various requirements and budgets. As well as smaller units grouped together on one storey, there are maisonettes and town houses (integrated into the block), with floor spaces ranging from 55 to 138 square metres, plus garage, loggia and small garden. This complex outcome was achieved in consultation with the inhabitants, modifying the architects' original plan for a simple row of town houses.

Visually, the ensemble is striking. In spite of the significant differences in the form of the individual units, the overall architectural concept works like a uniform: a compact form (wide-spread in detached housing in Hamburg's inner city since the late 19th century) which is entirely suitable in such a densely developed urban setting (thus sending the right signal), and only appears peculiar at this location, among the urban sprawl. This also means that supposed differences are aesthetically levelled, inevitably leading to a slight homogenization of the way it feels to live in the complex, hopefully in a positive sense.

The open spaces around the building could be used exclusively for access routes and thoroughfares, simply because the site borders on that of the International Garden Exhibition, due to open this year as a park. But the complex will nonetheless remain an enclave because, even today, the Hamburg suburb of Wilhelmsburg is an industrial quarter, beginning just a few hundred metres away from the development on the banks of the Süderelbe, where an imposing harbour basin has been dredged. The choice of such a location as the site for a Baugruppe project as part of the IBA is thus ambivalent. On the one hand, it is about filling neglected parts of town with new life. On the other, astronomical prices for plots of land within the

city itself would have rendered such a project unfeasible. After Munich, Hamburg is the second most expensive place to live in Germany, with most people spending over half their income on rent. In the case of the members of this Baugruppe, that money will now flow into paying off a mortgage. Here, too, the main beneficiary of citizens participating in the building of their own homes is an institution—the bank. ←

NEUE HAMBURGER TERRASSEN, 2010–2013

Architect: LAN (Local Architecture Network)
Client: Baugruppe Neue Hamburger Terrassen
Address: Schloßerstieg, Hamburg
Info: www.lan-paris.com



↑↓ Each housing unit is singular in its layout.



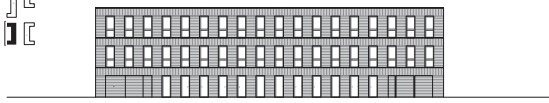
↑ Street elevation ↓ Courtyard elevation



↓ Ground floor ↓ First floor ↓ Second floor



↓ Street elevation



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DC



↑ View along the foyer ↓ Green tiles from the former interior were kept as abstract decoration.

From mine to library, Labin

A team of architects led by Margita Grubiša and Ivana Žalac transform a once disused legacy of the coal industry.

CROATIA — TEXT: IVAN DOROTIC, PHOTOGRAPHY: IVAN DOROTIC, DAMIR GAMULIN

When approaching Pijacal, formerly a large industrial mining site in the city of Labin, what is most striking is the colossal 'Shaft', a huge, neglected object that once served as a lift lowering miners into the mine. Its dominance recalls a time in the 20th century when Labin was the hub of Croatia's coal mining region. What once was an important centre of economic prosperity for the broader area has since been shuttered and almost forgotten.

Somewhere in the 'plinth' of this Shaft, not very visible at first, lies a building that once served as above-ground administrative space. This enclosed structure is where a new public library has emerged, designed by a group of young architects headed by Margita Grubiša and Ivana Žalac. In the context of Croatia and abandoned factory premises, it represents a brave and progressive interior design. 'Brave' due to the fact that the project's architects are fresh and relatively inexperienced, and 'progressive' with respect to the context where it evolves, and the potentials it might hold.

The project is the first phase of a public competition won by the architects that will hopefully turn Pijacal into a new generator of urban culture in the Labin area. How was it for these 'youngsters' to build inside of an ex-mining facility? 'To build inside a preserved location, being architectural heritage, is never an easy quest, particularly in the zone where we had to fight conservationists and limited budgets, accustomed to newly built cultural facilities inside Croatia,' explains Grubiša.

The architects pointed out in their competition proposal that this zone should not be treated separately, but as a whole, function-

ally connected and programmatically thought out regarding both the city and time needed for the entire area to reactivate. 'What we found extremely important while dealing with the project in the first place was not to think and act one step at a time, but to design while keeping in mind the entire context of the zone, and to presume all the segments and stages the project might have in its development.'

Apart from smaller projects, architects Grubiša and Žalac had never before completed a public building or project of this size and importance. That said, the evaluation of their project is expected to be extraordinary.

The story begins a bit prior to the competition awarded in 2007. Žalac explains, 'We should probably thank the Croatian Archipelago New Lighthouses project initiated by Vedran Mimica, the Berlage Institute and MATRA programme, together with the Croatian Architects' Association, back in 2005. They are the ones to blame in the first place, because as part of their project, which focused on researching alternative development concepts on the Croatian coast, one of the working groups, Platforma 9.81 [a non-governmental Croatian organization of architects, theorists, designers and urban planners, ed.], explored Pijacal and its potentials, and developed →

'We had to fight conservationists and limited budgets, accustomed to newly built cultural facilities inside Croatia.'



DC

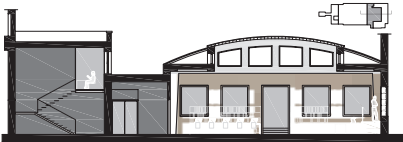
(From mine to library, Labin)
multiple scenarios for revitalization. With the input from this project, a workshop initiated by the city was held, which explored the real programmatic possibilities that could be implemented in the structures existing on the ground level, after which, as a logical consequence, a public competition was held.'

The project stands as a paradigmatic example of how architects could and should treat architectural heritage zones whilst remaining contemporary, daring and resolute. As Žalac points out, 'What was important to us was to stress the values that we found, and offer new usage that upgrades existent elements, creating a dynamic coexistence of old and new.'

This is evident in the preservation of existing marble walls and a coffered ceiling in the library, and continues through segmental preservation of basic elements found in the complex. The marble is wisely linked with the lightness of white ambience in the space, while the coffered ceiling and its dominant gridded pattern rigidly translates onto other elements in the hall, both aspects significant with regard to retaining the hall's spatiality and representativeness. Green tiles from the former bathrooms were retained as abstract shapes, transformed into a visually striking wall decoration that recalls the original function of the spaces. In contrast to the 'whitish' hall interior, moreover, the space that adjoins it functions as a colour counterpoint, a dark zone alluding to the roughness of coal and murkiness of the mines.

The precision of interior details is a notable aspect of the project. It directly speaks to the fact that the project's excellence cannot and should not only lie in the wider context and overall consideration, but begins in the smallest aspects, choices and implementations, which hopefully then are proportionally adaptable on a larger scale. ←

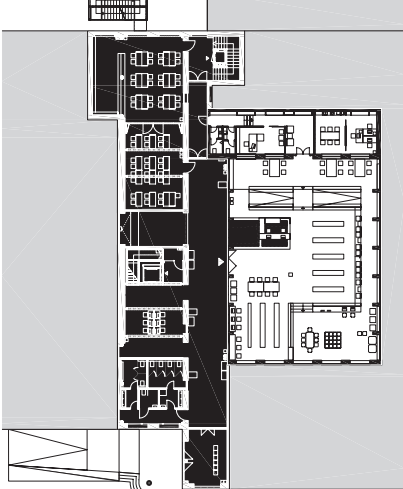
PUBLIC LIBRARY, 2009–2013
Project team: Damir Gamulin (designer), Margita Grubiša, Marin Jelčić, Zvonimir Kralj, Igor Presečan, Ivana Žalac (architects)
Interior design: Damir Gamulin, Margita Grubiša, Igor Presečan, Ivana Žalac
Client: City of Labin
Address: Rudarska 1, Labin
Info: www.skroz.org www.publicdesign.biz



↑↓ Sections



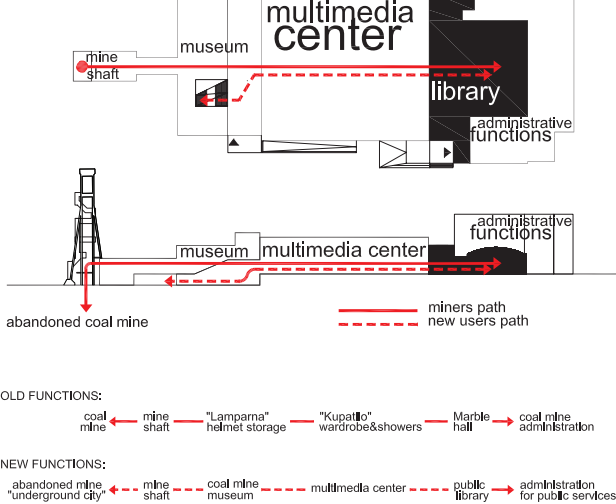
↓ Ground floor



↑ Children's reading area ↓ The coffered ceiling of the library's main hall continues through other elements.



↓ Conceptual scheme



↓ Future plan for the expansion of the site



Contemporary machine for living, Paris

Chartier Dalix and Avenier & Cornejo launch an almost faultless residential block into the metropolitan sea.

FRANCE — TEXT: SOPHIE ROULET, PHOTOGRAPHY: LUC BOEGLY, DAVID FOESSEL

The project won by the team of Chartier Dalix Architectes and Avenier & Cornejo Architectes in 2010 has lived up to its promises. More faithful than nature to the 3D renderings from the competition entry, it has just been delivered on the outskirts of Paris on time and on budget. 'A risk-free construction,' the architects say simply in front of their building, whose silhouette stands proudly like an ocean liner in the 20th arrondissement, just beyond the Boulevard Périphérique. Playing with the site's varying elevations, its urban balconies offer panoramic vistas over the area like the decks of a metropolitan cruise ship.

Enjoying a location that shares its identity between Paris and the suburb of Les Lilas, the building plays on urban contrasts and layers to form a three-tiered arrangement (accommodation for immigrant workers, accommodation for young workers and a crèche for 66 infants on the ground floor). With its skin of anthracite brick striped with gleaming copper, sitting on a 1750 m² corner plot with the ring road below, the building connects Paris symbolically with Les Lilas. Like a ship that has just run aground between avenue Docteur-Gley and rue Paul-Meurice, in the Porte des Lilas Urban Development Zone

(Paris XX), much to the delight of residents. Its mission to lend identity to the site at the same time as being integrated within it has been accomplished.

With a total surface area of 9300 m² and a cost of 19.6 million euros, excluding tax, this project might be termed 'faultless'. However, it does have two 'faults', formed by the lines that break up its impressive volume. It presents the contrasting effects of a density created by an extremely rational plan (distribution and arrangement of the studio flats) and a double caesura that lightens the volume on the street side. An initial →



↑↓ The eye-catching block has a skin of anthracite brick accented with gleaming copper.



↑ An open floor with shared facilities forms a communal area for residents.



(Contemporary machine for living, Paris)

vertical fault line – a source of light in the circulation spaces – allows it to breathe, while a second, horizontal fault line is formed by an open floor housing the glass-clad spaces of a media library, sports hall, refectory and technical rooms. With its facilities for very young children and its highly compact shape, this new residential block, which the architects see as a contemporary 'machine for living', offers a rare spatial quality. Its open floor on level four, with a panoramic view over the city, is the communal area for residents, who can find all the shared facilities there. This central arrangement facilitates supervision, but also access to the different sections. Freely arranged, they create external spaces that play the role of a new, open urban level with 360-degree panoramic views, thus 'linking the heart of the block to the street, whilst at the same time offering vistas over the neighbourhood and the city,' the architects explain from the terrace that could easily be that of a hotel or some other luxury building.

The residents of the two hostels will certainly not fail to appreciate the luxury of this architectural approach, which offers people the possibility of 'living together' in a generous setting open to the city. For the architects, the aim of mixing several different populations is fully realized here, extending the initial ambition of the contracting owner to bring together different types of accommodation in the same building, concurrently paying particular attention to the residential comfort of each tenant, 'to give something of a sumptuous feel to hostel-type accommodation,' they claim with sincerity.

In the hostel, the 'standard' apartment is designed to make the absolute most of the space and offer spatial versatility. The furniture designed by the architects has been custom-made: movable shutters close off the kitchenette, the table has integrated drawers, and the bed is either a pull-out bed or there is a sofa-bed available. The vertical circulation spaces have not been forgotten, and are remarkable. All the stairwells are bathed with natural light and conceived as high-quality spaces in order to encourage people to use them as much as possible, in preference to the lift. Indeed, this building has been designed from the point of view of sustainable energy, with two vertical-axis wind turbines installed on the roof to supply power

↓ Studio apartments with custom-made furniture offer spatial versatility



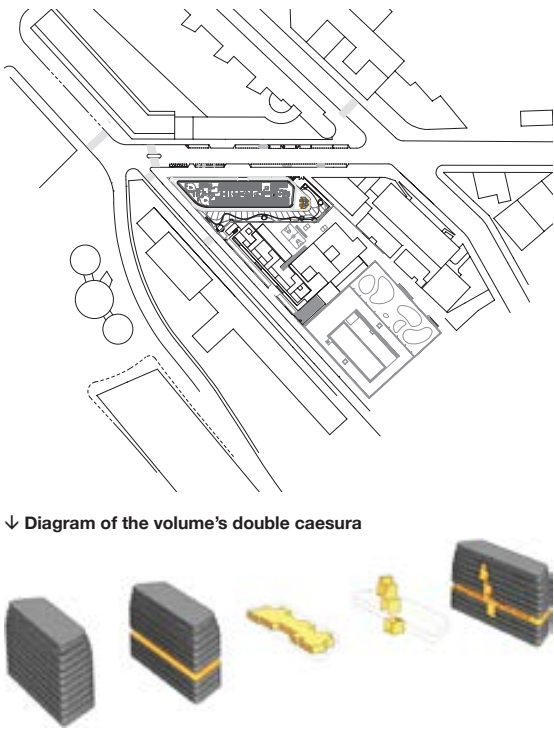
↓ Interior hallway showing continuation of the exterior accent



er to the crèche in the daytime and to the hostel accommodation in the evening. The compensation, estimated at 25 kwh/m², is a beneficial response to the Paris Climate Protection Plan. This choice of energy production, still experimental in an urban setting, is particularly justified in a building with high elevations that is situated in a windy corridor, and where the solar panels on the roof provide 30 per cent of the building's energy needs. ←

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING, 2010–2013

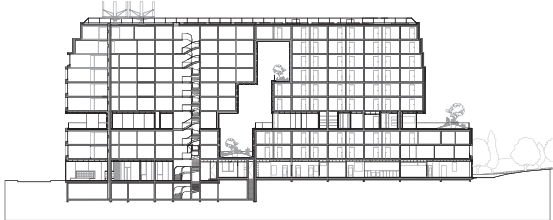
Architects: Chartier Dalix Architectes and Avenier & Cornejo Architectes
Client: Régie Immobilière de la Ville de Paris (RIVP)
Address: 16-30 avenue du Docteur Gley, Paris
Info: www.chartier-dalix.com, www.avenier-cornejo.com



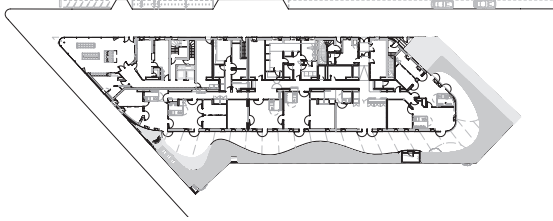
↓ Stairway



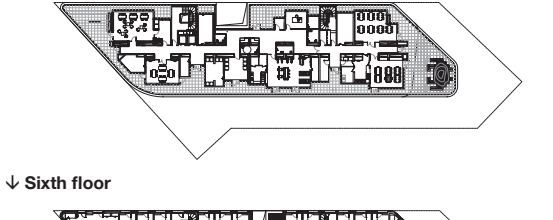
↑ Elevation ↓ Section



↓ Ground floor



↓ Third floor



↓ Sixth floor





Forest retreat, Sedlčany

*Inspired by stones dotting the rolling landscape, **Uhlík architekti** design and build a contemplative yet modern hideaway.*

CZECH REPUBLIC — TEXT: VENDULA HNÍDKOVÁ, PHOTOGRAPHY: JAN KUDĚJ

After a previous and efficient experience with the work of Uhlík architekti, the client returned to the office with another commission, yet this time a much more specific one. The assignment encompassed more than a common practical task; the idea required rather that a kind of dream must first be materialized: a vision of a modern version of a studio, hermitage, or an extremely simple retreat in the forest.

The client's family history is rooted in an agricultural countryside located between the small towns of Sedlčany and Milevsko. About a one-hour drive south of Prague lies a region with only a few villages set into the picturesque landscape. Such a constellation continues to provide relatively remote locations among the fields, meadows and forests, and scattered about are many huge, rounded stones dotting the landscape, giving it character with their irregular volumes. These striking stones became an essential part of the eventual project.

The sparsely inhabited area inspired the client to visualize his idea of a hut in the romantic natural surroundings. The chosen plot is located in a small forest within a larger property that formerly belonged to the client's grandfather. The surrounding environment naturally

became the starting point in precisely positioning the future cottage in order to achieve the best views, as the rolling landscape holds an extremely poetic value. Eventually, the harmonious setting was decided following a series of preliminary sketches and studies.

Because the client's family owns an old house in a neighbouring village, there was no express demand given for the practical equipment of the cabin, as might usually be expected (a bathroom or kitchen, for example). Furthermore, the reduced programme enabled the architects to apply the distinctive conceptual solution that had been selected.

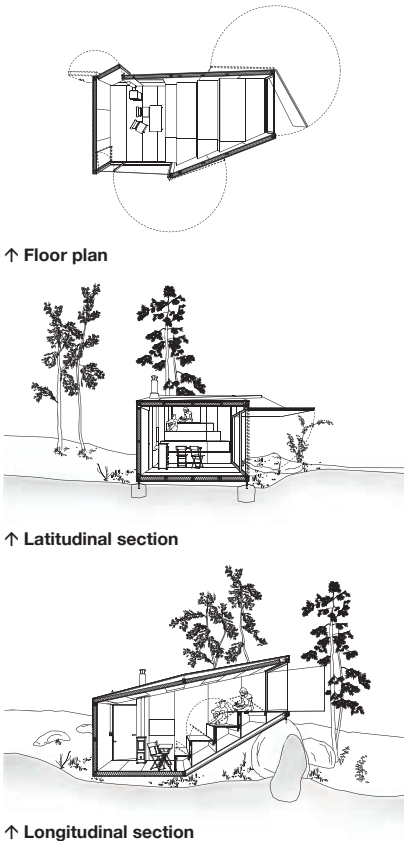
Uhlík architekti is based in Prague, yet has had connections and several commissions in the southern part of the Czech Republic. The office was established in 2009 by Martin Uhlík after the split of his previous office, Atelier UM. In the case of this project, the architects' contribution was not only limited to the particular design of the cabin; they became physically involved in the building process. The architects left their office in Prague and, together with the client, realized the project with their own hands.

Such an approach proved to be especially instrumental not only for the client's personal

relationship to his vision, but for its final material and technological solution. The timber cottage does not in any way feature vernacular design. On the contrary, the architects envisioned a simple yet uncommon structure. Its unique outer appearance resulted from the programme, budget and, above all, the local context. The pre-existing stones became naturally incorporated into the building as structural elements. The black, burnt finish of the wooden boards was chosen in order to achieve a lasting proofing and the visual effect of the hut's disappearance against its natural backdrop. From among the trees, this observation point often becomes invisible from a distance, especially when all three large shutters are closed.

The interior offers a single room that can be adapted to several purposes. The space is basically shaped by four oversize steps that lead from the entrance level to the large window. This kind of furniture serves as both storage and for sitting upon, or even as a primitive table. In addition, a comfortable sleeping platform can easily be created by opening the steps.

The client further emphasized the project's local meaning by inviting some of the local craftsmen to become involved in the construction process. In the end, this intention has proven to be slightly problematic, as the craftsmen were not always able to fulfil the desired standard of quality. On the other hand, the decision to employ them helped the local community a bit instead of relying on the most affordable design solution. Such intentions have thereby created a truly 'context friendly' architecture. <



FOREST RETREAT, 2012–2013
Architect: Uhlík architekti (Petr Uhlík, Jan Šorm and Přemysl Jurák)
Client: Private
Craftsmen: Miroslav Šindelář (carpenter), Jaroslav Hůla (blacksmith)
Address: Forest between the towns of Sedlčany and Milevsko
Info: www.uhlikarchitekti.cz



↑↓ Directly engaging with its natural surroundings, the structure uses a boulder as a plinth.



↑↓ The interior holds a bare minimum of amenities.





Defining home ground, London

To pull off a daring residential design, MATT architecture outmanoeuvred planners in a game of spatial chess.

UNITED KINGDOM — TEXT: ISABELLE PRIEST, PHOTOGRAPHY: WILL PRYCE

‘I wanted to be a spaceman. And in some ways, I am.’ Matt White is an accidental architect. He studied architecture as a means to doing a Masters in car design. But the undergraduate degree put paid to the Masters – it’s not the kind of outcome architecture school encourages. But White sees himself as slightly apart from other architects. He doesn’t have a practice manifesto, or guiding concept. He just sees opportunities and grasps them. If not in architecture, he would be doing just that in something else.

As a profession, architecture is characterized by devotees. And it’s not that White isn’t devoted – he worked for Fosters + Partners for ten years and Make for six – but he has a wider perspective. There is something different about White’s build-

ings. Something fun and glitzy. He tells me that this difference means his first house, Number 23 in West London, built for himself and his family, is not taken seriously as architecture. Apparently it is more a ‘lifestyle home’, approved by the likes of *The Sunday Times*’ British Homes Awards. Yet I don’t see why characters that ‘want to make things happen’ and design houses that are lively can’t be included under the umbrella of architecture, too. After all, it takes a talented architect to get planning permission for a 159 m² house at the top of an avenue of stuccoed town houses in this part of the city.

The story of Number 23 began in 2007. White had bought an end terrace house on Keith Grove with an adjoining garden. The garden had a separate legal title, which meant any propos-

al could avoid garden-grabbing rules. White lived in the house while planning was in progress, a process that took a year and a half. But the resulting house is nothing like the one for which White received planning permission. Like every architect practising in London, White played the game, outmanoeuvring planners by designing an initial facade to resemble what was already there: timber cladding at ground level for the wooden fence and a green wall at first floor for the trees.

Number 23’s final form comes from many minor tweaks to the original permission, which together have enormous effect. From the front, the house is almost symmetrical, with a grand, central double doorway, a cantilevered full-height first floor window and a strip of vertical windows on either side of its white rendered surface. But this handsome – classical, even – facade disguises a very natty and domestic interior. For example, one side of the front door opens into the underside of the stair as a space for pushchairs.

At ground level, the hallway leads onto an L-shaped kitchen, living and dining space, with a half-glazed, half-masonry wall overlooking a courtyard (part of which plunges into the basement). The stair upstairs is in the centre of the house, as it was the only way three bedrooms and a bathroom could →



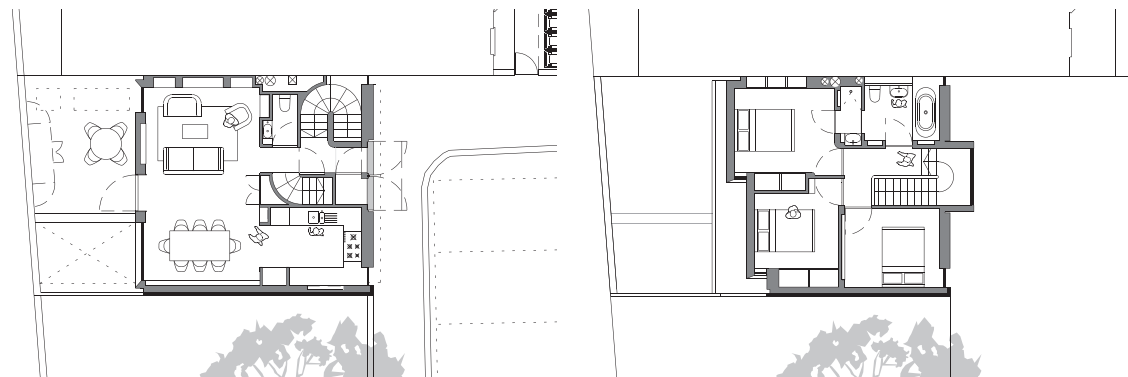


↑↓ Ample glazing in the ground floor living area lets in plenty of light from the rear courtyard.



↓ Ground floor

↓ First floor



(Defining home ground, London)

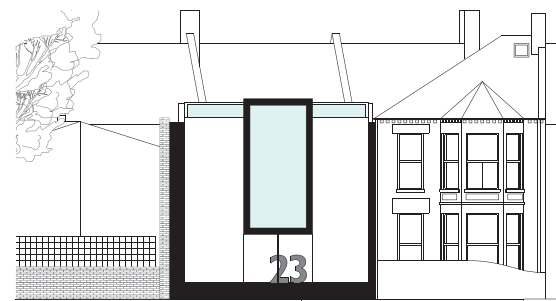
be arranged above. The basement stair forms part of a more spacious well off the hall at the front right corner of the plan, creating a more stately entrance to the party/play room below. There is even a niche for a statue. But the recessed handrails and shadow gap detail flush skirting are ultimately a way of 'having it all' in a tiny space. The gold-leaf bar that curves on the outside of the stair behind a cupboard door in the living room is just another example.

After his childhood ambition, White is a dab hand at space, fitting a 30 per cent bigger house on a 20 per cent smaller plot than neighbouring properties. But at Number 23, he captures some of the essence and ambiance in the other sense of the word, too. Number 23 is incredibly gadgety – it practically buzzes like an electricity substation. There is a neon 'Hello' sign that lights up when someone presses the doorbell (it gets a lot of laughs). The house, inside and out, has the ability to glow in different colours. And the street elevation window is fitted with smart glass that, when activated, changes from transparent to translucent.

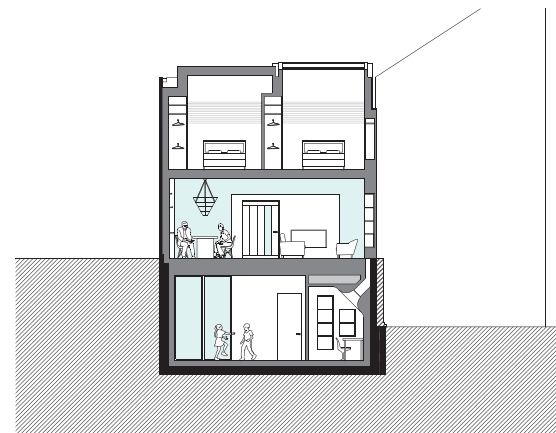
All these technologies together create an energetic house to match its architect. A glance into White's current project – regenerating a 4645 m² area of Soho, including the famous Raymond Revuebar – reveals his taste for life: quirky and luminous. But Number 23 is surprisingly green, with a Code for Sustainable Homes level 4. It is also incredibly well-designed for family life, with canny additions like a laundry chute in the family bathroom that leads straight into a basket in the basement. You wouldn't expect much less, however, from an architect who has his office (that happens to have a Damien Hirst) through a grungy backdoor, above a Burger King and overlooking Leicester Square. If you don't find the humour in that, you probably wouldn't get along. ←

NUMBER 23, 2013

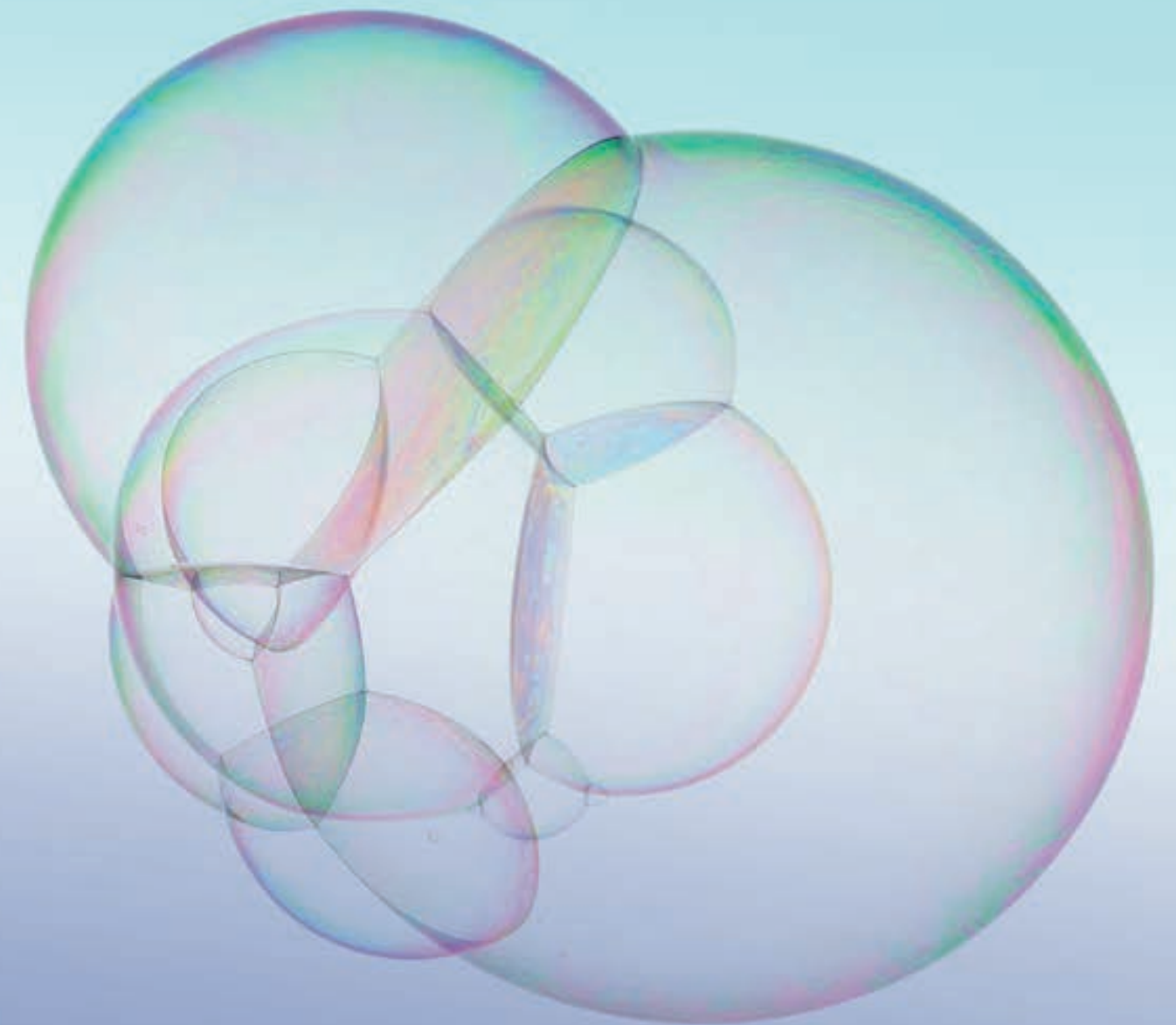
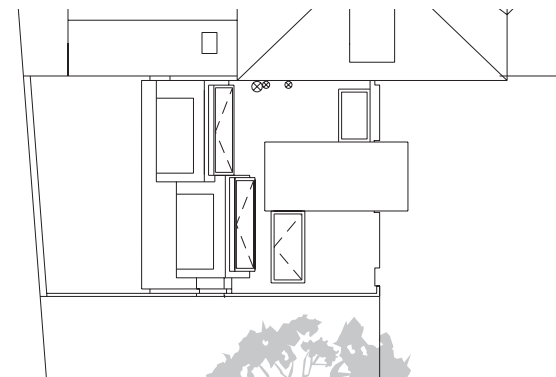
Architect: MATT architecture
Client: Self-build
Address: Keith Grove, White City, London
Info: www.mattarchitecture.com



↑ Front elevation ↓ Section



↓ Roof



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Guest edited by a leading national organization in one of the European countries. Within a range of themes, they strive to give deeper insight into the current state of architectural affairs.

The Oslo Architecture Triennale left us wanting to know more about young architects practicing in Norway. The projects that it presented confront and contextualize the contemporary architectural scene, and express a strong sense of environmental and social responsibility. To follow up on this, we have collected examples showing

how Norwegian architects not only work with the geography and topography of their native land, but even more with the demographics, ecologies and economics of Norwegian landscapes. ←

Producer/editor Helle B. Berg, MSc City Design & Social Science



↑ The Most Beautiful House in the World by Einar Bye and Ola Sendstad, NTNU thesis project (2011)



← RAKE Showroom, Trondheim, by a student workshop with architect August Schmidt (2011)



ROSE MARE STENSVIK



↑ Statoil Regional and International Offices, Fornebu, by a-lab (2012)

↑ Passive energy houses, Storelva, Tromsø, by Steinsvik Architects (2008)

↓ Library and Cultural Centre, Vennesla, by Helen & Hard (2011)



EMILIE ASHLEY/ASHLEY'S STUDIO

Norwegian wood, Norwegian oil

TEXT: HEGE MARIA ERIKSSON AND ANDREAS VAA BERMANN

Norway is situated on the northern periphery of Europe, stretching beyond the Arctic Circle, with a long coastline, vast mountains and forests. The total population is five million, with Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Stavanger being the major cities. Since the 1970s, Norway has experienced strong economic growth due to its offshore oil reserves. The construction economy has benefitted from this, with the Norwegian state being an important stakeholder and developer. Still, a fair share of our newly built architecture is created in rural areas. Simultaneously, there is rapid urban growth. One fourth of the country's population lives in the Oslo region, where most of the urban area has a density of 165 inhabitants per square kilometre. By contrast, the municipality of Kautokeino, in the remote county of Finnmark, has only 0.3 per square kilometre.

Architects work within this twofold situation of urban and rural conditions and traditions, which may even become threefold, as interest in the outer northern periphery emerges due to the ongoing quest for natural

resources and changing geopolitics. Are rural, urban and 'far-out' features expressed in architecture? Can we detect different approaches to architecture? There are arguably two main tendencies. We find architecture using wood and rare materials, emphasizing spatial and contextual quality. These are often carefully detailed and well-crafted, small-scale projects in rural and semi-rural areas, where innovative architecture and local identity interact – often private commissions where young architects can prove their talents. On the other hand, we find projects engaging in the urban environment, handling issues of density, social structures, infrastructures and involvement. Yet young architects move easily between the two approaches – and between politics, ethics and aesthetics. They base their work on a profound interest in people, dealing with questions of how their surroundings can provide the best possible living conditions. In different and unconventional ways, they integrate environmental aspects, create encounters and challenge the conformities of architecture. ←



RODFA HOLDING/MUNICIPALITY OF OSLO

The Norwegian Architectural Policy

In 2009, the Norwegian government launched Norway's first unified architectural policy, *architecture.now*. The Foundation for Design and Architecture in Norway has a key role in its implementation. The aim is to increase awareness towards high quality in architecture and our physical environment, and to create more clarity regarding the government's sectorial responsibilities. Through broad collaboration, *architecture.now* aims at securing a more holistic and better governed political practice. The concept of 'quality' is here regarded as a mindset and approach that requires an engaged, critical and ongoing discussion about quality criteria. The follow-up of *architecture.now* is evaluated every second year, the last report being published in 2013.

Behind the Green Door: Architecture and the Desire for Sustainability

The fifth edition of the Oslo Architecture Triennale, entitled 'Behind the Green Door – Architecture and the Desire for Sustainability' (see A10 #54), was curated by the Belgian collective Rotor. It took place in the autumn of 2013 and turned out to be highly successful, reaching broader audiences than before, both locally and internationally. For the main exhibition, *Behind the Green Door*, Rotor collected 625 objects, all carrying claims of sustainability, from over 200 architects' offices, companies and environmental organizations from across the globe. Altogether, the objects formed a collection of curiosities exhibited at the Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture. Almost 30 years after the Brundtland Commission launched the term 'sustainable development', the Triennale confronted the relativity and paradoxes of the notion, including the effect of energy production on the Norwegian environment, both in renewable hydro- and wind power and in the petroleum industry.

The Wildcard Programme

Architecture is a cost-intensive, complex and skill-demanding discipline. The business structure is increasingly divided in two: a few large, interdisciplinary concerns and a multitude of small, often younger practices. Clients rarely take the risk of engaging young architects. Competition directives make it even more difficult to establish new offices and enter the market of commissions. Both innovation and quality suffer without the regeneration of young and alternative practices. The Norwegian Wildcard Programme has been running since 2010 as an initiative within the architectural policy, and includes wildcards in competitions and introduces them in different contexts. The programme nourishes the undergrowth of architecture through various projects, ranging from education to alternative procurements, from networking and mentorship to exhibitions casting light on the valuable competence of young practitioners.

Norsk Form – Foundation for Design and Architecture in Norway

Norsk Form was established in 1993 by the Ministry of Culture to increase the understanding of quality in design and architecture in Norway. In 2013, the political decision was made to consolidate Norsk Form and the Norwegian Design Council. The fusion will take place in 2014 and will present a stronger, more evident and effective organization to promote design and architecture as creative industries. This will make the field of architecture and design appear more clearly to both the market and a broader audience in cultural, social and economic aspects. The consolidation does not imply a change of address for the two partners, as the new organization – the Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture – will still be situated at DogA, in Oslo. ←



Norway



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Andreas Vaa Bermann (1971), Director of Norsk Form, holds a MSc in architecture and MA in urbanism. Currently board member of Oslo Architecture Triennale and member of Oslo's Advisory Committee on Architectural Quality. Previously chairman of the Oslo Association of Architects and architect at his own firm.

Hege Maria Eriksson (1969), Head of Architecture at Norsk Form and Director of Oslo Architecture Triennale 2013, holds a MA in architecture. Previously professional director of the National Association of Norwegian Architects, partner at LY Architects, editor of ArkitekturN and consultant to Arts Council Norway.



Dealing wildcards

Before the discovery of oil during the 1960s, Norway was one of the poorest countries in Europe. Now it is better known as the epitome of a welfare state. In terms of architecture, we find proof of this in the huge and opulent state-owned Oslo Opera House by Snøhetta, completed in 2008. Having cost over 700 million euros to build, it provides an odd but adventurously new skyline for the rather modest capital. The country's architecture policy, established in 2009, has given opportunities to young practices as well. It's time to check out this architectural paradise with Andreas Vaa Bermann and Hege Maria Eriksson of Norsk Form, the Foundation for Design and Architecture in Norway.

🇳🇴 NORWAY — TEXT: INDIRA VAN 'T KLOOSTER, PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS MALUSZYSKI/MOMENT

Architecture seems to be a national affair in Norway. The architecture policy is supported by thirteen government ministries, the Energy, Railway and Road Building Authorities are active promoters of it, plus you have a State Housing Bank that financed 50 per cent of all post-war dwellings. So, where's the catch?

Andreas Vaa Bermann: The architecture policy was basically a collection of ongoing initiatives and programmes, but it proved to be a very useful document. It made the ministries aware of the implications of architecture and planning in the different sectors, and what an architecture policy can do to reach political goals.

Hege Maria Eriksson: A few new programmes and projects were initiated, such as the Wildcard Programme, and others were given better funding and a clearer mandate. And we could take this policy document to the table and point out to these actors their obligations and responsibilities.

But?

AVB: The ministries themselves don't give it much priority, and since the last elections it's uncertain whether the new government will prolong the policy.

What does this mean for the successful instruments of the policy, like the Wildcard Programme for young practices, the Oslo Architecture Triennale and your own institution?

HME: Maybe not that much. The architecture policy is part of a continuous effort from many actors and authorities. The state authorities for railway and road building are developing architecture strategies. Local policies are being drafted in several municipalities, like Bergen and Trondheim, and urban policy is lifted into the national political debate.

AVB: The architecture policy is also a mindset and a common language. Four years ago it was not a topic; now we register an increasing interest, corresponding to a growing interest in architecture and urbanism among people, politicians and architects. We will keep on working and nudge politicians, clients and public organizations to take part.

The new approach to the Triennale was quite successful; are you going to continue it?

HME: We have now built a good basis for developing the Triennale further. The curator, Rotor from Belgium, is the first practice that was selected after an open call. The concept Rotor introduced approached sustainability issues with totally different forms and means, discussing the multitude of outcomes, the limitations and dilemmas. Reactions have come from far outside the field of architecture, which really pleased us!

Will the 2016 edition be an international open call again?

HME: The international acclaim and the international network that came with it have been very positive indeed, but we haven't concluded on the model for engaging the next curator yet.

The Behind the Green Door exhibition refers to 1987, when the Brundtland Commission presented a new concept: sustainable development. The report defined sustainable development as that 'which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' It stuck immediately, but was also critiqued for being a bit vague – the concept could be interpreted in multiple ways. Does this explain the 625 visions on sustainability in the exhibition?

HME: Yes, but a broad and open approach may be better than

being exclusive. Both global and local questions can be addressed, individual efforts as well as international treaties. The side programme of the Triennale debated sustainability within a Norwegian context; we depend on the oil economy. Can the headquarters of Statoil be labelled sustainable? Are passive houses sustainable at all? The main conference asked: Can we go on living the way we are doing now? Personally? As a nation? Can architects influence this, and how? Should we give up our holiday homes and cottage culture to reduce our ecological footprint? We have touched upon many sensitive subjects.

Do architects engage in social and economic issues?

HME: After a period of high awareness for environmental and energy matters, we have seen a change towards more social awareness. This seems to be spreading from the small practices, and they actually provoke discussions. If you look at Rodeo or Erikson Skaaja, there is a market for social approaches.

AVB: In *Eurovision*, we want to show how the young practices communicate. They engage on a local level, on a quite small scale, but in dealing with social problems, economic processes and deficient situations, these projects have effect, even on a broader scale. Others are working with experimental use of materials and crafts, including reuse and use of 'unusable' products. Methods and interests also have to do with the business structure. There are many relatively small offices, and the small stay small, although sometimes in clusters. Compared to Denmark, for example, we have only a few large and internationally famous offices, apart from Snøhetta and Nordic, formed over the decades. However, we do have some companies based on international buyouts of Scandinavian practices.

HME: Architects are quite pragmatic when it comes to commissions. But they are committed as well. An example is Stavanger, where oil generates a lot of commissions. Can you afford to be critical? Helen & Hard, based in Stavanger, are always bringing values other than economic – like recycling, new typologies, new sustainability – into their projects. They manage to convince private developers to rethink housing and design new collective concepts.

Do established and young practices work together?

AVB: They do! Established practices serve as mentors, and team up with young practices in competitions – partly thanks to the Wildcard Programme. It is a small field, after all, and the established remember well how they started out. Snøhetta are very much a part of the community; they are open-minded and take part in many arenas.

So there is an architectural brotherhood of sorts in Norway?

AVB: Yes, at least a growing number of collaborations to deal with the tough criteria of competitions, allowing only experience through. Atelier Oslo got the major library commission together with Lund Hagem, who were actually their former employers. And as some young prove their skills, others follow.

Does government influence work for architects?

HME: Not really. Although the governmental commissioners claim they are positive to 'wildcards' and alternative qualifications, they never commission young architects! Neither do the large developers.

AVB: But, slowly but steadily, the Wildcard system works, and so does the architecture policy and its initiatives, not to mention the wide set of actors, organizations, practices and clients working in the field of architecture. ←



The pristine landscapes and agricultural countryside of Norway may be picturesque, but most of its small towns are not. Town centres originating from the 20th century seem to have given in to sprawling areas of shopping malls and single-family catalogue houses. Emerging architects

are rarely engaged in the revitalization and refurbishment of towns and villages, or in large-scale construction. Instead, they are set to work on small, private commissions, often in scenic surroundings. Despite this, they tend to make the most of it. (HME)

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Renderings
of electricity pylons
envisioned
by Rever &
Drage
Architects



The moss/plug juxtaposition

TEXT: MARI HVATTUM (OSLO SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN)

In the winter of 2009, Atelier Oslo made a small but noteworthy exhibition in Oslo. The gallery was empty except for a couple of trees and a thick layer of moss lining every inch of the floor. A press photo from the exhibition shows the deep green moss against the white gallery walls, with an electrical socket conspicuously jutting out above the lush forest floor. The image is delightful, and captures the paradoxes of new Norwegian architecture. It speaks of an ambiguous preoccupation with nature, but more importantly, of the uneasy relationship between young Norwegian architects and the tradition into which they are often inscribed. In fact, the moss/plug juxtaposition is an apt comment on the branding of Norwegian architecture in the first decade of the 2000s, with its fetish for the natural and the Nordic. The young generation of architects seemingly approaches this fetish with humour and irreverence. They know the qualities of moss, yet they also appreciate having access to electricity close by.

Contemporary Norwegian architecture is too often promoted in terms of its relationship to the Nordic landscape, marketing itself as a pocket of place-specific authenticity in an increasingly generic world. Enterprises such as the Norwegian Tourist Routes Project continue to present images of spectacular landscapes framed by tasteful but discrete design objects, perpetuating the myth of Nordic architecture as a pristine, natural product. And yet, looking at the recent work of Ghilardi+Hellsten, Schjelderup Trondahl architects, Pushak, Manthey Kula, Rever & Drage, or Atelier Oslo (all featured in these pages), a far more diverse agenda becomes apparent. Admittedly, you will find the blonde birch plywood and the sensitive siting, but you will also encounter a curious mix of pragmatism, realism and deadpan humour that allow these architects to escape, or at least rework, the clichés of Scandinavian design.

Take Rever & Drage's sculptural electricity pylons, for example, submitted for a competition in 2010. Massive electricity installations are prevalent in Norway, whose domestic energy is largely hydroelectric. Such installations are controversial, however, causing outcry and accusations of landscape destruction with every new hydroelectric power line planned. Rever & Drage tackled the challenge unapologetically and with a good deal of wit. Their giant pylons tiptoe through the landscape on spindly legs, taking on a quirky, anthropomorphic quality. Looking like an architectural equivalent of Monty Python's 'Ministry of Silly Walks', they were no joke but instead a potentially refreshing contribution to the northern landscape.

Similar irreverence is also found in the more conventional commissions that make up the bread and butter of many young Norwegian practices: single-family houses and cottages. Norway is a sparsely populated country where most people dream of building their own house and garden, and where tax incentives and ownership structures encourage them to do so. While many of these projects are either self-build or catalogue homes, single-family houses form a substantial part of small-to medium-sized offices' portfolios. Most of these are built with beauty and comfort, safely within the tradition of Scandinavian modernism. Some, however, break the mould. Take Manthey Kula's single-family house on Biristrand, an agricultural area along the lake Mjøsa in south-eastern Norway, for example. Built on an exceedingly tight budget, the little house

is an exercise in creative pragmatism. Its structure is a simple, cost-efficient massive timber frame for which many different kinds of facade elements are possible. This allowed for a rather unusual strategy of buying facade elements like windows and doors second-hand on the popular website www.finn.no. The house was also a guinea pig for new insulation standards, an experiment that allowed the architects some technical and budgetary leeway. The small dwelling on Biristrand forsakes the minimalist preciousness of so much contemporary Norwegian design. In doing so, it gains not only an unusually low cost per square metre, but also an expression of cheerful informality, well-suited to its situation and function, unpretentious and pragmatically adapted to the local context.

New environmental awareness has led to major changes in Norwegian building standards and regulations in the last few years. While there is concern that new standards focus too narrowly on a technological definition of sustainability, young architects seem remarkably adept in their response, using new legislation as a creative trigger rather than a hindrance. Such adaptability in the face of an increasingly bureaucratized building industry is characteristic not only of new Norwegian architecture but new architecture in general. This is a generation grappling with social and technological sustainability, fair distribution, the challenges of multiculturalism, and the changing remits of architectural practice – without complaint. Instead of begrudging the architect's loss of power today, they invent new working methods and organizational structures to survive both quality control and climate crisis. They have long since abandoned the idea of the architect as a solitary form-giver, communing with the *genius loci*. Instead, they present themselves as team players, working with clients, politicians, industry, public and private bodies to create good places.

Do not be fooled by the blonde birch wood – Norwegian architecture is less natural than it seems, and no longer fits comfortably into the 'sensitive adaptation to the landscape' school of thought (perhaps it never has, really). 'I have spent my whole life trying to run away from the Nordic tradition,' Norwegian Pritzker Prize winner Sverre Fehn once stated. Given his position as Nordic architect par excellence, his escape seems to have failed. Yet, if he himself did not succeed, it appears that his students – the generation of Norwegian architects entering practice today – are well on their way to escaping the myths of Nordic architecture, venturing into a more engaging territory. ←



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The juxtaposition posed
by Atelier
Oslo delightfully captures
the paradoxes of new
Norwegian
architecture.



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HOUSE FOR A COUPLE, BIRISTRAND

The single-family home at Biristrand was constructed in 2008. Budgets were tight, and the solution had to be achievable through a high level of do-it-yourself. The house, with a square base of 80 m², is placed as close to the road as possible in order to preserve the upper section of the property, which borders grazing lands and woods to the southwest. Aside from garages, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom, the home has two living areas: one family room with double-high ceiling, a glass facade and an exit to the immediate terrain to the south-west. The details are simple. Some construction elements are second-hand, and some are bargains, such as the heartwood pine paneling.

Architect Manthey Kula Architects Info www.mantheykula.no



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CABIN NORDERHOV, NEAR HØNEFOSS

The project is located at Krogskogen, in the area of Ringerike. The site is a steep slope with a view of Steinsfjorden and is exposed to winds, and the cabin itself is shaped around several outside areas that provide shelter and sunlight at different times of the day. The interior is composed of one continuous room shaped by curved four-millimetre birch plywood sheets. The curved walls and the ceiling create continuous spaces, while the geometry defines different functional zones, with the fireplace being located at its heart. On the outside, the cabin has a more squared geometry. Walls and roofs are covered with 20-millimetre stone panels, placed in a traditional pattern from western Norway. The cabin is made up of prefabricated elements, assembled as a large and complex puzzle by skilled artisans.

Architect Atelier Oslo Info www.atelieroslo.no



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VESTFOLD CREMATORIUM, SANDEFJORD

The Vestfold Crematorium is peacefully located along a forest boundary in the town of Sandefjord. It forms an outdoor space sheltered from noise and visibility from a nearby highway. It is designed to create dignified spaces for the relatives who choose to follow their deceased to the cremation, as well as spaces of dignity and light for the staff that confirm the value of a once stigmatized profession. The cremator room and the chimney, functions that traditionally have been concealed, have a relatively high degree of visibility. The roof reflects the functional need for a high-ceilinged interior. The large amount of surplus heat from the cleansing of the smoke is used for heating.

Architect Pushak Architects Info www.pushak.no



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FEISTEINVEIEN, STAVANGER

To make room for a growing family, this single-family home needed an extension. Stavanger has experienced densification over the last decades, due to the booming oil industry. The building authorities accepted an extension beyond original restrictions and found common ground with the architects in letting the existing building be preserved as a clear shape typical to the area. The large extension to the north contains two small bedrooms on the upper floor, a living room at ground level, and a combined home cinema and exercise room with a skylight illuminating the concrete wall in the basement. Between the main structure and the large extension there is a roof terrace where the dark paint is infused with warm pigments to create a friendly atmosphere. It is interesting how Stavanger recently hosted the Norwegian Wood project, a part of Stavanger 2008: European Capital of Culture. There is reason to believe that the municipal authorities achieved a clearer and more mature architectural policy through its specific focus.

Architect Rever & Drage Architects Info www.rdtw.no





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NATIONAL TOURIST ROUTES, SELVIKA
The rest area in Selvika is a part of the National Tourist Route at Havøysund, almost as far north as you can get in Norway. The site has a sheltered situation and is a favored destination, both for tourists and for locals. The project is planned for a variety of uses, with parking area, information stand, bicycle shelter, public restrooms, a ramp with seating, and a picnic area with fireplace, grill and table. The winding footpath, cast in pale grey concrete, leads from the road to the beach, and invites the visitor to take in the area from different viewpoints, either seen by the windows of a car or experienced by foot. Gradually, the National Tourist Routes have earned a high national and international prestige, and attract tourists only wanting to see the artful installations along the scenic Norwegian roads. Although the project originally focused on presenting young architects and landscape architects, and on being an incubator, there has now been an evident shift towards choosing more established architects, such as Jensen & Skodvin, Snøhetta and – as in Selvika – Reiulf Ramstad.

Architect Reiulf Ramstad Architects
Info www.reiulfamstadarkitekter.no



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BOATHOUSE, AURE
The boathouse is a cultural and historical hallmark of Norway's coastal regions, where fishing used to be the primary profession. Today many of them are being converted for recreational summer use. This particular boathouse is located on the outermost reaches of the Moere coast. It was in such a bad state that the owner decided to tear it down and build anew. The isolated and somewhat inaccessible location made material reuse desirable. Old windows from a nearby farmhouse were collected and sorted. The main construction was built on site, and the cladding is made from Norwegian pine. The outer layer needs no maintenance and will turn into a silvery grey patina. To clad some of the interior surface, 150-year-old materials from the former boathouse were used. The building remains true to historical building and cultural heritage while catering to new modes of usage.

Architect TYIN Architects Info www.tyintegnestue.no



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HOUSE OFF/RAMBERG, HOLMESTRAND
This single-family house is situated atop a 120-metre-high cliff on the shore of the Oslofjord, outside the town of Holmestrand. Strict demands for a gable roof and a height limitation gave inspiration to the volumes. A basic request to preserve and maintain the natural topography and vegetation influenced the exterior shape of the house and the organization of its plan. Each room has a different relation to the environment, thus maximizing the potential of the plot. The facade cladding is made from burnt pine and the inner walls from light poplar veneer. Windows and doors are of massive oak.

Architect Schjelderup Trondahl architects (STA) Info www.sta.no



Urban developments in Norway are mainly dominated by (sometimes risky) market-oriented and -defined experimentation with physical qualities. This is evident in every city, but no place more than in the fast-growing capital, Oslo. Particularly commercial buildings and the majority of housing developments seem to be downgrading good

public space and architectural qualities. At the same time, initiatives exist wherein developers and architects have a common ambition and strive to make more positive contributions. Especially amongst the younger offices can be found architects who take initiative to individually make their mark on urban development. (AVB)

Word on the street

TEXT: JOAKIM SKAJAA (PARTNER AT ERIKSEN SKAJAA ARCHITECTS)

In recent years, Norwegian architecture and urban development has been dominated by a booming housing market and an oil-fuelled economy. This has resulted in some very high-profile cultural buildings, such as the Oslo Opera and the National Museum of Art, and building programmes like the Tourist Road projects, but also a considerable amount of low-profile and low-quality housing and office buildings. This situation differs from that in other countries with different economies, yet it is nevertheless in need of a more critical practice, one that challenges both the profession and society as a whole.

Architects and planners who take on roles at the edges of their profession, looking for other ways to interact with and operate in society, is nothing new. This is probably a tendency that can be traced back to the generation of planners educated in the 1960s, who broke with the classical planning ideals of their time on behalf of a more human and subjective paradigm. Knut Erik Dahl's 'The game of Tromsø' is thus a key Norwegian project, more interested in the forces that are driving change and how they interact than actual formal interventions. This manner of engaging in planning has made it necessary to interact more with other professions, such as sociologists, historians and philosophers. Rodeo Architects, a young Norwegian office, is one recent example of such a practice, where employees with various backgrounds engage simultaneously in planning and research.

The major change in Norway these last 30 years is that planning has largely left the hands of municipal institutions. Both large and small urban developments are now commercially driven by property developers, or by governmental landowners acting as speculators. This means that some formerly interesting and possibly quite radical positions within the governmental planning agencies are now lost. The larger urban developments in Norway, and especially in Oslo, do not bring any new ideas forward about what kind of future city we want to live in, and how architects and planners can facilitate a city while paying lip service to long established ideas about urban spaces.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, there have been some interesting attempts to establish a position where the architect is not working on behalf of either a public agency or developers but taking on a more active role in society. Fantastic Norway is an important example of this new way of thinking. The archi-

tect took their little red caravan and parked out on the streets, where actual conversations take place, changing the whole idea of what an architectural office is and *can be*. The Collective Project: For a Denser Concentration of the City, another young practice, expands boundaries, too. They work more as social instigators and artists than as planners. And, in a situation where both public and private developers are driven by the quest for financial gains, a position on the edge of the field is probably the most interesting. Rodeo, Fantastic Norway and the Collective Project have all developed alternative positions by changing their own role: Rodeo by using research to finance an expanded practice; Fantastic Norway by exposure, placing themselves in the middle of the city; and the Collective Project by developing a practice between art and architecture. From these positions it is possible to transform both architecture and the city.

Other projects of interest are Alliance Architects and Element Architects, where both offices link back to the original, celebrated 'Infill-initiative' from ten years ago. Infill looks at small, unused and underused plots in the city and seeks ways to develop them. Element and Infill's very recent project in Dæleneggata is conceived in harmony with the existing urban fabric, returning quality – and even new greenery – to the surroundings. Støperigaten, Alliance's project in Stavanger, is another example that illustrates the desire to develop housing typologies with more generous social and public spaces. Interestingly, the units are made in a way that allows the inhabitants to build their own additions. Helen & Hard needs mentioning, too; they developed a range of housing projects where social space is crucial, emphasizing energy-saving, sustainable solutions.

These offices show how both architects and buildings must step back into society in order to expand the views on how architecture is produced. At the moment it *does* seem to be a change in attitude, bringing different social groups – also those with little or no resources – more into consideration in planning processes and collaborative projects in the public space. We see promising examples of how the city dweller is taking on a more active role in these processes, and how architects are becoming more open and inviting towards the public. ←



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Fantastic Norway uses their red caravan to get in touch with the city.

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THE NORWEGIAN ROMA EMBASSY
The purpose of the project was to address the Roma peoples' need for a cultural house in Oslo, a cause that's been in the making for years. The project aims at manifesting the potential for such a house, created for, with and by the Roma people. The Collective Project: For a Denser Concentration of the City designed and built a temporary solution, developed in close collaboration with Norwegian Roma organizations like Romani Kultura, the Norwegian Rom Association, Norwegian Romas and the Roma Initiative, plus the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History, a photographer, a film-maker and a radio station. The 'embassy' hosted a cultural event programme with seminars, courses, film screenings, food tastings and parties. The embassy closed on the on 8 April, the international day of the Roma people.

Architect The Collective Project: For a Denser Concentration of the City
Info www.fdb-public.com



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RUNDESKOGEN, STAVANGER, SANDNES
Rundeskoen consists of three towers of twelve to fifteen storeys with a total of 114 flats from 60 to 140 m². The project is located at a major traffic intersection linking three larger cities in the region. The emphasis has been to balance the tall building typology with generous and attractive public green space on the ground. To minimize the footprint of the three towers and retain the fjord view for the neighbours, the first apartment floors have been lifted off of the ground and cantilevered from the core, thus creating sheltered outdoor spaces. The towers have solar collectors on the roofs, as well as geothermal heat pumps in the ground.

Architects Helen & Hard in collaboration with DRMM (London) Info www.hha.no



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STØPERIGATEN 25, STAVANGER
Støperigaten 25 is a modern and playful condominium in the centre of Stavanger with an emphasis on daylight, high ceilings, flexible dwellings and active communal zones. The building was originally designed for first-time buyers. However, the design of the apartments proved to be an answer to challenges involved in facilitating more flexible solutions in a longer perspective. The roof terrace, the broad access galleries, the play areas and the passage through the block all represent the idea of community.

Architect Alliance Architects Info www.allark.net

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D36, GREEN HOUSE, OSLO
Green House is situated in, and alongside, a green, formerly underused stretch in the eastern part of inner city Oslo, on Dølenenggata. The area is mainly residential, but also houses cultural institutions and light industrial production. For the concept, Element chose to 'blend in' with the urban greenery. The building symbolizes a tree, and the project can be seen as a contribution to the debate on what we understand as living-quality and identity in a dense city context. As in many of Element's projects, the facades integrate art. The dwellers also own the roof garden, which holds half a metre of soil to provide good growing conditions and allow urban farming. The facade is made up by an inner coat of aluminium that protects the wind-stopper, combined with a glass system with ceramic prints. All the apartments have balconies and 2.7-metre-high ceilings.

Architect Element Architects Project developer Infill Info www.element.no



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POLLEN
Pollen is an interview-based Norwegian magazine covering architecture, urbanism and housing, published by Eriksen Skjåa Architects. The magazine focuses on alternatives to the current models of housing development. The first issue explored the issue of occupied buildings whilst the second issue dealt with communal living. The third issue, to be published spring 2014, will focus on self-initiated housing projects.

Architect Eriksen Skjåa Architects Info www.eriksenskajaa.no



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LINKED-IN MASTERPLAN, KONGSBERG
Linked-In is a strategy for relocating educational and cultural institutions from the suburbs and periphery of Kongsberg to the city centre. A spatial loop is created, connecting the two sides of the river through a string of programmes that integrate the different institutions. The loop strengthens Kongsberg as an arena for knowledge, culture and commerce and stimulates a vibrant city centre.

Architect Rodeo Architects Info www.rodeo-arkitekter.no

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FURUSET, OSLO
Furuset is a focus area for FutureBuilt, a collaborative programme for climate-friendly building and urban development in the capital region and the neighbouring region of Drammen. Furuset is targeted by the Gorrudalen Action Plan and included in a major integrated urban regeneration project designed as a ten-year collaboration between the Norwegian government and the municipality. The aim is to improve living conditions and urban design features in the industrial, suburban valley of Gorrudalen. Furuset is a green area with several larger parks and recreational facilities, and with good public transportation coverage. But this part of Oslo has challenges linked to its obsolete traffic solutions and its closeness to corridor-congested main roads. The population, around 3800 residents within the planning area – is vibrantly mixed, with roots from some 140 nations. Sixty-five per cent are immigrants, or born in Norway of immigrant parents. The Agency for Planning and Building Services in the Municipality of Oslo has worked out a development plan for Furuset based on the winning contribution of a-lab/COWI/Architectopia for the 2011 concept competition. The plan establishes an overall framework and key measurements for Furuset as a role model within climate-efficient urban development. The concept builds on existing green qualities, and proposes a denser urban street structure around the old centre as key to an environmentally, socially and culturally sustainable development. While the plans are going through political decisions, projects to improve the local schools, library and nursing homes are running.

Architect a-lab/COWI/Arhitectopia Info www.a-lab.no



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TRANSFORMER, OSLO
Transformer makes use of derelict sites for small art arenas. Rising prices for real estate in central Oslo has led to a more aggressive approach to development of available building sites and existing building mass. One result is scars and left over sites in the urban fabric, due to a rising level of conflict between developers and the public planning authorities. The Transformer project aims to reverse these negative processes by establishing a dialogue between land owners and art producers, liberating sites for temporary stages and public use. The target group for the art programme is children and teenagers, the next generation of city dwellers.

Architects Vigdis Storsveen, ROM for Art and Architecture and Rintala Eggertson Architects Info www.vigdis-storsveen.no, www.r-o-m.no, www.ri-eg.com



The landscape of the world's High North is opening up for new ways of living and building societies. During recent years, it has been the subject of multiple projects and initiatives related to architecture, research and urban design. These projects illustrate how architects can engage in geopolitical processes and create new and alternative

models for development. A growing number of architects in the Nordic countries are undertaking these challenges, often out of professional interest rather than by commission. They demonstrate tendencies and possibilities that are then engaged politically, fostering the realization that the world is not what it once was. (AVB)

Changing the Arctic

TEXT: ØYSTEIN RØ (PARTNER AT TRANSBORDER STUDIO AND CO-FOUNDER OF 0047)

Mention the Arctic, and images of pristine, icy landscapes and polar bears probably spring to mind. Instead, think oil, gas, mining and logistics. The circumpolar areas are changing into an industrial frontier, a new global pool of resources. A race for riches is played out, all too often in the colonial mode, with conflicts between the environment, existing industries and local communities. New development models that respect the multilayered Arctic territories are needed, but can architects contribute?

Two key Arctic nations, Russia and Norway, share a 196-kilometre-long common border. The former Cold War frontier is a remarkable case of transformation. Since the Soviet collapse, this region has turned into an experiment in cross-border collaboration, fuelled by the promising industrial and logistical potentials of the area. The 2006 strategy of Transborder Kirkenes, written by architecture students Rø and Wetlesen, and the 0047-led urban research project 'Pezaniki City' from 2009 deal with models for how the borderland region and its towns can take steps towards fully exploiting its geographical uniqueness. Transborder Kirkenes envisioned a town that would go from being a border town to a *transborder* town, physically and mentally growing across the border. This would be achieved through a series of border crossing projects in industry, tourism, education, culture and infrastructure. One of the project proposals was adopted by the Norwegian government and proposed later as the Pomor Zone, a joint Norwegian and Russian economic and industrial zone. A Norwegian state official called the plans a physical realization of the ties between the two states.

The 2012 introduction of border passes for locals living within 30 kilometres of the border (on both sides) has made the vision of a transnational urban field possible. The new regime has created a new group of potentially 53,000 citizens who can freely cross the border, creating a cross-border job market and cross-border commerce of culture, goods, education and even health care. The history of the borderland and its four border towns is an example of how international and national politics is directly linked with local urban development. Twenty years ago the border was a closed wall, and local cooperation impossible. Now international political events have turned it into a core area in the development of the region.

A project from 2011 directed by Tromsø-based architects Dahl & Uhre proposes planning two central areas in Nuuk, Greenland's capital, in a bigger, global picture. Greenland is

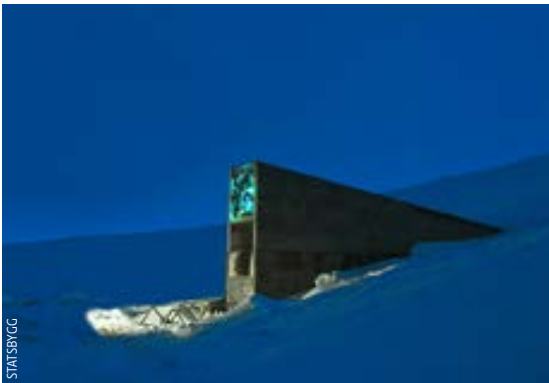
gradually gaining sovereignty from its former colonial ruler, Denmark, and this liberation coincides with an intensified search for natural resources by international oil and mining companies. Paradoxically, the Inuit country could easily end up in a similarly colonial situation. The Dahl & Uhre project presented alternative narratives to this development. Through comprehensive research and close dialogue with the local community, the architects developed a plan that investigates how people may live and work in future Nuuk. The plan introduced a series of concrete projects, such as an activity centre, a world citizen quarter and a media hub, designed by invited local and international architects like Fantastic Norway and MDH. These programmes were intended to strengthen the social and cultural structure of Nuuk and unfurl a new, creative economy—one based on the younger and increasingly globally connected generation in the country.

Currently, one of the most ambitious architectural projects in the Arctic is the relocation of the mining town of Kiruna in northern Sweden. Large portions of the town must be moved in order to extract more iron. An international competition for the design of new Kiruna was held in 2012; a project by Ghilardi + Hellsten and White was the chosen winner. One of the proposal's most interesting features is its focus on recycling. By regarding the disappearing urban fabric as a field of resources, a new and unexpected possibility occurs: the old city holds minerals, glass, bricks and other materials that can be reused, recycled and moved to the new city centre. The dwellings slated for demolition contain some 20 million bricks and over 60,000 square metres of glass. This ambitious recycling scheme for Kiruna not only has a positive effect on the environment, but will allow a continuation of the town's heritage and identity.

These projects represent different approaches to unlocking the potential of the north, both in scale and method. What they have in common is an understanding of local conditions and the linking of these to the opportunities offered by interaction with the outside world. The Arctic will change, but not necessarily according to outdated models of exploitation and colonization. When developing the High North, we should look for projects that crossbreed local expertise and resources with global opportunities, resulting in a sustainable future. Architects can contribute by bringing participants and knowledge together in a new spatial synthesis, new buildings and new types of cities. ←

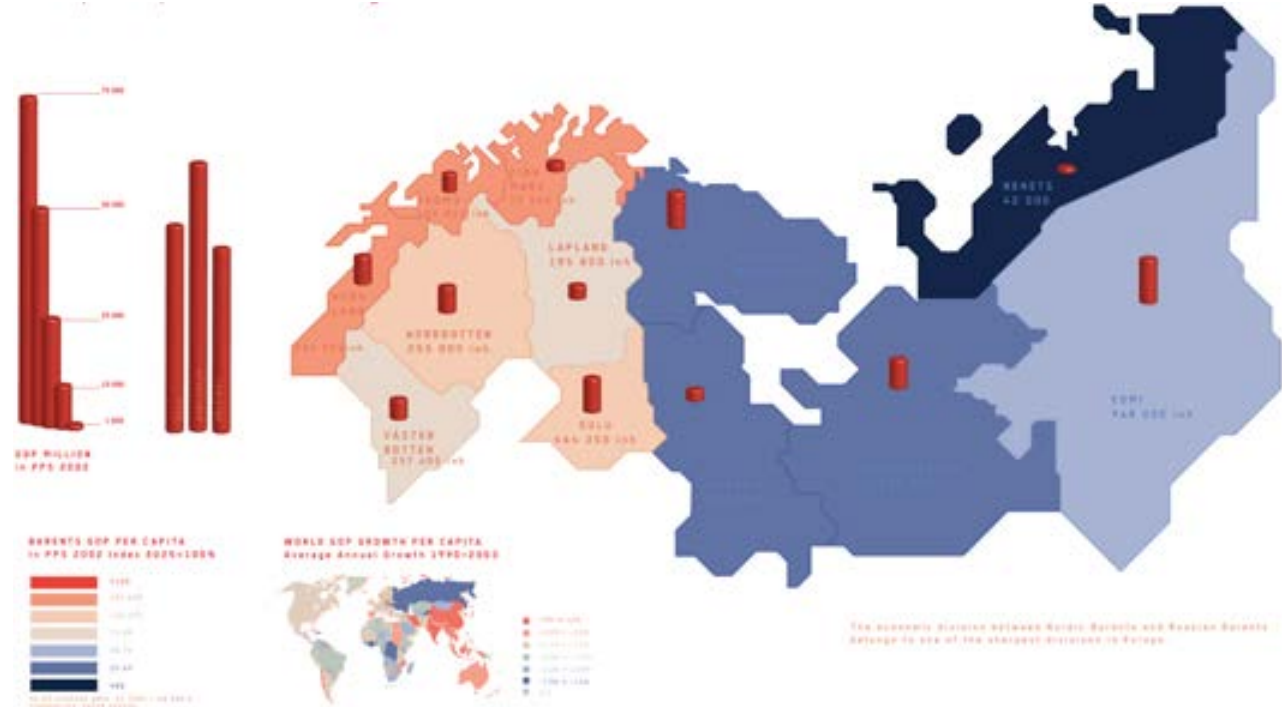
→ **SVALBARD GLOBAL SEED VAULT, LONGYEARBYEN, SVALBARD**
The Global Seed Vault contains the world's largest storage bank of food seeds. The vault is situated a kilometre away from the airport in Longyearbyen, the major community on Svalbard. The facility consists of three separate halls, blasted out from inside the mountain. Each of the halls can store up to 1.5 million seeds. The vault was developed by building commissioner, property manager and property developer Statsbygg, the Norwegian government's key advisor in construction and property affairs. Due to harsh climatic and natural conditions, short summers and permafrost in the bedrock, Statsbygg faced a demanding task in constructing the vault. The bedrock temperature is -5° C, while the temperature inside the halls is -18° C, provided by electric cooling aggregate. The seed vault is built to sustain every known scenario of natural threats due to global climatic changes. Because the facility is buried deep in the mountain, it has a natural, frozen 'coat'. This protects it by keeping temperatures stable, even during power outages.

Architects Barlindhaug Consult and Peter Spøderman Info www.barlindhaug.no



← **KIRUNA 4-EVER**
Ghilardi + Hellsten Architects, along with White, were selected as winners of a competition to relocate the city centre of Kiruna, located in the north of Sweden (see A10 #52). The proposal, entitled 'Kiruna 4-ever', creates a vision for the long-term eastward expansion of the city. Through a series of strategic interventions it allows for the further development and broadening of Kiruna's mix of cultures and diverse population. It connects Kiruna as a global city, unique in its placement within the arctic landscape and the Barents region. The proposal strives to create a destination of great dignity, attractive venues and fantastic living environments.

Architects Ghilardi + Hellsten Architects together with White
Info www.ghilardihellsten.com, www.white.se



NORTHERN EXPERIMENTS: THE BARENTS URBAN SURVEY

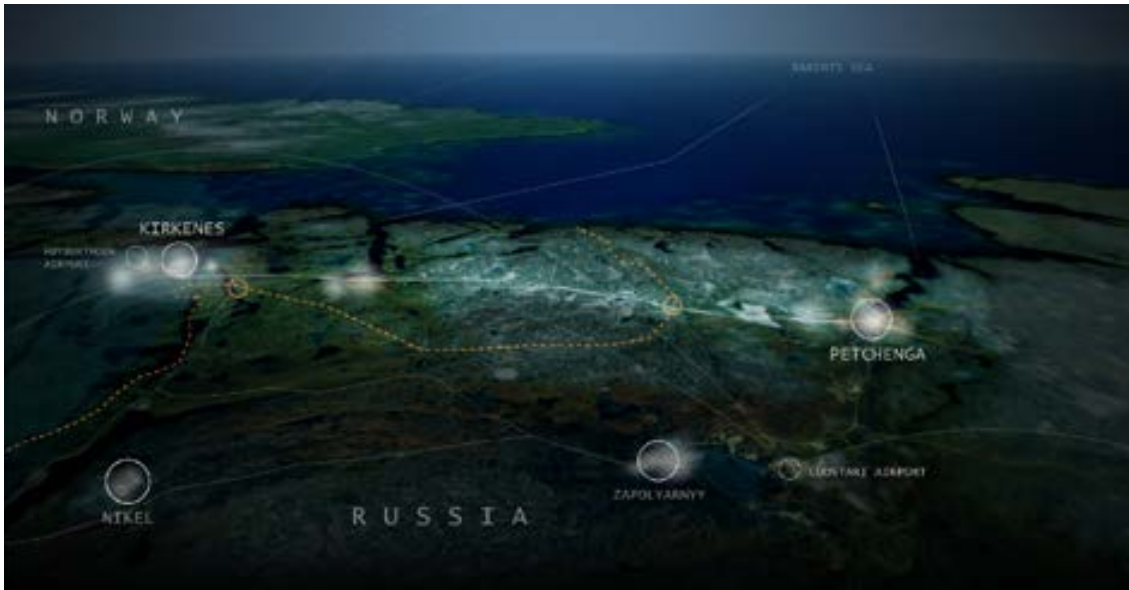
This 2009 survey focuses on four aspects of the Barents region: the Barents as a global resource pool, the great Russian urban experiment, transnational space, and the potential of the periphery. A general theme is the experimental nature of the region. Having been a scene for industrial, political and ideological experiments, it should continue to be a space for new endeavours in society. Project teams and contributors came from various backgrounds, professions and locations. Participants from both inside and outside the region were invited to investigate urban conditions, phenomena and ongoing processes. The goal of the project was to present a contemporary reading of the region and of High North urbanity.

Project 0047 and Transborder Studio Collaborator Pikene på broen Main contributors BuroMoscow (RU), NORD (DK), Testbedstudio (SE), NTNU (NO) Info www.0047.org, www.transborderstudio.com

→ IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WORLD/ IN THE MIDDLE OF NUUK, KOMMUNEQARFIK SERMERSOOQ

This project pushes the boundaries between many disciplines and touches on the strong social ambiguities and the adverse local conditions in Nuuk, Greenland. The new municipality has, in collaboration with the government of Greenland, prepared a comprehensive masterplan for the Tuujuk and Block P areas in Nuuk. Norwegian architects and urbanists at Dahl & Uhre and tnt nuuk consulted on a plan developed in continuous dialogue with citizens and interest groups in Nuuk, and with a broad spectrum of Nordic voices through the Tromsø Conversations. The clear and strong narrative of the project, also presented as a book, is based on intense research and exchange with the local community. The plan comprises a contemporary approach to landscape and cultural issues and subtly deals with different typologies, introducing urban qualities by creating diversity and a balanced density.

Architects Dahl & Uhre and tnt nuuk Contributors MDH Architects, Asplan Viak, Steinsvik Arkitekter, INUPLAN, Fantastic Norway, 42 architects + Regional associates, M-ARC ApS and Arkitekti ApS Info dahluhre.blogspot.nl, www.tntnuuk.gl



↑ PEZANIKI CITY

A research project on the Norwegian and Russian border towns, their common history and possible future as a transnational urban field. These towns play many different roles: politically supercharged area, a cocktail of international systems, a militarized territory, a common historic landscape and an increasingly strategic space in the development of the Barents Sea. Through presenting and viewing the Russian and Norwegian borderlands as one, the perception of this part of the world will hopefully change, thereby initiating discussion about its alternative future.

Project Transborder Studio Locations Kirkenes, Nikel, Zapoljarny, Pechenga Info www.transborderstudio.com

Bathed in light

Current trends and developments in cutting-edge building technologies and specific materials are the focus of Section, wherein A10 selects a single project for closer analysis, exploring the connections between concept and result, innovation and use, and

beyond. In this issue, we take a closer look at the new headquarters of Sigmax, an ICT company in Enschede, the Netherlands, designed by Paul de Ruiter. Kirsten Hannema reports on an innovative use of LED lighting that comes close to the experience of daylight.

LEDs
The office building is illuminated using LEDs, which look as if they have been dispersed at random intervals over the ceiling. The diameters of the round light fittings also vary. The result of this sophisticated 'confetti illumination' is natural, even lighting, leaving the open space intact and creating a sense of working in daylight.

CLEAR GLAZING
The almost outdoors experience in the Sigmax building is due in large part to the entirely transparent facade, comprised of full-height, 5.4-metre-wide glass panels without window frames. In addition, rounded hot-bent glass has been used to maintain the illusion of unlimited space at its corners.

ATRIUM
Together with the glass facade, the atrium at the heart of the building has a prominent role in the lighting plan. Daylight enters the twelve-metre-tall space through the translucent part of the roof, reaching the entrance on the ground floor. The atrium acts as the social hub of the office building with its iconic, sculptural staircase.

AIR CUSHION DOME
The soft light in the atrium enters through the skylight above the spiral staircase, a lens-shaped air cushion made of ETFE film (ethylene tetrafluoroethylene). The covering is made up of three layers of film. The lower two layers are transparent, while the upper layer is translucent white.

CANOPIES
The canopies stem from the desire to create a building with maximum transparency using neutral glass without sun-reflective films. The floor overhangs keep out direct sunlight. Their size varies depending on the direction they face: to the south, the canopies are 1.20 metres deeper than on the north facade.

FLOATING FLOORS
The concrete floors contribute to the maximization of the incidence of daylight. The 45-cm-deep floors house integrated climate units, concrete core activation, sun blinds and ventilation. Traditional lowered ceilings have therefore been rendered unnecessary, as a result of which the clear height is no less than three metres; 30 cm more than usual.

Clear glazing

According to Reinout Jansonijs of glass supplier **Glassolutions Saint Gobain**, 'Two things make this facade particularly striking. Firstly, the clear glazing without reflective coating that allows daylight to reach deep inside the building, and secondly, the fact that the glass has been used in a semi-structural manner; we have not used any vertical frame profiles. The wide glass panels, measuring 41 mm

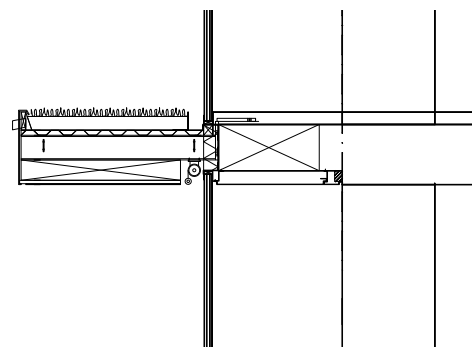
thick, have aluminium profiles that have been integrated into the concrete floors. The glass panels themselves have been positioned alongside each other with straight joints, and are connected by means of mastic joints. In this way, a single, flat glass facade is seen from both the inside and the outside. Reflections in the glass are not interrupted by frame profiles, clamp frames, or cornices.'



Canopies

Architect **Paul de Ruiter** explains: 'Following on from the idea of a facade made entirely of glass, we wanted to blur the boundary between indoors and outdoors using the canopies. The canopy has the same thickness as the concrete floor inside. The stainless steel cladding on the underside

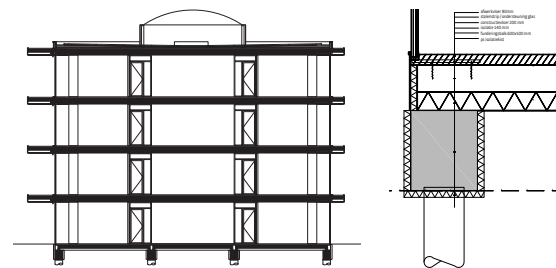
reflects daylight into the interior; the same material is also used on the first half metre inside the building on the ceiling. The design incorporated into the black-and-white flooring was inspired by the sedum moss outside on the canopy; you can look out onto your own little lawn.'



Floating floors

'In terms of the look,' De Ruiter adds, 'we wanted the floors to extend outwards in the form of canopies. However, the most important thing is that all solutions contribute to a pleasant and sustainable working environment, with plenty of light, pleasant views, and fresh air. We have positioned the

building at such an angle to ensure maximum sunlight, while we have also filtered the light using canopies and blinds. In addition, the floor provides both heating and cooling. Fresh air is sucked in directly from outside via the ventilation units which are integrated into the canopies. Depending on the outside temperature, the air is then warmed or cooled before being blown into the interior. The air is then extracted centrally from the atrium.'



Air cushion dome

'The architect was very specific in what he wanted for the roof of the atrium: plenty of daylight, evenly dispersed indirect light, and an even surface without intermediate constructions,' adds Rienk de Vries of **Buitink Technol-**

ogy. 'These wishes formed the basis for this solution – a skylight in the form of a circular ETFE cushion made of milky-white plastic sheeting and with a span of 6.5 metres. The cushion is affixed to the roof by means of

a clamp frame surrounding it. Once installed, it was inflated to form a 'flattened' sphere. There are no problems with dirt on the skylight with this material, as dirt cannot attach itself to Teflon. It keeps itself cleaner than glass.'



LEDs

'The idea was to use sustainable lighting,' says Maichel Kusters of **Arpalight**. 'LED lighting is energy-efficient and offers a long useable life. In this case, the lighting also responds to the strength of the daylight and makes use of motion detection. The problem was that we were not able to use hanging fit-

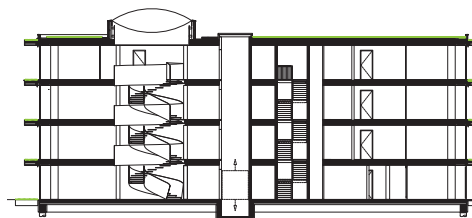
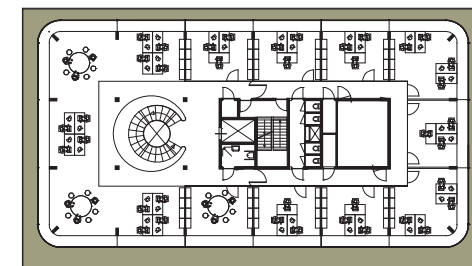
tings, as they would have interfered with the air flowing along the ceiling as ventilation. Built-in lighting was also not possible with this construction. In the end, we used fittings with a thickness of just one centimetre. These have been clicked onto a steel railing on the ceiling using magnets. The circular shape not only connects with the suggestion of a random pattern, but also allows air to flow freely.'

Atrium



'The basic idea for the design is a very compact building, with this core at its centre surrounded by flexible, open, light workspaces,' De Ruiter continues. 'The amount of land available determined the need for four storeys. That is a good height for this kind of footprint. At the same time, this brought the

challenge of creating connections – literally and figuratively – despite the division into levels. The connecting element is the atrium with the white steel spiral staircase. It is not only an aesthetic element; it has also become a meeting place. With a staircase like this, no one takes the lift.'



SIGMAX OFFICE BUILDING, 2010–2013

Architect Paul de Ruiter Client Sigmax Lighting plan Arpalight Projectverlichting, Bavel Ceiling lighting Nimbus Glass Glassolutions Saint Gobain ETFE air cushion dome Buitink Technology Construction management Kloos2 Contractor Van Dijk Bouw Interior architect Ex Interiors Address Capitool 13, Enschede Info www.pauldeRuiter.nl

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Light is essential for our health and productivity as human beings. We need light, but the allocation and use of light as a integral part of design is an art in itself. Different sources have different characteristics and properties, as well as varying capacities for distribution. This points to a core question about the starting point for good luminaire design. Is it the source itself or the application? Or something else entirely? In the case of the office building by Paul de Ruiter, the decision to use LED lighting was motivated by the desire to realize a sustainable project. The result is a lighting concept that comes close to the experience of daylight. Sophie Valla also works with LED lighting, albeit its more common use as stage lighting – additively mixing a combination of different colours – is harmonized with architecture in this case, turning abandoned gas stations into inviting pavilions. More subtle but equally effective is the interior by Salon Architects, wherein light lines accentuate routes through an existing office space. As the examples on these pages show, when source and application are carefully matched some impressive effects can be achieved.



LED cloud

AMSTERDAM (NL) — A new north-south metro line is currently being built to connect the north of Amsterdam to its Zuidas (South Axis), a large, rapidly developing business

district. The construction required that the motorway that runs through Amsterdam North, the Nieuwe Leeuwarderweg highway, be dropped seven metres in elevation. As a result, two gas stations on either side of the road have lost their function and would have been

demolished if it were not for the district council, which saw an opportunity to use the space for public gathering. Sophie Valla Architects, an Amsterdam-based office founded in 2006, was commissioned to turn the filling stations into inviting **meeting pavilions**,

complementing the adjacent park. The stations are originally sleek and simply designed, reminiscent of American gas stations from the 1960s. This characteristic imagery is retained, though a clear new layer is added: the canopies are now adorned with

a permanent light installation entitled 'LED Cloud'. Sixty textile panels made of advertising fabrics were cut to various sizes to match the dimensions of the roof structure. Each panel is backlit by LED fixtures that are placed in the corners and can be programmed independently.

In total, 192 DMX channels are used, driven by 8 x 24-channel DMX controller suitable for applications such as this, where multiple RGB lamps must be directed. The system is programmed on location and comprises 20 dynamic light animations,

each lasting 30 minutes and designed to recall 20 different sky-scapes, from clear and bright to sunrise and sunset. Users can admire the spectacle while relaxing on furniture also designed by Valla. Together with the lighting system, it forms a conspicuously

stylish urban spot which the architect hopes will 'appeal to neighbourhood youth'. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

LED CLOUD, 2013

Architect Sophie Valla Architects
Client District Council of Amsterdam Noord
Light supplies InventDesign
Address Noorderpark, Amsterdam
Info www.sophievalla.nl



Kaleidoscopic shell

LEEDS (UK) — The massive new **entertainment venue** in Leeds' city centre, designed by stadium design experts Populous, is an odd building and does not try to hide it. Rising to 35 metres, it is faced with metal shingles in different shades of green, set in a diamond forma-

tion. As it wraps around the building, this mottled shell is prised open to form a series of geometric layers in which hexagonal windows have been punched. The windows are glazed with tinted glass panels.

In the evening, the exterior becomes even more overwhelming. Covered with 600 LED downlights and track spots shining through the windows, the building is then transformed into a com-

pact Technicolor 'spaceship'. There is nothing like it in Leeds, and it has already been described as one of the most important occurrences in the city in years.

The architects, who designed legendary venues like Wembley Stadium and Wimbledon's Centre Court, point out that they have developed the facade 'as a kaleidoscopic lens' in which lighting and layering are used to allow the building with a ca-

capacity for 13,500 visitors to react to the type of event being held within. Another interesting feature of the structure is its fan-shaped seating layout around a stage at one end, which focuses every seat towards centre stage, bringing the public closer to the show. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

LEEDS ARENA, 2013

Architect Populous
Client Leeds City Council
Lighting High Technology Lighting
Structure and acoustics Arup
Cladding Lakesmere
Address Claypit Lane, Leeds
Info www.populous.com



Floating light containers

HAMBURG (DE) — In Hamburg, Europe's largest inner-city development project is under construction. It involves the transformation of the former port area into an urban expansion of the inner city, linking the old red-brick warehouses with downtown Hamburg and creating a city within a city. One of the plan's flagships is a new home for HafenCity University, a school focusing on architecture and urban planning. To service the new quarter and university, the city expanded its

metro system with a new station.

The U4 HafenCity University **metro station**, designed by Munich-based offices Raupach Architekten and pfarré lighting design, seeks to establish a connection with the district's former life. The interior is entirely clad in steel panels, a reference to the hulls and modules of transport containers. Suspended high above the platform is a gravity-defying installation of twelve boxes, each of which weighs six tons and is designed to be the same size as a standard shipping container. Made from steel frames and translucent glass panels, these 'containers' are incorporated with 280

RGB colour-changing LED fixtures, adding a pop of colour to the rather gloomy subterranean space.

The fixtures are connected to a central control system, which allows for preset scenes that can be used for day and night, when a train is approaching, or simply to create a visual sensation while waiting. On the whole, the interaction between the light and the steel panelling turns the station into an animated light sculpture; one that is not only beautiful, but also functional. To provide the necessary soft white illumination on the platform, the bottoms of the containers are outfitted with fluorescent fixtures.

(KIM HOEFNAGELS)

HAFENCITY UNIVERSITY METRO STATION, 2013

Architect Raupach Architekten
Lighting planning pfarré lighting design, d-lightvision
Client Hamburger Hochbahn
Light containers Metallbau Wendelstorf
Address Versmannstrasse, Hamburg
Info www.raupach-architekten.de, www.lichtplanung.com



Non-linear fluidity

ISTANBUL (TR)

In 2012, a lawyer commissioned Alper Derinboğaz and Melike Altınışık, co-founders of Salon Architects, to refurbish an **office space** located in a larger office block having a repetitive standard construction grid. To transform the bleak room into a pleasant working space, the architects came up

with a radical yet simple intervention. The existing orthogonal office plan was reorganized with a non-linear interior, which in a way represents the personality and the working method of the client: unpretentious, vigorous and innovative.

The law office occupies a total area of 250 m² and is tucked away in a plain office building in Istanbul. The design challenge was twofold: to create an attractive ambience and invoke a spatial fluidity that 'naturally' leads

visitors through the office. The key component of the designers' response is a slender, jagged line of light that is mounted on the ceiling. It comprises a LED light encased in aluminium plating, covered with black electrostatic paint and with a plastic diffuser at the bottom.

The walls and floors display geometric patterns of contrasting colours that follow this irregular line of light and take away the angularity of the space,

giving it a certain plasticity. In addition, the different tones of grey indicate variations in function between the service and storage areas. To complement the interior's strong lines, the furnishings are restrained, distinguished by the use of wood, metal and black furniture. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

CTHB LAW OFFICE, 2013

Architect Salon Architects
Client Cafer Tekir Law Office
Lighting manufacturer Zen Aydınlatma
Address Kagitthane, Istanbul
Info www.salonarchitects.com



JUNG

Illumi- nated barcode

■ **ASNIÈRES-SUR-SEINE (FR)** — On a narrow piece of land in the suburbs of Paris, wedged between a railway embankment, the river La Seine and a breach generated by the western entrance of the new district under the embankment, Ateliers O-S has successfully inserted a **gymnasium**. Its minimalist structure, made of a wooden frame-

work leaning over a concrete base-ment along the railway, is deliberately autonomous and compact. Still, the architects, who met in Rotterdam and worked for West 8 and OMA before starting their own practice in 2006, have managed to pre-serve a human scale in the project.

Emerging from the railway em-bankment as a rock with straight edges, the build-ing is composed of basic volumes, mostly clad in metallic punched panels. Placed just

behind the panels are vertically aligned LEDs of about two metres in height. These lines of light distin-guish the exterior, preventing it from being non-descrip-tive, but without counteracting its monolithic archi-tecture. A sloping volume forms the transition be-tween the railway and town; on the station side, the building is closed and higher than on that of the street, where large windows make the activities in-side visible. By dis-closing its function

on the ground floor, the building obtains a public character. Within the more enclosed area around the sports hall are the changing rooms and other facilities. A skylight allows for the fil-tering of sunlight entering the inte-rior spaces, adding to the light coming from the wide windows on the facades. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

GYMNASIUM CURIE, 2012–2013

Architect Ateliers O-S
architectes Client City
of Asnières sur Seine
Address Rues Pierre et
Marie Curie, Asnières sur
Seine Info www.o-s.fr



CECILE SEPIET



Concept house

■ **MERELBEKE (BE)**

— Generally speaking, light switches are not high on the list of priorities for inter-ior designers. Yet the design and placement of switches can just give an interior that extra finish. Modern technology like smart phones and tablet PCs continues to pro-vide new possibili-ties. Today, build-ings are already stuffed with all

sorts of switches for fixtures, atmo-spheric lighting and hardware. Domotics is sup-posed to group these different functions together and ease living without being noticed. To show how this can be done, a Belgian manufacturer of touch-sensitive light switches has transformed a building from 1875 into a so-called concept house.

In a small mu-nicipality in East Flanders, the house of a former floristry has been

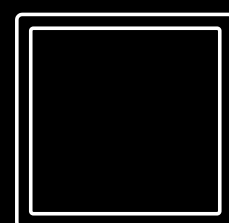
converted into a showroom where people can 'live and experience' the company's smart home prod-ucts. The basis of the design lies in demonstrating to visitors how various products can be integrated into a home.

The atmosphere in this concept house is homely and understated chic. All walls are painted white so as to not divert attention from the light switches and the integration of scene and mood settings. One of

the highlights is the Sentido, a touch-sensitive switch that is divided into two or four different surfaces giving access to either two or four differ-ent functions. It also features the patented multi-touch func-tion, activated by touching more than one surface at the same time. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

CONCEPT HOUSE, 2013

Architect Undisclosed
Client Basalte Lighting
Basalte Address
Hundelgemsesteenweg 1a,
Merelbeke Info
www.basalte.be



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Glow-in- the-dark dwelling

■ **PRAGUE (CZ)** — Dur-ing Designblok 2013 (Prague's design week), artist Jiří Přihoda intro-duced a **two-storey dwelling** with a secret compartment conceal-ing a pull-out bed. The prototype is built into a reclaimed rail-way yard and features an outer shell made of acrylic polymer stone that absorbs daylight, which later manifests as opalescent light that will glow in the dark for approximately eight hours.

While the mini-dwelling was installed in a very urban loca-tion, the idea is that it would make a tran-quil place to stay in natural surroundings. 'In an ideal circum-stance, the exterior surrounding of the dwelling should be a forest or large garden, with as little contact with civilization as possible,' says Přihoda. According to the struc-ture's placement and climate, the construc-tion core can be ther-mo-insulated and the open sides can be glassed-in with double thermo-insulated Plexiglas. In warmer climates, the open sides may remain

open with only simple protective screens, which are also strong enough to guard against falling.

The main advan-tage of the glowing outer shell is that it does not use electricity and yet still provides enough light to help people to see hazards in the dark. As opposed to electrical lighting, the structure's envi-ronmental impact would be nil — not only because it doesn't require an electricity grid, but also in terms of light pollution, mak-ing it an interesting experiment for alter-native lighting in nat-ural surroundings. The prototype will be

further tested in the middle of the Sonoran Desert near Tucson, Arizona, where a new version is under construction. It will be used primarily as a single-person dwell-ing for a space ob-servatory. The urban dwelling on display during Designblok will be exhibited in Křehký Gallery, an exhibition space inside a former factory in Prague, until 28 February 2014. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

LAMPYRIADE ARBOR DWELLING II, 2013–2014

Architect Jiří Přihoda
Luminescent acrylic polymer
stone Corralit, Vagnerplast
Address Křehký Gallery,
Osadní 35, Prague Info
www.jiriprihoda.cz,
www.prihodadwellings.com



MARTIN HURICH/JIRI PRIHODA

Architecture in a time of crisis: 2008 – 2013

The bliss of the 2004 Olympic Games in **Athens** lasted more than four years after their conclusion. The Games radically transformed the post-war city that was, until that time, produced by the repetition of the *polykatoikia* (apartment building) typology, albeit in multiple variations. The changes introduced a new, extra-large-scale layer of infrastructural urbanization laid on top of the pre-existing modern urban fabric. New circulation networks allowed for the diffusion of Athens in all directions.

ATHENS (GR) — TEXT: YANNIS AESOPOS, ILLUSTRATION: HARMEN VAN DER HORST

The unprecedented mobility offered by the infrastructural networks, together with numerous loans light-heartedly offered by the banks, led to the development of an intense consumerist culture. Numerous shopping malls popped up along circulation axes. Simultaneously, a large part of the more affluent population departed the city centre for new neighbourhoods on its periphery, leaving a vacuum to be filled in by thousands of illegal immigrants migrating to Greece from Asia and Africa.

Crisis did not take long to arrive. The first signs became apparent with the massive riots in the centre of Athens following the killing of a young student by the police in December 2008. A year later, the country's public debt bubble burst, forcing Greece to agree to a very large financial aid package from the EU and the IMF, accompanied by severe austerity measures. From 2010 onwards, construction activity in Greece, and Athens in particular, ground to a halt. Over the last three years, we have witnessed the collapse of the construction sector, both private and public. The only projects completed or under construction during this period are either ones begun pre-crisis or those funded by public benefit foundations.

Single-family homes have always been a significant part of Greek architectural production. Most houses built

in the last fifteen years refer mainly to the work of Nicos Valsamakis and, to a lesser degree, that of Aris Konstantinidis, two masters of Greek architecture from the 1960s, characterized by orthogonal geometry, volumetric simplicity, the use of white plaster or finely exposed concrete and the search for spatial continuity between the house and its surrounding landscape. The design of single-family homes in the Athenian suburbs reflects signs of opulence and express an extroverted lifestyle developed in the 2000s that is now fading.

The **House in Kifissia (1)** and the **House in Psychico (2)**, both by Valsamakis and completed after the mid-2000s, embody in a 'sober' manner the characteristics of the aforementioned architectural idiom. Both are very simple, white and orthogonal two-volume prisms placed in large gardens. Likewise, the **House in Psychico (3)** by BLP Architects (Iro Bertaki, Christina Loukopoulou and Costis Paniyiridis) adopts an L-shaped plan so as to isolate itself from neighbouring buildings and open up to its garden and pool. The first-floor bedrooms form a white, linear volume that hovers above the ground level, accentuating the building's horizontality.

Two houses in Kavouri (4) by Maria Kokkinou and Andreas Kourkoulas are placed at different levels of a sloped

site in the southern suburb of Vouliagmeni. House A consists of a large volume of living quarters connected to three individual bedroom volumes. House B also uses the platform element as a design tool, upon which stand the extensive living quarters, complemented by shaded areas opening onto an unobstructed sea view.

The **house in Ekali (5)** by ISV Architects (Babis Ioannou, Tasos Sotiropoulos and Alexander Van Gilder) provides spaces for living but also for exhibiting the owners' large art collection, organized in multiple levels along the site's slope, while a **house in Voula (6)** by mplum sits on an oblong site, organized as two parallel volumes. Its smaller, sky-lit volume encases vertical movement and offers views to the linear pool through its tall louvers. The larger volume contains the living areas, which open onto the ground level terrace and bedroom spaces, defined by a large glass-and-metal structure. Similarly, **two L-shaped houses in Penteli (7)** by Demetrios Issaias and Tassis Papaioannou face each other at two ends of an elongated plot, creating an interior courtyard joined by a covered walkway.

Polykatoikias constitute the other most common building type in Greek architectural production. During the last five years, the rising demographic heterogeneity of Athenian society due to intense immigration led to less generic designs of *polykatoikias* that, based on their architecture, appear as identity providers for their inhabitants. The **Uptown Residences (8)** housing complex in Marousi by BLP Architects occupies an entire urban block and consists of seven functionally autonomous buildings with a total of 70 apartments, linear communal spaces with gardens and underground parking. The complex is laid out in an S-shaped plan, with elevations marked by the white horizontal stripes of balconies, referencing the typical facades of modernist Athenian *polykatoikias*.

Oyster Smart Flats (9) by ISV Architects is a serviced apartment building located in an up-and-coming neighbourhood with notable cultural institutions. It addresses a diverse crowd of young people seeking a fresh relationship with the city centre. The building provides spaces for relaxation, exercise and meeting, and balconies are planted to reproduce a wild flora within the urban environment. The finely-crafted exposed concrete ***polykatoikia* on Deinokratous street (10)** by Giorgos Aggelis sits on a sloping, three-faced site. It introduces a public passage on different levels, cutting through the ground-level pilots to bring urban life into the building, while a four-storey exposed concrete ***polykatoikia* in Voula (11)** by →

Over the last three years, we have witnessed the collapse of the construction sector.



1 HOUSE IN KIFISSIA (2006)
Architect: Nicos Valsamakis
Address: Pentelis street, Kifissia



2 HOUSE IN PSYCHICO (2006)
Architect: Nicos Valsamakis
Address: Agiou Dimitriou street, Psychico



3 HOUSE IN PSYCHICO (2011)
Architect: BLP Architects (Iro Bertaki, Christina Loukopoulou, Costis Paniyiridis)
Address: Diamantidou 75-77, Psychico



4 TWO HOUSES IN KAVOURI (2011)
Architects: Maria Kokkinou and Andreas Kourkoulas
Address: Archimideou 1, Kavouri, Vouliagmeni



5 HOUSE IN EKALI (2010)
Architect: ISV Architects (Babis Ioannou, Tasos Sotiropoulos, Alexander Van Gilder)
Address: Rodon 64 and Vakhou 2A, Ekali



6 HOUSE IN VOULA (2012)
Architect: mplum (Memos Filippidis, Marita Nikoloutsou)
Address: Vassileos Georgiou 55, Voula



7 TWO HOUSES IN PENTELI (2008)
Architects: Demetrios Issaias and Tassis Papaioannou
Address: Phediou 12, Palea Penteli



8 UPTOWN RESIDENCES (2012)
Architect: BLP Architects (Iro Bertaki, Christina Loukopoulou, Costis Paniyiridis)
Address: Dionysou 148, Ayios Thomas Amarousiou



9 OYSTER SMART FLATS (2012)
Architect: ISV Architects (Babis Ioannou, Tasos Sotiropoulos, Alexander Van Gilder)
Address: Evridamantos 7 and Sfigos, Neos Kosmos



10 POLYKATOIKIA ON DEINOKRATOUS (2012)
Architect: Giorgos Aggelis
Address: Deinokratous 123, Kolonaki



11 POLYKATOIKIA IN VOULA (2008)
Architects: Dionisis Sotoukakis and Anastasis Sotoukakis
Address: Konstantinou Karamanli 139, Voula



12 OFFICE BUILDING ON PIREOS (2008)
Architect: Alexandra Kalliri
Address: Pireos (Panagi Tsaldari) 38, Omonoia



13 OFFICE BUILDING AND SUPERMARKET (2010)
Architects: Maria Kokkinou and Andreas Kourkoulas
Address: Pireos 222 & Kydonion, Tavros



14 NEW ACROPOLIS MUSEUM (2009)
Architects: Bernard Tschumi Architects with Michael Photiadis & Associate Architects
Address: Dionysiou Areopagitou and Makriyanni, Acropolis
Contributed by: Eirini-Tsianaka



15 NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (EMST)
Architects: Kalliope Kontozoglou with 3SK Styliandis Architects
Address: Kallirois 44 and Frantzi, Fix



16 ONASSIS CULTURAL CENTRE (2010)
Architect: AS Architecture Studio
Address: Syngrou 107-109, Neos Kosmos



17 STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION CULTURAL CENTRE (2015)
Architect: Renzo Piano Building Workshop
Address: Syngrou and Poseidonos, Kallithea



18 FALIRON URBAN WATERFRONT PARK
Architects: Renzo Piano Building Workshop (concept design), a-3/BLP Architects, mplum, Divercity Architects (design development), Elandscape/Helli Pangalou (landscape design), Thimio Papagiannis Associates (general studies coordination and masterplan)
Address: Faliron Bay



19 MONASTIRAKI SQUARE (2008)
Architects: Nikos Kazeros, Vasileia Manidaki, Zina Kotsopoulou, Christina Parakente, Eleni Tzirtziaki
Address: Monastiraki



20 NAVARINOU PARK (2009-2010)
Architects: Local community groups and citizens
Address: Navarinou & Harilaou Trikoupi, Exarcheia



21 POCKET PARK IN PANGRATI (2012)
Architects: Labros Seklisiotis and atenisas
Address: Pafsanioi 20 & Phaidrou, Pangrati



(Architecture in a time of crisis)

Dionisis Sotovikis and Anastasis Sotovikis faces the Saronic Gulf. Based on its simple geometry, large glass surfaces and long, cantilevered balconies, the building accentuates the significance of the unobstructed view and operates as a 'diving board' to the sea.

Office buildings, which constituted a significant part of architectural production during the economic boom, are now scarce. The **office building on Pireos street (12)** by Alexandra Kalliri continues the city facade with the use of a curtain wall laid out as a play of indents and protrusions accentuating the presence of light and shadow. Of its three volumes, only the middle one touches the ground to provide an entrance, while the remaining ground-level space is left free to form an urban garden; an extension of public space into the building's core. Voids provide natural light and ventilation to all parts of the building, offering a sense of unity.

An **office building and supermarket (13)** by Maria Kokkinou and Andreas Kourkoulas (see A10 #39) also sits along busy Pireos street. The large roof of the supermarket is designed as a rooftop garden for use by office employees, and combines orderly planted trees in large flower pots and drought-tolerant true grasses that grow in a random manner. In an interesting sectional move, the roof dips down to connect to the office building's street-level collective spaces.

Following the economic crisis, the impoverishment of the state has rendered it weak, unable to fund new public buildings and open public spaces. This task has been taken up by prominent foundations for public benefit, and by several newly-formed citizens' groups or collectives. The former fund large-scale projects, with commissions given to well-known architects, while the latter operate on a smaller, neighbourhood scale through low-tech collective enterprise. The most important public building of the post-war period in Athens is the **New Acropolis Museum (14)** by Bernard Tschumi Architects with local partner Michael Photiadis & Associate Architects (see A10 #15). Since opening its doors in 2009, it has become a major cultural pillar and tourist attractor. The museum is formed by stacked volumes: a base of exposed concrete is topped with a glass prism housing the Parthenon sculptures. The latter is shifted from its base so as to acquire the same disposition as the Parthenon and thereby achieve a viewing experience as close as possible to that of the original monument.

Another important state-funded public building nearing completion is the **National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST) (15)** by Kalliope Kontozoglou with 3SK Styliandis Architects. It stands between two busy streets, Syngrou and Kallirois avenues, and reuses the remaining half of the abandoned Fix Brewing Company. The building's two characteristic facades, with linear glass stripes facing the two streets, designed in 1957 by the prominent architect Takis Zenetos, are preserved. The other facades are redesigned as solid walls of sedimentary stone – a reference to an underground stream – that 'protect' the exhibition spaces lying behind them. The museum will house exhibition spaces, archives, library and auditorium.

Less than a kilometre to the south, along Syngrou avenue, stands the **Onassis Foundation Cultural Centre (16)** by AS Architecture Studio, which opened its doors in 2010 to become a major cultural hub. The centre contains a large auditorium, open-air amphitheatre, library, restaurant and exhibition hall. Its orthogonal

glass volume is clad with horizontal louvers of white Greek marble that dematerialize its large volume. The spaces for performances are part of a large, gold-plated and organically-shaped volume that seems to 'float' inside the prism.

Further south on Syngrou avenue, at the point where it meets the sea, one reaches the huge construction site of one of the most important civic projects ever undertaken in Greece, the €550 million **Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre (17)** by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, scheduled for completion in 2015. Located on a 200,000 m² site, it will hold the new National Library, the new National Opera House and a 120,000 m² park. The southern part of the park facing the sea is lifted to cover, in the form of artificial ground, the two large volumes of the library and opera and create an outdoor and indoor belvedere to the Saronic Gulf and the city. Just in front of the Niarchos Cultural Centre, the two-kilometre-long **Faliron Urban Waterfront Park (18)** will be realized following a concept by Renzo Piano Building Workshop and development design by a-3/ BLP Architects, mplum and Divercity Architects. Studies for the project were funded by the Niarchos Foundation. The new waterfront park re-establishes a long-desired connection between the city and sea by covering an existing highway with a green surface and extending five streets along piers. Small-scale buildings, some of them half-buried in the ground with planted roofs, house various recreational programmes.

Returning to the city centre, the most successful example of designing public space is **Monastiraki Square (19)** by Nikos Kazeros, Vasileia Manidaki, Zina Kotsopoulou, Christina Parakente and Eleni Tzirtzilaki. The square, situated at the skirts of the Acropolis, is a vibrant, bustling intersection of commercial streets and metro lines. This character is expressed in the design of the square's pavement, conceived as a colourful mosaic of marble and stone.

A different approach to the design of public space was followed in the making of **Navarinou Park (20)**, located in the lively, bohemian neighbourhood of Exarcheia (see A10 #38). Community groups and individual citizens turned a parking lot into a small urban park with no pre-existing plan. The strong presence of the underlying soil revealed during construction and the random planting of trees creates a pocket of nature in contrast to the surrounding urban context. Wooden planks placed along a small hill create an amphitheatre that emphasizes the park's role as a 'common' space. Navarinou Park paved the way for other citizens' groups to produce new public spaces at the neighbourhood scale, such as **Pocket Park in Pangrati (21)** by atenistas group. Within a single day, an abandoned municipal playground was turned into a small park with pathways, benches and a play area for kids. Recyclable materials (wooden pallets, tree trunks and tires) provided by the municipality, together with plants, toys and paint provided by sponsors were used by a group of 30–40 volunteers and citizens coordinated by the architect to build a space for relaxation and play. This same strategy has been applied to other run-down sites in the city.

Ten years after the 2004 Olympic Games brought about radical changes to the city's composition and led to a period of excess, Athens is once again at a turning point. In the midst of an unprecedented crisis, all givens and rules related to the production of space must be renegotiated and set anew. ←

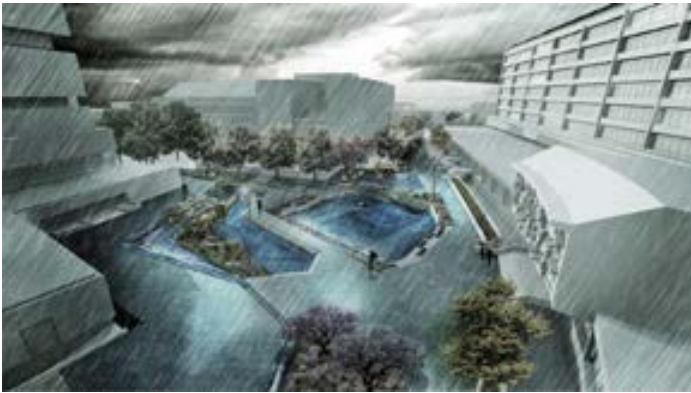
MI Tour Guides published in A10 magazine are available online at MIMOA (www.mimoa.eu).

In the next issue:

Ready

Water square, Rotterdam

Due to changing climate conditions and increasing rainfall in some areas, now is the moment to look at all that water from a different perspective. Places in cities where drainage occurs primarily via underground systems are especially vulnerable. The municipality of Rotterdam and the design office De Urbanisten have found common ground in a unique approach: a public space where water can be stored when it rains heavily.



Eurovision

Catalonia

Eurovision presents an overview of the current state of architecture in a specific country or region. Catalonia will be the focus of the upcoming issue.

Tour Guide

Tallinn

The capital of Estonia blends historic urban heritage and a vibrant contemporary architecture scene. Many neighbourhoods provide excellent snapshots of various periods from the city's past, from classicist palaces to functionalist town houses and Soviet experimentation. Over the last two decades, the time of Estonia's regained independence, Tallinn has witnessed a building boom that entails a number of new public, commercial and private ventures. A10 correspondent Triin Ojari shows us some of the more outstanding projects.



↑ Apartment house in Rotermann quarter by Alver Architects, 2013.

...and much more. A10 #56 will be published 1 March 2014.

The free-standing house Thomas Bedaux built for his family in a 1930s district in Tilburg is a rather 'odd one out'. The house is three storeys instead of two, its slim stature almost tower-like. The bricks are not dark red but ochre, like the school up the street. It lacks double or bay windows. Instead, windows are minimalistic, sowing doubt as to the building's exact size. Even the letterbox and house number are different in style from the neighbours'. Nevertheless, this corner house holds a certain familiarity. From the outside, the window frames have the same slim dimensions as the steel frames in the houses opposite. The jointing, filled flush with bricks of the same yellow colour, has been executed with similar attention to detail. Behind the modern facade is a rather classic floor plan.

The residence straddles the line between tradition and innovation. It is clearly a statement, as one's own home is the perfect opportunity to show what you are capable of as a designer. Simultaneously, this brings about a confrontation with yourself as an architect. A designer look is laudable, but Bedaux eschewed living in a showroom. Comfort and a homey feel were key.

The dilemma was compounded by Bedaux's background. Educated in Delft during the 'wild' 1990s, he spent some years working with Bjarne Mastenbroek (SeArch) and Dick van Gameren (Mecanoo) in Amsterdam. Yet he has never forgotten his roots. More than just his birth city, Tilburg is where his famous grandfather, Jos Bedaux, set up an architectural firm in 1937, succeeded by Thomas's father, Peer. Today, Thomas also works at Bedaux De Brouwer Architects.

The strangely familiar house of Thomas Bedaux, Tilburg

 NETHERLANDS — TEXT: KIRSTEN HANNEMA, PHOTOGRAPHY: PHILIP DUJARDIN



Bedaux cherishes tradition. Take the narrow window in the lavatory, for instance. This little window is found in every project taken on by the firm, an example of the traditional craftsmanship with which the senior Bedaux set to work, and with which the spaces and rooms in this house are also composed. The entrance hall is illuminated by a large window with a window seat at the top of the wooden staircase. The dining room has a central position between the hall, kitchen, and playroom at the front. A step down leads to the living room, which looks out onto the back garden. The high-ceilinged studio on the first floor enjoys daylight from the north. The four bedrooms and two bathrooms each have their own views.

The innovation that Bedaux aims for lies in the isolated character of the house. That effect arises partly from its location, next to a cemetery and with a pasture full of sheep beyond the garden. Bedaux emphasizes the absurdist-looking view by using windows as picture frames, alternating their positions between flush with the facade, halfway into the wall, or set all the way back.

Thomas's grandfather returns in the interior. The master bedroom features a bed he designed. The garden contains a reproduction of his lantern, while the stainless steel door handles are a reinterpretation of his copper door handle. Bedaux has himself been occupied primarily with practical matters: lighting, smoke detectors, thermostat, and even doors disguised within the white walls. In its own way, this distinctive house has a very neutral character; a white canvas on which the family will be the first to leave its mark. ←





Memorial centre, Kolašin

 MONTENEGRO — TEXT: MIODRAG NINIĆ, PHOTOGRAPHY: WOLFGANG THALER

The ideological system of socialist Yugoslavia was in constant flux. At its core was communism, yet its manifestations evolved from a totalitarian Stalinism to a rather decentralized system of self-management. These disparate components of its ideological system were represented in the built environment in various ways, and often with a mix of proportions.

In the early post-war years, the Soviet doctrine of socialist realism in art and architecture was dominant in the official circles, but after the break with Stalin in 1948 modernism quickly emerged as a dominant practice. Modernism came to represent country's aspirations of modernity as well as its distance from the Soviet political models.

Reconstruction of the country after the war and the need for its modernization raised the question of how to represent the identities of the six constituent republics and of the federation as a whole. Answers ranged widely, both in terms of programme and style, from the party headquarters and national assemblies to local cultural centres, and from cosmopolitan modernism to modernist regionalism.

In this respect, war memorials were one of the central motifs of the self-definition of the emerging and uniquely Yugoslav socialism. From the relatively modest sculptures of the first post-war years to the megalomaniac abstract structures of the 1970s, the war memorials in their many shapes proved to be one of the most experimental and most progressive fields of Yugoslav art, architecture, landscaping and engineering. A memorial centre by architect Marko Mušič, located in the small town of Kolašin in Montenegro and built in 1975, is one such example. It is a multi-purpose structure with complex relations of abstract form and socialist content articulated in an uncompromisingly modern architectural expression.

The memorial centre consists of two main sections: the memorial wing and the municipal offices. The memorial wing, which is also called the 'cells of events' consists of a number of typical units of expressive pyramid forms, which no doubt draw inspiration from the local landscape and the roof forms of the local vernacular architecture, yet achieve monumentality and expressive power in the repetitive treatment of the composition and the Brutalist finish in bare concrete. The interior of each unit is treated uniquely so that a number of different functional units and ambiances have been achieved. These units provide exhibition spaces, a library, club, assembly chamber and a multi-purpose space, and are all connected through a glass vestibule called the 'civic vestibule', which itself acts as both connecting space between the different units and between the entire complex and the surrounding landscape.

The other part of the building, which is reserved for the municipal offices, flows out of the vestibule and has a simple, trapezoidal volume finished with a stark glass facade that reflects the sky and landscape, providing light to the offices but also lending aesthetic contrast to the memorial wing of the complex. The final volumetric composition of the memorial centre has consequently been achieved through the rotation of the typical units, while the functional scheme is regulated by the circular placement of the units around the central vestibule.

Overall, this memorial centre, which commemorates the heroic anti-fascist efforts of the local community in the Second World War, is a fine example of the intensive use of modern expression in the construction of the Yugoslav people's national identity, and makes a strong testimony to the skill of its artists, architects and engineers. ←