

Place, Production and Scenography: international theory and practice since 1962

What the word for space, *Raum*, *Rum*, designates is said by its ancient meaning. *Raum* means a place cleared or freed for settlement and lodging. A space is something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely within a boundary, Greek *peras*. A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something *begins its presencing*. That is why the concept is that of *horismos*, that is, the horizon, the boundary. Space is in essence that for which room has been made, that which is let into its bounds. That for which room is made is always granted and hence is joined, that is gathered, by virtue of a location, that is by such a thing as the bridge. *Accordingly spaces receive their being from locations and not from 'space'.*

Martin Heidegger
'Building, Dwelling and Thinking', 1954

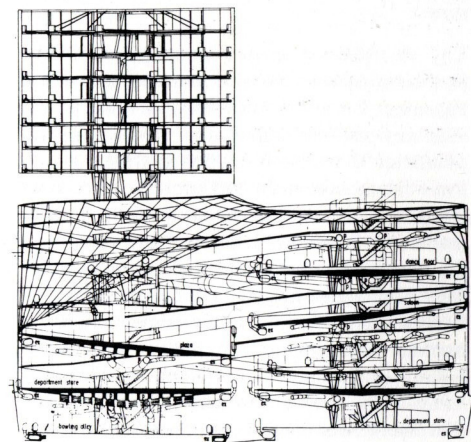
No account of recent developments in architecture can fail to mention the ambivalent role that the profession has played since the mid-1960s – ambivalent not only in the sense that while professing to act in the public interest it has sometimes assisted uncritically in furthering the domain of an optimized technology, but also in the sense that many of its more intelligent members have abandoned traditional practice, either to resort to direct social action or to indulge in the projection of architecture as a form of art. As far as this last aspect is concerned, one cannot help regarding it as the return of a repressed creativity, as the implosion of utopia upon itself. Architects have of course indulged in such unrealizable projections before but, with the classic exception

of Piranesi or, more recently, the fantasmagoria of Bruno Taut's Glass Chain, rarely have they projected their images in such inaccessible terms. Both before and after the trauma of the First World War the positive aspirations of the Enlightenment still had the power to carry a certain conviction. Before that, at the threshold of the 19th century, even the most grandiose of Boullée's visions could, one imagines, have been built had sufficient resources been made available, and clearly Ledoux was as much a builder as he was a visionary. What was true of Ledoux was certainly no less true of Le Corbusier, whose vast urban projections could no doubt all have been realized had sufficient power been placed at his disposal. The 412-metre (1,350-foot) World Trade Center, New York, a framed tube structure in the form of twin towers completed to the designs of Minoru Yamasaki in 1972, or the 30-metre (100-foot) higher Sears Tower, Chicago, designed in 1971 by Bruce Graham and Fazlur Khan of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, have both served to demonstrate that possibly not even Wright's 1,600-metre-high (1 mile) skyscraper of 1956 was necessarily unfeasible. But such mega-buildings are too exceptional to serve as a model for general practice. Meanwhile, as Manfredo Tafuri has suggested, the aim of the latterday avant garde is either to validate itself through the media or, alternatively, to redeem its guilt by executing the rite of creative exorcism in isolation. The extent to which this last may serve as a subversive tactic (Archigram's 'injecting noise into the system') or as an elaborate metaphor with critical implications depends of course on the complexity of ideas involved and on the intent underlying the whole enterprise.

In the case of the English Archigram group, who began to project Neo-Futurist images just before the first issue of their magazine *Archigram* in 1961, it is obvious that their attitude was closely tied to the technocratic ideology of the American designer Buckminster Fuller and to that of his British apologists John McHale and Reyner Banham. By 1960, at McHale's suggestion, Banham had already earmarked Fuller as the redeeming white knight of the future, in the last chapter of his book *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*. Archigram's subsequent commitment to a 'high-tech', light-weight, infrastructural approach (the kind of indeterminacy implicit in the work of Fuller and even more evident in Yona Friedman's *L'Architecture mobile* of 1958) brought them, rather paradoxically, to indulge in ironic forms of science fiction, rather than to project solutions that were either truly indeterminate or capable of being realized and appropriated by society. It is this more than anything else that distinguishes them from that other prominent Fuller disciple on the British scene, Cedric Price, whose Fun Palace of 1961 and Potteries Thinkbelt of 1964 were nothing if not realizable and, in theory at least, both indeterminate and capable, respectively, of meeting an evident demand for popular entertainment and a readily accessible system of higher education.

Aside from a certain subversive eroticism (the biologically functionalist parody evident say in Michael Webb's *Sin Centre* of 1962) Archigram was more interested in the seductive appeal of space-age imagery and, after Fuller, in the Armageddon overtones of survival technology than in the processes of production or the relevance of such sophisticated tech-

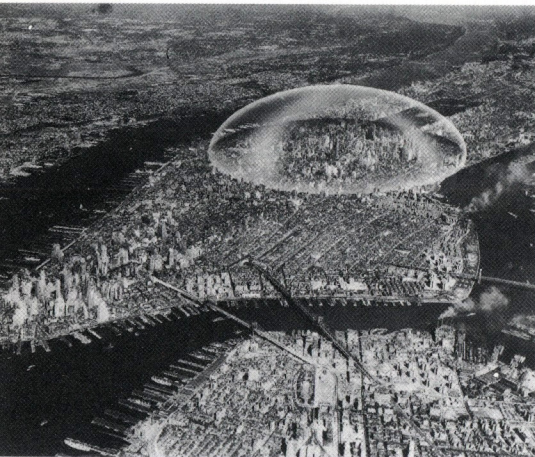
nique to the tasks of the moment. For all their surface irony, Ron Herron's 'Walking Cities' of 1964 were clearly projected as stalking across a ruined world in the aftermath of a nuclear war. Like Howard Hughes's 'Glomar Explorer' they suggest some sort of nightmarish salvation, rescuing both men and artifacts after a cataclysmic disaster. These leviathans may be regarded as paralleling Fuller's 1962 proposal to erect a giant dome over the whole of midtown Manhattan. This urban iron lung was projected as a geodesic smog shield, a device which could no doubt be made to double as a fallout shelter in the unlikely event of a nuclear near-miss. With comparable nonchalance, Archigram saw no reason to concern themselves with the social and ecological consequences of their various megastructural proposals, of which Peter Cook's 'Plug-In



278 Webb, 'Sin Centre' project, 1962.

279 Herron, 'Walking City' project, 1964.





280 Fuller, project for a geodesic dome over midtown Manhattan (river to river, 64th–22nd streets), 1962.

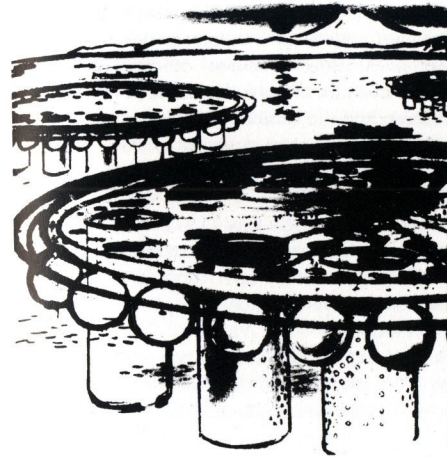
City' of 1964 was a typical example. Similarly, in their obsession with suspended space-age capsules, Dennis Crompton, Michael Webb, Warren Chalk and David Greene felt under no obligation to explain why one might choose to live in such expensive and sophisticated hardware and yet at the same time in brutally cramped conditions. Like Banham acting out the narcissistic gestures of Vishnu in his solipsistic, inflatable bubble, equipped with high fidelity and presumably other conveniences (in homage probably to the philistine ethos of Fuller's ironic lyric 'Roam Home to a Dome': see p. 239), they all proposed space standards that were well below the *Existenzminimum* established by those pre-war functionalists they supposedly despised.

If anything was destined to reduce architecture 'to the level of the activities of certain species of insects and mammals' – to quote Berthold Lubetkin's 1956 attack on the reductivism of Soviet Constructivist architects (his target was Ginzburg's OSA group) – it was surely these residential cells projected by Archigram. Modelled on Fuller's Dymaxion House of 1927 or on his Dymaxion Bathroom of a decade later (see p. 239), these units aspired to being 'autonomous packages', in the sense that they were designed chiefly for

individuals or couples. Although this preoccupation with the childless unit may have been an implicit critique of the bourgeois family, the ultimate stance of Archigram was hardly critical, as the following passage from Peter Cook's *Architecture: Action and Plan* of 1967 makes evident:

It will often be part of the architect's brief to investigate the 'possibilities' of a site; in other words to use the ingenuity of the architectural concept to exploit the maximum profit from a piece of land. In the past this would have been considered an immoral use of the talents of an artist. It is now simply part of the sophistication of the whole environmental and building process in which finance can be made into a creative element in design.

The work of Archigram was surprisingly close to that of the Japanese Metabolists, who, reacting to the pressures of Japanese overcrowding, started in the late 1950s to propose constantly growing and adapting 'plug-in' megastructures where the living cells, as in the work of Noriaki Kurokawa, would be reduced to prefabricated pods clipped on to vast helicoidal skyscrapers. Alternatively, as in the projects of Kiyonori Kikutake, they would be attached like limpets to the inner and outer surfaces of large cylinders floating in or on the sea. Kikutake's floating cities are surely among the most poetic visions of the Metabolist movement. Yet, despite the proliferation of off-shore drilling rigs with their working complement dedicated to the extraction of energy, Kikutake's marine cities seem even more remote and inapplicable to everyday life than the megastructures of Archigram. It testifies to the rhetorical avant gardism of the movement that most of the Metabolists went on to establish rather conventional practices. With the exception of Kikutake's Sky House of 1958 and Kurokawa's Nagakin bachelor capsule tower, built in the Ginza, Tokyo, in 1971 (cf. Kurokawa's capsule apartments of 1962), very few Metabolic concepts were realized. Although such frantic futurism is to be distinguished from the intelligent additive urban form proposals advanced by such moderates as Fumihiko Maki and Masato Otaka, Gunther



281 Kikutake, 'Marine City' project, 1958.

Nitschke had this to say when making an assessment of the Metabolist movement in 1966:

As long as the actual buildings get heavier, harder, more and more monstrous in scale, as long as architecture is taken as a means of expression of power, be it of oneself or of any kind of vulgar institution, which should be serving not ruling society, the talk of greater flexibility and change-loving structures is just fuss. Comparing this structure [Akira Shibuya's Metabolic City project of 1966] with any one of the traditional Japanese structures or modern methods suggested by Wachsmann, Fuller, or Ekuin in Japan, it must be considered a mere anachronism, a thousand years out of date, or to say the least, not an advance of modern architecture in terms of theory and practice.

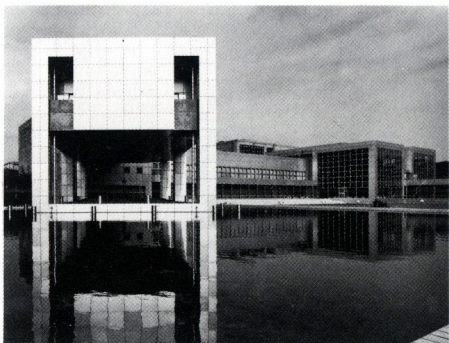
The decline of the Metabolist vision in Japan came with the evident ideological emptiness of the Osaka Exhibition of 1970. Thereafter the critical lead in Japanese architecture passed from the older Metabolists to the members of the so-called Japanese New Wave, whose work became known largely through the support of two architects of the middle generation, Arata Isozaki and Kazuo Shinohara. While Shinohara's work



282 Kurokawa, Nakagin capsule tower, Tokyo, 1971.

has remained almost exclusively domestic, Isozaki's stature stems from his double reputation, first as a critical intellectual and second as a public architect whose independent career began with the Oita branch of the Fukuoka Sogo Bank, built in Kyushu in 1966. This successful work led to a whole series of major public structures, including the Gunma Prefectural Museum, Takasaki, dating from 1974.

Isozaki came to the fore internationally in 1968 when he contributed a critical exhibit entitled 'Electric Labyrinth' to the 14th Triennale in Milan. Conceived as a multi-media presentation of the apocalyptic significance of the Hiroshima disaster, this *tour de force* comprising randomly operated pivoting screens and back-projected images established Isozaki's standing with the European avant garde. The Milan Triennale brought him into contact with Archigram and Hans Hollein, and thereafter his work displayed certain aspects of these influences. From Archigram he took the 'high-tech' exuberance of his robot designed for Kenzo Tange's Festival Plaza in the Osaka Exhibition of 1970; from Hollein, his taste for mixing materials with high crafted objects and ironic artistic images, the latter first appearing in the Fukuoka Sogo Bank headquarters in Kitakyushu (1968–71). Apart from his penchant for elaborate interior finishes, Isozaki was inspired,



283 Isozaki, Gunma Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, Takasaki, 1974.

like Kahn, by the *architecture parlante* of Ledoux. Taking Ledoux's emblematic Neoplatonic geometry as his point of departure, Isozaki pursued a gridded high-tech architecture in a series of branch banks designed in the early 1970s, culminating in the *magnum opus* of the Gunma Museum. With this mirage-like, scintillating architecture Isozaki attempted to compensate for the loss of the traditional Japanese 'space of darkness' – the dimly lit, recessive domestic interior which Junichiro Tanizaki had been among the first to lament, in his essay 'In Praise of Shadows' (1933). Sympathetic with Tanizaki's evaluation of the underlit interiors of traditional Japanese buildings but unable to accept the reactionary implications of his cultural nostalgia, Isozaki attempted to evolve a modern equivalent for this traditional illusionistic space. This development reached its peak in the Nagamsami Home Bank (1971), of which he wrote:

This building has almost no form; it is merely a gray expanse. The multi-level grid guides one's lines of sight but does not focus them on anything in particular. At first encounter, the vague gray expanse seems impossible to decipher and utterly odd. The multi-level lattice disperses vision throughout the space, much as various images might be thrown around an area from a central projector. It absorbs all individual spaces that establish strict order. It conceals them, and when that concealment process is over, only the gray expanse remains.

Since the early 1970s Isozaki's work has oscillated constantly between gridded atectonic assemblies (gray expanses) controlled by the superimposition of cubic forms, as in the Gunma Museum and the Shukosha Building in Fukuoka City (1974–75), and a series of barrel-vaulted tectonic structures such as the Fujimi Country Clubhouse near Oita (1972–74) and the Central Library of Kitakyushu City (1972–75). The latest version of this last paradigm is the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, under construction in 1984, which is probably his finest recent work.

Unlike the Metabolists, Isozaki and Shinohara and other members of the Japanese New Wave accept the fact that today one can hardly hope to achieve any meaningful relationship between the one-off building and the urban fabric as a whole. This critical attitude has been expressed in a series of extremely formal and introspective houses designed by such architects as Tadao Ando, Hiromi Fujii, Hiroshi Hara, Itsuko Hasegawa and Toyo Ito, in addition to similarly introverted works by Isozaki and Shinohara. (See also below, pp. 324–5 and 339–42.)

Ito, who has been influenced to an equal degree by both Isozaki and Shinohara, can be seen as epitomizing the general line of the Japanese New Wave; that is to say, his work is both highly aesthetic and ideologically critical. Like Isozaki and Shinohara he has assumed a fatalistic attitude toward the megalopolis, regarding it as a manifestation of environmental delirium, devoid of sense. He sees the sole possibility for cultural significance to reside in the creation of closed poetic domains, in contrast to the random disorder of the 'Non-Place Urban Realm' (see below). His largest urban work to date, the PMT Building at Nagoya erected in 1978, is a 'paper-thin' structural intervention whose hermetic, largely top-lit form possesses a stoic and acerbic beauty. What we have here is the aristocratic counterform (Isozaki) rather than the mask of a patronizing Populism (Venturi). This much is clear from Ito's essay of 1978, 'Collage and Superficiality in Architecture':

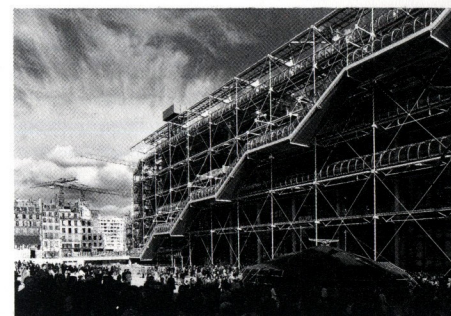
Surface richness in a Japanese city does not consist of a historical accumulation of buildings but rather arises out of a nostalgia for our lost

architectural past which is indiscriminately mixed with the superficial icons of the present. Behind an endless desire for nostalgic satisfaction there resides a void without any substance. What I wish to obtain in my architecture is not another nostalgic object, but rather a certain superficiality of expression in order to reveal the nature of the void hidden beneath.

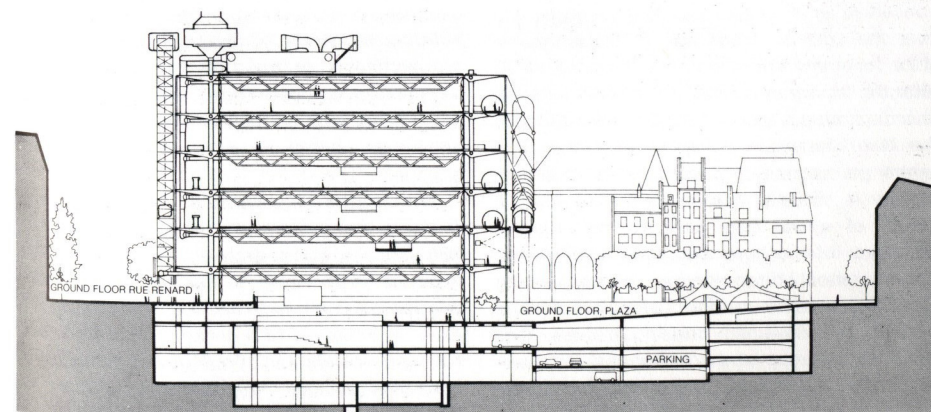
As we have seen, apart from the geodesic dome 'drop-out' culture of the American West Buckminster Fuller's greatest impact has been in Japan and, above all, in Britain, where a continuous 'Dymaxion' development can be traced from the first space-frame and dome projects of Cedric Price and Peter Cook to the more recent work of Foster Associates.

The paradigm of this movement is the Centre Pompidou in Paris, built in 1977 to the designs of the short-lived Anglo-Italian partnership of Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano. The building is obviously a realization of the technological and infrastructural rhetoric of Archigram; and while the full consequences of this approach are becoming evident through everyday use, it is apparent that certain paradoxical achievements may be claimed on its behalf. In the first place, it is an outstanding popular success – as much for its sensational nature as for anything else. In the second, it is a brilliant *tour de force* in advanced technique, looking for all the world like the oil refinery whose technology it attempts to emulate. It seems, however, to have come into being with the

minimum regard for the specificity of its brief – for the art and library holdings it was destined to house. It represents the design approach of indeterminacy and optimum flexibility taken to extremes. Not only was it necessary to build another 'building' within its skeletal volume in order to provide sufficient wall surface and enclosure for the exhibition of art; but also the provision of 50-metre (165-foot) lattice truss spans throughout, in order to ensure optimum flexibility, seems to have proved excessive. In the first instance we have an under-provision of wall surface, in the second an over-provision of flexibility. The additional fact that the scale of the building is quite indifferent to its urban context and that it is incapable of representing its status as an institution is consistent with the ideological position from which it stems, since such concerns



284, 285 Piano and Rogers, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1972–77.



286 Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker and Bor, strategic plan for Milton Keynes New Town, Bucks., 1972. Schematic road grid laid over the landscape. Residential areas (pale shading) and employment areas (dark) are irregularly intermingled.



were always foreign to the English Dymaxion school of design. One of the unintended ironies of this work seems to derive from the spectacular view of the city which may be gained from the glazed escalator access tubes, hung off the west side of the building. These access ways are now barely adequate to accommodate the average daily attendance of more than 20,000 visitors, a number of whom come not for the cultural facilities offered but for the building and the view.

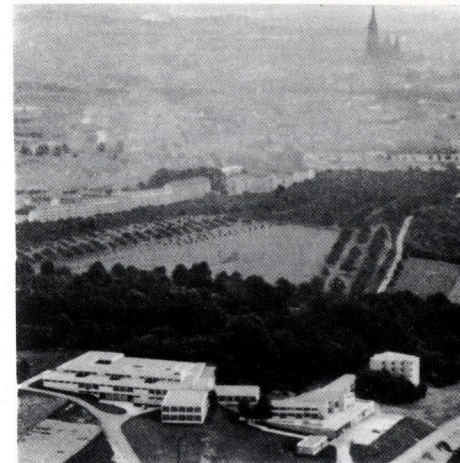
An equally indeterminate approach was adopted in the 1972 design of the English New Town, Milton Keynes. This city, based on a somewhat irregular street grid, was apparently conceived as an instant Los Angeles to be laid over the agrarian landscape of Buckinghamshire. Its empty irregular network, configured after the topography, was yet another exercise in indeterminacy pushed to absurdity. Despite the Neo-Classicism of its Miesian shopping centre, its capacity to represent a municipal identity is virtually non-existent. One has no notion of arrival here save for the graphic indication of the legal boundary, and for the casual visitor Milton Keynes seems nothing more than a rather random collection of more or less well-designed housing estates. One thinks by contrast of the orthogonal precision of Wright's Broadacre City, where, despite the relentless dispersal of the urban fabric, places

would have acquired a certain definition by virtue of their orthogonal boundaries. Here, needless to say, what boundaries there are fail to correspond to any perceivable order, and this is hardly surprising given that the structure of the town was influenced by the planning theories of Melvin Webber, whose slogan 'Non-Place Urban Realm' seems to have been adopted as a credo by the official architects of the plan, Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker and Bor. The fact that this slogan stemmed from Webber's commitment to the Kristaller-Losch central place location theory – then as now, the most dynamic model available for the creation of optimum marketing conditions – could hardly have escaped either the architects or the City Corporation. This selection of an open-ended planning model in accordance with the hypothetical interests of a consumer society was surely a conscious choice.

Within the Hochschule für Gestaltung (HfG) at Ulm in Germany, initially conceived in 1951 by the Swiss architect Max Bill as the institutional successor to the Bauhaus, a rigorous approach to design and technology brought itself in the space of a decade to confront the fundamental contradictions of designing for a consumer society. After Bill's resignation as director in 1956, the HfG embraced a form of

'operational research' by which it intended to evolve a heuristic of design, whereby the forms of objects would be determined in accordance with precise methods for analyzing the nature of their production and use. Unfortunately, this method rapidly degenerated into a form of method-idolatry in which the methodological 'purist' was invariably prepared to forego a solution rather than arrive at a design that had not been ergonomically determined. As far as Herbert Ohl's Department of Industrialized Building was concerned, this led to an emphasis on the design of industrial components to the exclusion of any comprehensive analysis of specific building tasks. Real needs were often overlooked in an effort to produce extremely sophisticated, if relatively simple, prototypical components for the rationalized production of built form. By the mid-1960s the more critical faculty members, Tomás Maldonado, Claude Schnaidt and Gui Bonsiepe, had jointly recognized that this idealization of product design was a dead end, conveniently overlooking in the name of scientific method and functional aesthetics the fundamental contradictions inherent in neo-capitalist society. As far as architecture was concerned this was never more forcibly expressed than by Schnaidt, who in his essay 'Architecture and Political Commitment' (1967) wrote:

In the days when the pioneers of modern architecture were young, they thought like William Morris that architecture should be an 'art of the people for the people'. Instead of pandering to the tastes of the privileged few, they wanted to satisfy the requirements of the community. They wanted to build dwellings, matched to human needs, to erect a Cité Radieuse. But they had reckoned without the commercial instincts of the bourgeoisie who lost no time in arrogating their theories to themselves and pressing them into service for the purposes of money-making. Utility quickly became synonymous with profitability. Anti-academic forms became the new décor of the ruling classes. The rational dwelling was transformed into the minimum dwelling, the Cité Radieuse into the urban conglomeration and austerity of line into poverty of form. The



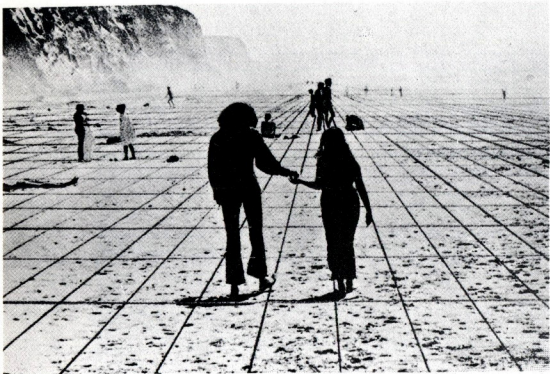
287 Bill, Hochschule für Gestaltung, Ulm, 1953–55, showing (left to right) workshop block, library, administration building and student housing. In the distance is Ulm Cathedral.

architects of the trade unions, co-operatives, and socialist municipalities were enlisted in the service of the whisky distillers, detergent manufacturers, the bankers, and the Vatican. Modern architecture, which wanted to play its part in the liberation of mankind by creating a new environment to live in, was transformed into a giant enterprise for the degradation of the human habitat.

Later in the same article Schnaidt criticized the achievements of the 'alternative' avant garde of the 1960s:

It is their philosophy that even the most audacious concepts in architecture and city planning are feasible with modern technological aids. This is what lies behind their quest for something resembling space ships, packing crates, filing systems, refineries, or artificial islands. . . .

These futurist architects may well have the merit of taking technology to its logical conclusion but more often than not their attitude ends up in technolatry. The refinery and the space capsule may serve as models of technical and formal perfection but if they become the objects of a cult, the lessons they can teach will



288 Superstudio, 'A Journey from A to B', 1969. 'There will be no further reason for roads or squares'.

completely miss their mark. This unlimited confidence in the potentialities of technology goes hand in hand with a surprising degree of disingenuousness concerning the future of man. . . . Such visions as these are soothing to many architects: braced by so much technology, by such confidence in the future, they feel reassured, and justified in their social and political abdication.

Yet while one might challenge its effectiveness, the architectural avant garde of the 1960s had not entirely abdicated its social responsibility. Many factions existed whose orientation was decidedly political and whose attitude towards advanced technology was by no means uncritical. Of these mention must be made of the Italian Superstudio group, who were, in this respect, among the most poetic. Influenced by the 'unitary town planning' concepts of the International Situationist Constant Nieuwenhuys, who, in his *New Babylon* of 1960, had postulated a constantly changing urban fabric that would respond to the 'ludic' tendency in man, Superstudio, led by Adolfo Natalini, started in 1966 to produce a body of work which was more or less divided between representing the form of a 'Continuous Monument' as a mute urban sign and producing a series of vignettes illustrating a world from which consumer goods had been eliminated. Their work varied from the projection of vast im-

penetrable megaliths, faced in mirror-glass, to the depiction of a science-fiction landscape in which nature had been rendered benevolent – in short the quintessential anti-architectural utopia. In 1969 they wrote:

Beyond the convulsions of over-production a state can be born of calm in which a world takes shape without products or refuse, a zone in which mind is energy and raw material and is also the final product, the only intangible object for consumption.

And again in 1972:

The objects we will need will be only flags or talismans, signals for an existence that continues or simple utensils for simple operations. Thus, on the one hand, there will remain utensils . . . on the other, such symbolic objects as monuments or badges . . . objects that can easily be carried about if we should become nomads, or heavy and immovable if we decide to stay in one place forever.

Beyond the rule of the performance principle, which the philosopher Herbert Marcuse had already characterized as defining life in terms of instruments and consumer goods, Superstudio projected a silent, anti-futurist and technologically optimistic utopia where, in the words of Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (1962),

The level of living would be measured by other criteria: the universal gratification of the basic human needs, and freedom from guilt and fear – internalized as well as externalized, instinctual as well as 'rational'. . . . In this case the quantum of instinctual energy still to be diverted to necessary labor . . . would be so small that a large area of repressive constraints and modifications no longer sustained by external forces would collapse.

It is significant that Superstudio chose to represent such a non-repressive world in terms of an architecture that was virtually invisible, or, where visible, totally useless and by design auto-destructive (see their self-disintegrating mirror-glass dam for Niagara Falls). For all that they rendered the contradiction of the 'Continuous Monument' as an impenetrable mass

reminiscent of Boullée, it was nonetheless a metaphysical image, as fleeting and as cryptic as the Suprematist monuments of Malevich or the 'wrapped' buildings of Christo, an artist who, after wrapping the Kunsthalle at Berne in 1968, went on to package and hence to 'silence' most of the institutional monuments of the Western world.

The growing awareness in the early 1960s that in common practice there was a fundamental lack of correspondence between the values of the architect and the needs and mores of the user led to a whole series of reformist moves which sought in a variety of counter-utopian ways to overcome this divorce of the designer from everyday society. These factions not only challenged the inaccessibility of the abstract syntax of contemporary architecture but also tried to devise ways in which architects could serve those poor sectors of the society not normally addressed by the profession. In his book *Supports: An Alternative to Mass Housing* (1972) N.J. Habraken first tackled the problem of building residential stock that could meet the variable needs of its users, and John Turner and William Mangin began in 1963 to write up their experience as consultants to the spontaneous 'squatter' cities then coming into existence around the perimeters of large South American towns. The following situation, as described by Mangin at the time, may be taken as typical of many other cities throughout the Continent:

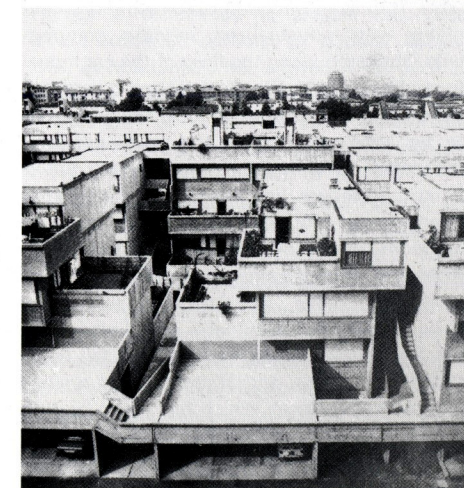
The tremendous population growth in Peru, together with the centralization of social, political, economic and cultural rewards in Lima, the capital city, has led to recent intensified migration from the provinces to Lima. It is safe to say that at least a million of Lima's two million people were born outside the city. The increase in the numbers of migrants to the city and the subsequent dramatic resettlement of many of them in 'unaided self-help' squatter settlements, 'barriadas', have drawn considerable attention locally and abroad and for the first time made many Peruvians aware of the situation. The city has probably grown in the past in much the same way, but the magnitude and the visibility of the recent influx made it

seem like a new phenomenon. The migrants come from practically all regions and all social classes and ethnic groupings in the country.

Problems of this magnitude, of course, lie beyond the province of architecture as an autonomous discipline and even outside the process of land settlement and building as it is commonly understood. All the same, the scale of the problem, its visibility and the need to confront it in a way that would assist the squatters to build in a more effective manner (the provision in most instances of water and sewer infrastructures), created a general climate in which the forty-year-old *Neue Sachlichkeit* formula of slum clearance followed by massive rehousing was for the first time subjected to radical reconsideration. Habraken argued that the whole approach needed to be rethought, not only in respect of the Third World but also in the face of growing user discontent in industrialized economies.

The establishment of alternative modes of practice to meet this situation, for both the developed and the underdeveloped world, has proved elusive, and the panacea of 'user participation' (hard to define appropriately and even more difficult to achieve) has only served to make us acutely aware of the in-

289 De Carlo, Mateotti village, Terni, 1974-77.



tractability of the problem and of the fact that probably it can only be effectively tackled on a piecemeal basis, by responding appropriately to specific situations. Nevertheless, advocacy planning remains with us as a radical legacy of the 1960s, although the results of its application have varied widely, from the political manipulation of the underprivileged to the recent achievement of a section of low-rise housing in Terni north of Rome, designed by Giancarlo de Carlo, in accordance with a brief developed as a result of extensive discussions with the local trade union. There is no doubt that this whole undertaking has resulted in housing of remarkable quality and variety, although the manner in which the users' desires were finally interpreted remains a controversial issue.

As far as transforming the practice of the Neue Sachlichkeit was concerned, Habraken and his Foundation for Architectural Research (SAR) in Eindhoven did their technocratic best to take the promise of Yona Friedman's open infra-structural approach, his 'mobile architecture', to its logical conclusion. To this end they proposed a low-rise, multi-storey, *support* structure, whose plan arrangement was undetermined, save for fixed access, kitchen and bathroom zones. Outside these zones the occupant would be free to arrange the plan of his allocated volume in any way he wished. Regrettably, Habraken intended to furnish this spatial matrix with industrialized, modular components fabricated along the lines of the car industry and brought to a level of technical sophistication and structural tolerance which has yet to be attained, even in the wholesale prefabricated building programmes of the Soviet Union. Moreover, like Friedman, he tended to overlook the fact that much of the inherent 'freedom' of the system would automatically disappear once it came under the auspices of monopoly capital. Housing after all has yet to become a truly consumable item. Fortunately, the SAR concept does not stand or fall by its technology alone, and Habraken has opened up a line of research which has yet to be fully explored. A quite remarkable work apparently influenced by Habraken's thought is the distinguished 'expandable' terrace housing built in

Genterstrasse in Munich in 1971 by Otto Steidle and Doris and Ralph Thut.

Populism

The Loosian recognition of the loss of cultural identity that urbanization had brought in its wake returned with a vengeance in the mid 1960s as architects began to realize that the reductive codes of contemporary architecture had led to an impoverishment of the urban environment. The exact manner in which this impoverishment has come about however – the extent to which it is due to abstract tendencies present in Cartesian rationality itself or alternatively to ruthless economic exploitation – is a complex and critical issue which has yet to be judiciously decided. It cannot be denied that the *tabula rasa* reductivism of the Modern Movement has played a salient role in the wholesale destruction of urban culture; thus the emphasis that the 'Post-Modernist' critique has placed on respecting the existing urban context can hardly be discredited. This anti-utopian 'contextualist' critique was already available in the 1960s, first in Colin Rowe's neo-Sittesque approach to urban form (as taught in Cornell University and presented in his book of 1979, *Collage City*), and then in Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* of 1966 in which he wrote:

The main justification for honky-tonk elements in architectural order is their very existence. They are what we have. Architects can bemoan or try to ignore them or even try to abolish them, but they will not go away. Or they will not go away for a long time, because architects do not have the power to replace them (nor do they know what to replace them with), and because these commonplace elements accommodate existing needs for variety and communication. The old clichés involving both banality and mess will still be the context of our new architecture, and our new architecture significantly will be the context for them. I am taking the limited view, I admit, but the limited view, which architects have tended to belittle, is as important as the visionary view, which they have tended to glorify but have not brought about. The short-term plan, which expediently

combines the old and the new, must accompany the long-term plan. Architecture is evolutionary as well as revolutionary. As an art it will acknowledge what is and what ought to be, the immediate and the speculative.

With the publication in 1972 of *Learning from Las Vegas*, written by Venturi, Denise Scott-Brown and Steve Izenour, Venturi's sensitive and sane assessment of the cultural realities confronting everyday practice – the need to set order against disorder and vice versa – shifted from an acceptance of honky-tonk to its glorification; from a modest appraisal of Main Street as being 'almost all right' to a reading of the billboard strip as the transmogrified utopia of the Enlightenment, lying there like a science-fiction transposition in the midst of the desert!

This rhetoric, which would have us see A & P parking lots as the *tapis verts* of Versailles, or Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas as the modern equivalent of Hadrian's Villa, is ideology in its purest form. The ambivalent manner in which Venturi and Scott-Brown exploit this ideology as a way of bringing us to condone the ruthless kitsch of Las Vegas, as an exemplary mask for the concealment of the brutality of our own environment, testifies to the aestheticizing intent of their thesis. And while their critical distance permits them the luxury of describing the typical casino as a ruthless landscape of seduction and control – they emphasize the two-way mirrors and the boundless, dark, disorientating timelessness of its interior – they take care to disassociate themselves from its values. This does not prevent them, however, from positing it as a model for the restructuring of urban form:

Beyond the town the only transition between the Strip and the Mojave desert is a zone of rusting beer cans. Within the town the transition is as ruthlessly sudden. Casinos whose fronts relate so sensitively to the highway turn their ill-kempt backsides towards the local environment, exposing residual forms and spaces of mechanical equipment and service areas.

The irony with which architects from Lutyens to Venturi have sought to transcend through wit

the contradictory circumstances under which they are asked to build here seems to degenerate into total acquiescence; and the cult of 'the ugly and the ordinary' becomes indistinguishable from the environmental consequences of the market economy. Between the lines, the authors are brought to concede the superfluity of architectural design in a society that is exclusively motivated by ruthless economic drives; a society which has nothing of greater significance to represent than the giant neon-lit sky sign of the average strip. At the end of their analysis they are almost brought to concede that the loss of the monument is an absence that can hardly be compensated for by the sophistries of the 'decorated shed':

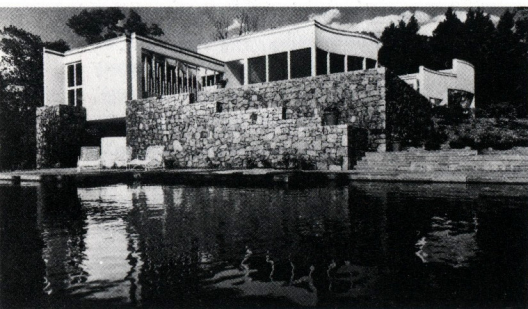
The casino in Las Vegas is a big low space. It is the archetype of all public interior spaces whose heights are diminished for reasons of budget or air conditioning. Today, span is easy to achieve and volume is governed by mechanical and economical limitations in height. But railroad stations, restaurants and shopping arcades only ten feet high reflect as well our changing attitude to monumentality... we have replaced the monumental space of Pennsylvania Station by a subway above ground and that of Grand Central Terminal remains mainly through its magnificent conversion to an advertising vehicle.

Venturi is determined to present Las Vegas as an authentic outburst of popular fantasy. But, as Maldonado has argued in his book *La Speranza Progettuale (Design, Nature and Revolution)* of 1970, the reality would indicate the contrary, that Las Vegas is the pseudo-communicative culmination of 'more than half a century of masked manipulatory violence directed towards the formation of an apparently free and playful urban environment in which men are completely devoid of innovative will'.

Be this as it may, the Venturi faction did not take their Populist stand in isolation. On the contrary, they soon acquired a sympathetic following in both academic and professional circles – from the historian/critic Vincent Scully, who initially rallied to their cause with his laudatory introduction to Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction*, and who went on to confirm his continuing support with

his polemic *The Shingle Style Revisited* (1974), and from architects such as Charles Moore and Robert Stern, who, while adopting more varied *ad hoc* attitudes towards the manipulation of form, were nonetheless equally open to exploiting the essentially atectonic nature of the American balloon-frame.

The net effect, at least in Anglo-Saxon circles, has been to stimulate a rather indiscriminate reaction against all forms of modernist expression in architecture, a situation which the critic Charles Jencks was prompt to identify as 'Post-Modern'. In his book *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (1977), Jencks effectively characterized Post-Modernism as being a Populist-Pluralist art of immediate communicability. At the end of the first edition of this text, he hailed Gaudí's 'pre-modern' Casa Batlló (1906) as an exemplary work, which was readily accessible, inasmuch as the populace could decipher and identify with the iconography of Catalan separatism which it embodied (Jencks is referring here to the lance-like tower and the dragon's back roof representing the ultimate triumph of the Catalan hero St George over the 'dragon' of Madrid). Nationalist mythologies cannot be invented overnight, however, and the sobering fact remains that many so-called Populist works have nothing more to convey than a gratifying cosiness or an ironic comment on the absurdity of suburban kitsch. More often than not Post-Modernist architects use the private house as an occasion for indulging in idiosyncratic obsessions, as is all too evident from the triviality of Stanley Tigerman's Hot Dog and Daisy houses of the mid-1970s.

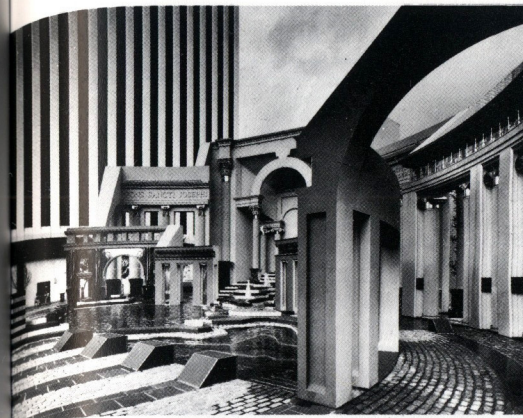


290 Stern, Ehrman House, Armonk, N.Y., 1975.



291 Jahn, Bank of the South West, Houston, 1982 ff.

Each year American Populism seems to grow increasingly diffuse in its eclectic parodies from the Art Deco conceits of say Venturi's Brant House at Greenwich, Connecticut (1971) and Stern's closely related Ehrman House at Armonk, New York (1975) to the self-styled 'Popular Machinism' (in effect, neo-Art Deco) of Helmut Jahn's typical crystal skyscraper, the high-rise, curtain-walled structure rendered as a giant Wurlitzer organ. These and other Populist divagations indicate that the purging simplicity of 'the dumb



292 Moore, Piazza d'Italia, New Orleans, 1975-79.

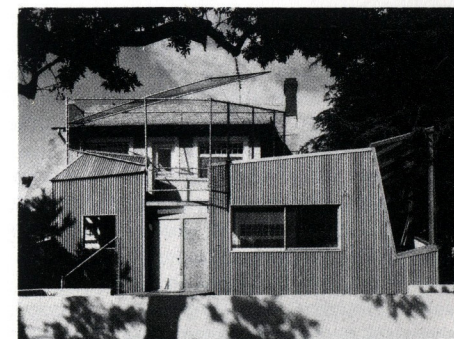
and the ordinary' (in Venturi's phrase) has now been left behind, along with the sparsely elegant Trubeck and Wislocki houses which Venturi realized on Cape Cod in 1970.

By scenographically simulating the profiles of classical and vernacular and thereby reducing the architectonics of construction to pure parody, Populism tends to undermine the society's capacity for continuing with a significant culture of built form. The consequence of this for the field as a whole has been a seductive but decisive drift towards a kind of 'tawdry pathos', to use Jencks's felicitous yet ambivalent assessment of the theatrical effects created by Moore and Turnbull in their designs for Kresge College on the University of California's Santa Cruz campus (1974). The cynicism which ultimately motivates such scenographic operations has since been openly conceded by Moore, above all in his account of the design process which led to the Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans (1979). In 1981 he wrote:

I remembered that the architectural orders were Italian, with a little help from the Greeks, and so we thought we could put Tuscan, Doric, Ionic and Corinthian columns over the fountain, but they overshadowed it, obliterating the shape of Italy. So instead we added a 'Delicatessen Order' that we thought could resemble sausages hanging in a shop window, thus illustrating its transalpine location. But now I think there is going to be an

Italian restaurant and no sausages. . . . there was a little bit of money left over so we thought we would bang up a temple out front to show that our piazza was behind it. There was enough money too to make a campanile beside the temple to show off our existence and to make more patterns with the verticals of the skyscraper behind. Someday there will be shops around it, like Ghirardelli Square, but for the moment it is just sitting by itself and a little lonesome.

In contrast to the flaccid eclecticism of Moore (who abandoned the constructional purity of his Sea Ranch complex in Sonoma County, California (1964-66) as soon as it was completed), Frank Gehry's domestic work, above all his own deconstructed 'anti-house' (cf. Marcel Duchamp's 'anti-painting') built in Santa Monica in 1979, introduced a genuinely subversive element into the complacent decadence of American Populist architecture. However, this creative resistance has been more than balanced by the uncritical absorption of American Populism into the European mainstream, a cultural transfer effected by Paolo Portoghesi's architectural section of the 1980 Venice Biennale which bore the seductive double title 'The Presence of the Past' and 'The End of Prohibition'. It is significant that the full-size façades of Portoghesi's 'Strada Novissima' in the Arsenal (fig. 309) were realized by scenobuilders from the Italian film industry. The only exception was the design by Leon Krier, who, no doubt out of 'moral' deference to his beloved Heinrich Tessenow (see the latter's *Handwerk*



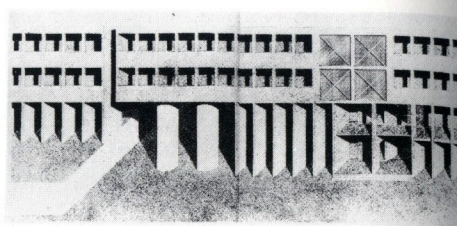
293 Gehry, Gehry House, Santa Monica, Calif., 1979.

und Kleinstadt of 1910), insisted on building his façade out of real materials.

Rationalism

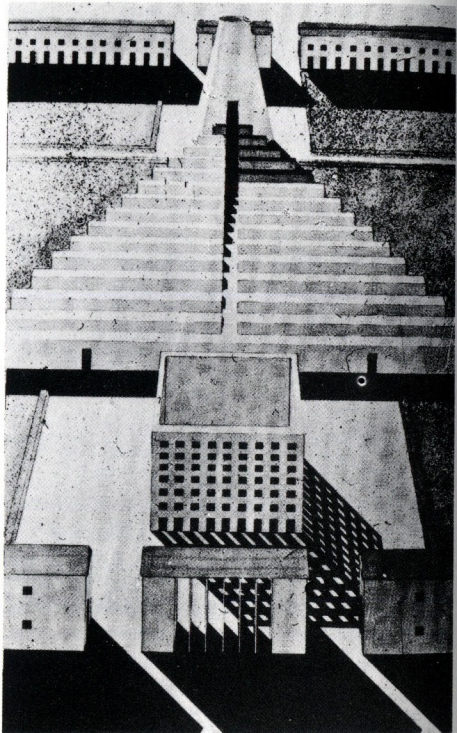
Nothing could be further from the Populist programme, at least at its origin, than the Italian Neo-Rationalist movement, the so-called 'Tendenza', which was clearly an attempt to save both architecture and the city from being overrun by the all-pervasive forces of megalopolitan consumerism.

This return to the 'limits' of architecture was initiated by the publication of two singularly seminal texts, Aldo Rossi's *L'architettura della città* (1966) and Giorgio Grassi's *La costruzione logica dell'architettura* (1967). The first stressed the part to be played by established building types in determining the morphological structure of urban form as it develops in time; the second attempted to formulate the necessary compositional or combinatorial rules for architecture – the intrinsic logic by which Grassi himself had arrived at his own highly restrained expression. While insisting that everyday needs must be met, both men rejected the principle by which form is supposed to follow function – ergonomics – and asserted instead the *relative* autonomy of architectural order. Aware of the tendency of interested rationality to absorb and distort every significant cultural gesture, Rossi structured his work about historical architectural elements that could recall and yet transcend the rational if arbitrary paradigms of the Enlightenment; the pure form postulated in the second half of the 18th century by Piranesi, Ledoux, Boullée and Lequeu. The most enigmatic, not to say hermetic, aspect of his thought resides in his unstated preoccupation with the Panopticon (cf. Michel Foucault's *Surveiller et punir* of 1975) under the rubric of which he would surely include – after Pugin's *Contrasts* of 1843 – the school, the hospital and the prison. Rossi seems to have obsessively returned to these regulatory, quasi-punitive, institutions which for him, in conjunction with the monument and cemetery, constitute the only programmes capable of embodying the values of architecture *per se*. After the thesis that Loos first set out in his essay *Architektur* of 1910, Rossi has recognized that most mod-



294 Rossi, apartment block for the Gallarate district of Milan, 1969–73.

295 Rossi, project for Modena Cemetery, 1971. Aerial perspective.



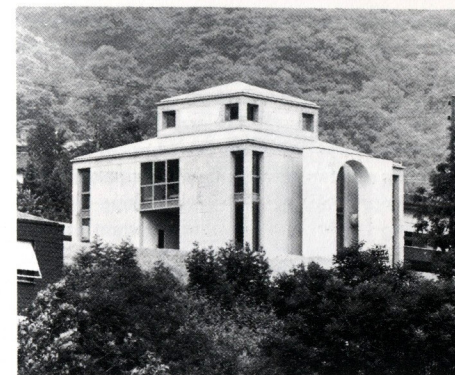
ern programmes are inappropriate vehicles for architecture and for him this has meant having recourse to a so-called analogical architecture whose referents and elements are to be abstracted from the vernacular, in the broadest possible sense. To this end his Gallarate apartment block, designed as part of Carlo Aymonino's housing complex built on the outskirts of Milan in 1973, was an occasion to

evoke the architecture of the traditional Milanese tenement. Similarly his town hall for Trieste, projected in the form of a penitentiary in 1973, was both a homage to the local 19th-century building tradition and a sardonic comment on the ultimate nature of modern bureaucracy. Like Leon Krier who has since taken a similar path, Rossi attempts to evade the twin chimeras of modernity – positivistic logic and a blind faith in progress – by returning to both the building typology and the constructional forms of the second half of the 19th century. Of his contribution to the Gallarate complex, he wrote:

In my design for the residential block in the Gallarate district of Milan (1969–73), there is an analogical relationship with certain engineering works that mix freely with both the corridor typology and a related feeling I have always experienced in the architecture of the traditional Milanese tenements, where the corridors signify a life-style bathed in everyday occurrences, domestic intimacy and varied personal relationships. However, another aspect of this design was made clear to me by Fabio Reinhart driving through the San Bernardino Pass, as we often did to reach Zürich from the Ticino Valley. Reinhart noticed the repetitive element in the system of open-sided tunnels, and therefore the inherent pattern. I understood . . . how I must have been conscious of that particular structure . . . without necessarily intending to express it in a work of architecture.

This analogical approach, suspended, as Rossi himself said, between 'inventory and memory', permeates his entire oeuvre, from the bunker-like resistance monument projected for Cuneo in 1962 to the Modena Cemetery of 1971, with its references not only to the traditional ossuary but also, by association, to the factory and to the traditional farm of the Lombardy region.

Other Italians who made important contributions to the Tendenza were Vittorio Gregotti, whose book *Il territorio dell'architettura* (1966) had an extensive influence, and Enzo Bonfanti, who with Massimo Scolari edited the Neo-Rationalist magazine *Contraspazio* in the second half of the 1960s. Finally credit has to be accorded to Manfredo Tafuri, whose writings were a major



296 Reichlin and Reinhart, Tonini House, Torricella, 1974.

influence on the movement, and to Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, whose theoretical projects explored the potential range of the Neo-Rationalist syntax. Paradoxically, the Tendenza has realized very little in Italy, though it has had an impact on Italian city-planning and the historic preservation of urban centres, the classic example being Cervellati and Scannarini's analytical study of Bologna, which influenced the development of that city throughout the 1970s.

The most extensive realization of the Tendenza outside Italy has undoubtedly been in the Swiss region of the Ticino, where a 'rationalist' school of considerable vigour was already flourishing in the early 1960s. While Bruno Reichlin and Fabio Reinhart followed Rossi closely (see their Tonini House in Torricella, 1974), the Ticino School included architects whose work came into being under a much broader Rationalist influence. Typical in this regard is Aurelio Galfetti's Neo-Corbusian Rotalinti House, Bellinzona (1961), which pre-dates the emergence of the Tendenza as an influence by almost a decade. It should also be noted that the Ticinese architects were privileged with links to the pre-war Italian Rationalist movement, in particular Alberto Sartoris and Rino Tami (see below, p. 322).

Since the late 1960s Neo-Rationalism has attained a wide following throughout Continental Europe. In France, its influence is apparent in H.E. Ciriani's Noisy 2 apartment complex in Marne-la-Vallée near Paris (1980). In Germany, Neo-

Rationalism has found its principal manifestation in the typological work of Mathias Ungers, Jürgen Sawade and J.P. Kleihues. Recent works of consequence in this regard are Ungers' extension to the Messehalle (1983) and his Architecture Museum (1984), both in Frankfurt. In Berlin a sampling of Rationalist work would surely include Kleihues' Vinetaplatz perimeter housing block in Wedding (1978) and his megastructural hospital in Neukölln (1984).

Particularly significant in the German development was Ungers' adoption of a modified Neo-Rationalist approach to urban form, after his return from the United States in 1975. His thesis of that time, that in the future we shall often find ourselves confronted with the problem of planned metropolitan shrinkage, rather than expansion or renewal, has imparted a certain urgency to his approach. Ungers recommends a fragmentary urban strategy comprising forms of development limited in accordance with the topographical and institutional constraints of a specific task in a particular context. This appears in such projects as his 1976 Hotel Berlin or his 1978 proposal for a multi-use building in the centre of Hildesheim. Where in the Hotel Berlin he opted for a self-contained 'city in miniature', close to the devastated urban landscape of the historic Lutzowplatz, at Hildesheim he attempted to rationalize and reinterpret the received type of the medieval market hall. His only truly contextual realization to date has been his Schillerstrasse perimeter block in Berlin, completed in 1982.

Ungers has been a major Neo-Rationalist theoretician and teacher, first in the Technische Universität in Berlin and then at Cornell University, where for eight years (1967-74) he directed the Department of Architecture. His consistent application of the principle of typological transformation to both teaching and practice gave his pedagogical method great conviction. He made the full range of this transformational precept explicit in 1982:

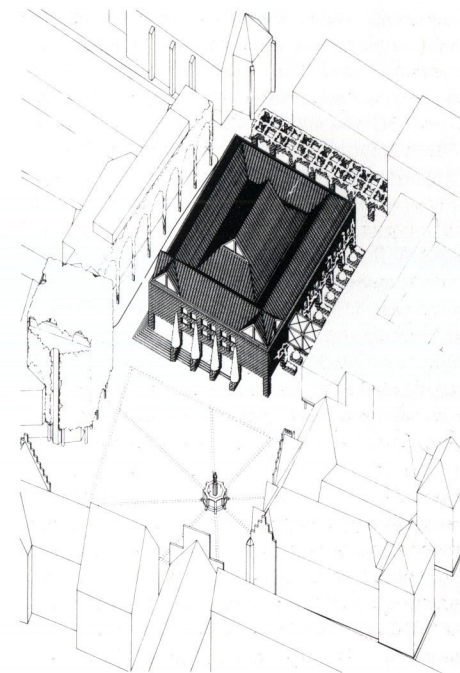
When architecture is seen as a continuous process, in which theses and antitheses are dialectically integrated, or as a process, in which history is as closely involved as the anticipation of

history, in which the past has the same weight as looking forward to the future, then the process of transformation is not only the instrument of design, but it is the very object of design. At the same time it becomes possible to make reference to the specific reality of each individual site where the architecture will be built – and therefore to the genius loci – and to discover the poetry of the place and give it expression. In this way the site is used to its best advantage.

The principle of transformation is active in all fields of nature, life and art. It is the principle of formation (Gestaltungsprinzip) capable of organizing divergent elements into a planned totality. Thus the principle of transformation – as it can be grasped for example in the historical transformations of the town plan of Trier – converts a given stabilized organization into chaos and eventually, following the laws of chance, into a new order. A differentiated and planned organisation is submerged over the course of time by chance and spontaneity, which in the end produce an organisation that is genuinely different and contrasts with the previous one: an organisation, that is, of immediacy and pragmatic necessity.

This grounding of architecture in the dialectic of typological transformation exerted a major influence on the Luxembourg architect Robert Krier, who spent a number of years in Ungers' Cologne studio as his assistant. However where Ungers was to remain open to the free interchange and generation of both type and technique, including industrial technique, Robert Krier and, to an even greater extent, his brother Leon adopted an exclusively craft approach to the generation of tectonic and urban form. Thus we find Leon Krier writing in 1976:

The debate which both Robert Krier and I want to raise with our projects is that of urban morphology as against the zoning of planners. The restoration of precise forms of urban space as against the wasteland which is created by zoning. The design of urban spaces, both traffic and pedestrian, linear and focal is, on the one hand, a method which is general enough to allow flexibility and change and, on the other, precise enough to create both spatial and built continuity within the city...

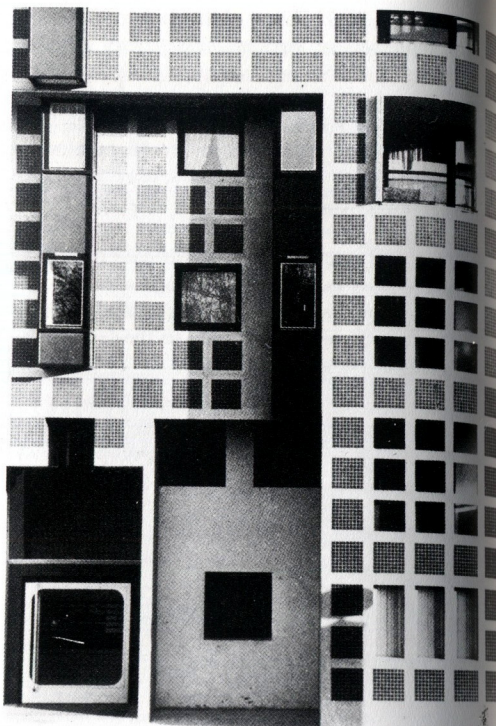


299 Ungers, project for a 'Stadtloggia' in the marketplace at Hildesheim, 1980.

we try in our projects to re-establish the dialectic of building and public realm, of solid and void, of the built organism and the spaces it necessarily creates around itself... the architectural language we use for fairly large urban parts is both simple and ambiguous. In Echternach (1970) we used the same craft which after the war reconstructed the city, the Abbey, and the annex buildings.

Structuralism

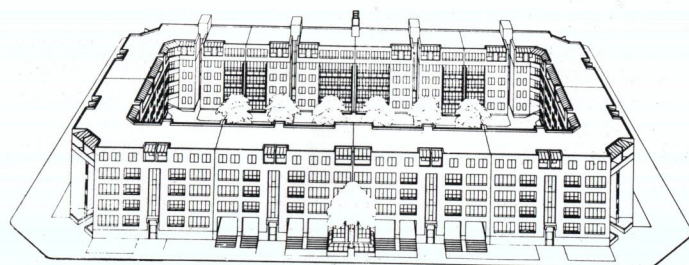
The Krier brothers' credo that 'function follows form', their anti-technocratic attitude and their insistence on the cultural importance of place, all find a parallel in the work and thought of the Dutch architect Herman Hertzberger, who in every other respect could not be further removed from the ethos of the Tendenza. The most crucial influence on the thought and practice of Hertzberger has been Aldo van Eyck,



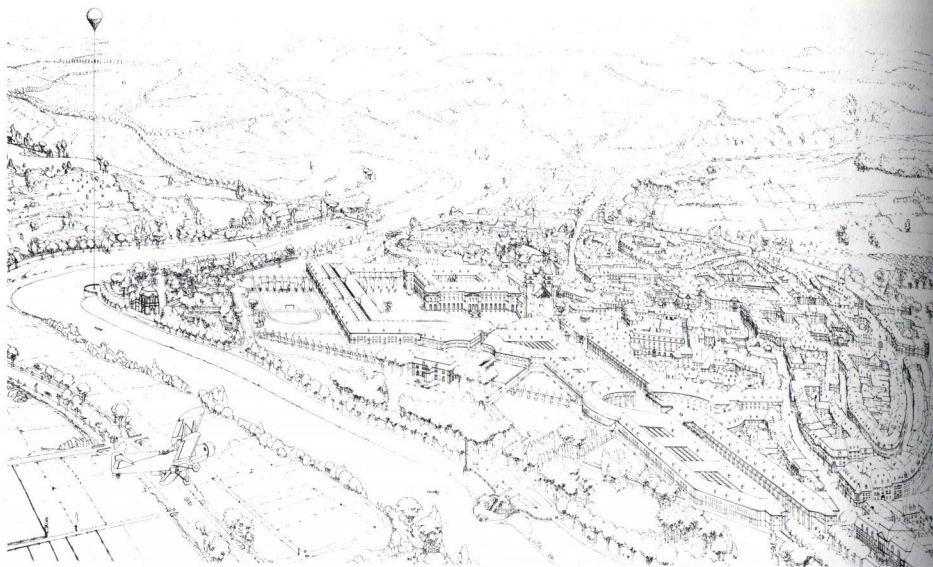
297 Ciriani, detail of Noisy 2, Marne-la-Vallée, 1980.

logical transformation to both teaching and practice gave his pedagogical method great conviction. He made the full range of this transformational precept explicit in 1982:

When architecture is seen as a continuous process, in which theses and antitheses are dialectically integrated, or as a process, in which history is as closely involved as the anticipation of



298 Kleihues, perimeter block housing, Berlin-Wedding, 1978. This residential type has the capacity to engender both courtyards and streets.



300 L. Krier, project for Echternach, Luxembourg, 1970. The continuous pitched roof (centre to bottom right) contains shops, apartments and a school.

who is responsible for the most consistently sustained and significant critique of modern architecture as an inseparable part of the Enlightenment. In 1962 Van Eyck delivered one of his sharpest attacks on Europocentrism and on the bankruptcy of imperialist culture:

Western civilization habitually identifies itself with civilization as such, on the pontifical assumption that what is not like it, is a deviation, less advanced, primitive, or, at best, exotically interesting at a safe distance.

Five years later, in his magazine *Forum*, Van Eyck anticipated many of the arguments since advanced by the Kriers, including a certain scepticism with regard to the notion of progress:

It seems to me that past, present and future must be active in the mind's interior as a continuum. If they are not, the artifacts we make will be without temporal depth or associative perspective. . . . Man after all has been accommodating himself physically in this world for thousands of years. His natural

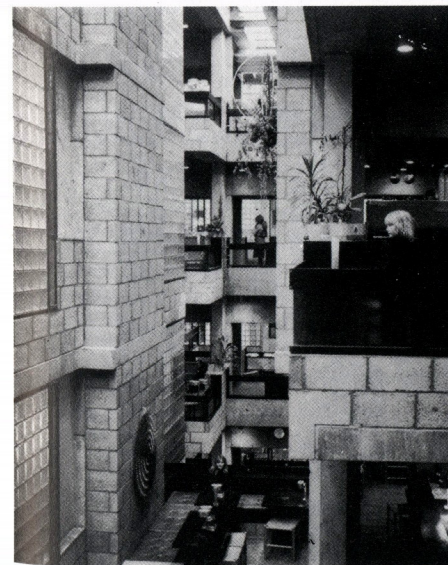
genius has neither increased nor decreased during that time. It is obvious that the full scope of this enormous environmental experience cannot be combined unless we telescope the past. . . . Architects nowadays are pathologically addicted to change, regarding it as something one either hinders, runs after, or at best keeps up with. This, I suggest, is why they tend to sever the past from the future, with the result that the present is rendered emotionally inaccessible, without temporal dimension. I dislike a sentimental antiquarian attitude toward the past as much as I dislike a sentimental technocratic one toward the future. Both are founded on a static, clockwork, notion of time (what antiquarians and technocrats have in common), so let's start with the past for a change and discover the unchanging condition of man.

The unifying concept with which Dutch Structuralism hoped to overcome the reductive aspect of Functionalism was characterized by Van Eyck as labyrinthine clarity, a concept that

has since been fully elaborated by his pupils. Thus Hertzberger wrote of their common notion of 'polyvalent space' in 1963:

What we must look for, in place of prototypes which are collective interpretations of individual living patterns, are prototypes which make individual interpretations of the collective patterns possible; in other words, we must make houses alike in a particular way, such that everyone can bring into being his own interpretation of the collective pattern. . . . Because it is impossible (and it always was) to make the individual setting that exactly suits everyone, we have to create the possibility for personal interpretation, by making things in such a way that they are indeed interpretable.

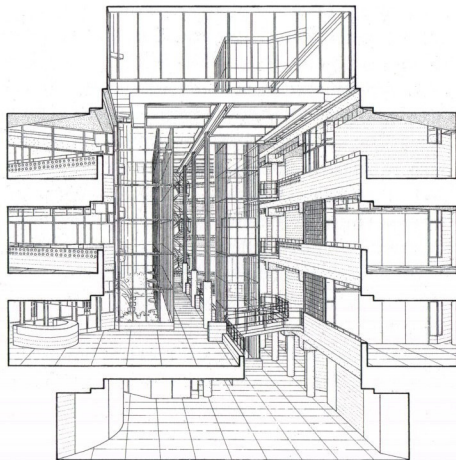
This precept has been the point of departure from which Hertzberger has evolved the rest of his work, culminating in the erection in 1974 of the Centraal Beheer insurance offices in Apeldoorn, built to his designs in the form of a 'city within a city'. This reinforced-concrete frame and concrete-block structure is ordered about an irregular cluster of working platforms set within a *regular* orthogonal tartan grid



301 Hertzberger. Centraal Beheer Building, Apeldoorn, Holland, 1974.

comprising floors, columns, light slots and service ducts. Top-lit gallery spaces of varying height separate these 7.5-metre (24-foot) square platforms from each other and allow natural light to filter down to the lowest public levels. The suspended platforms provide a network of activity spaces that may be appropriated as either individual or group working stations, through the rearrangement of modular elements comprising desks, seats, light fittings, cabinets, couches and espresso machines, etc. According to Hertzberger this bunker-like labyrinth – reminiscent in its introspection of Wright's Larkin Building of 1904 – has been deliberately left unfinished so as to encourage the 'spontaneous' appropriation and decoration of the space by its immediate users. Hertzberger's antipathy to the mechanistic provision of flexibility, as found in the sophisticated infrastructural propositions of both Habraken and Friedman, seems to have been vindicated here by the apparent spontaneity and ease with which the working spaces have been taken over and modified. And while one can only be circumspect about the rhetorical comparison that Hertzberger draws between the appropriation of space in the Centraal Beheer and the Saussurian linguistic distinction between *langue* and *parole*, there is little doubt that his approach has done something to overcome the chronic inaccessibility of the architectural discourse in a Taylorized age.

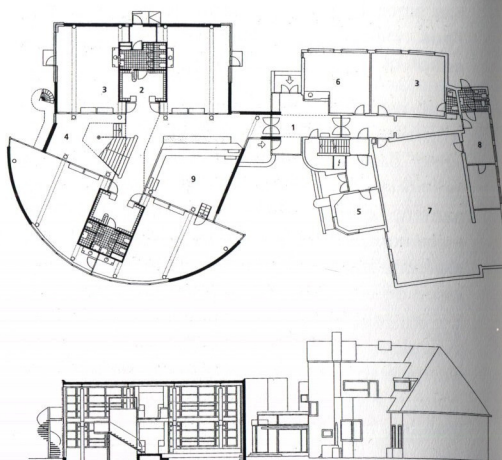
The architects of the Tendenza would surely agree with Hertzberger's argument that the functionalist organization of residential units into strictly subdivided areas for living, dining, cooking, washing, and sleeping is in itself a tyranny, and that we should attempt to return to the pre-industrial norm of interconnected rooms, offering an altogether looser fit between volume and activity (cf. Hertzberger's 'Diagoon' experimental houses built in Delft in 1971). On the other hand they would no doubt reject outright his 'casbah' concept, particularly as this appears in the Centraal Beheer, on the grounds that such an introverted type form is incapable of providing representative public space at an urban scale. The Centraal Beheer is, indeed, indifferently related to its urban context. The fact that these Islamic



302 Hertzberger, Ministry of Social Welfare and Employment, The Hague, 1990. Transverse sectional perspective.

'bazaar' or 'patio' building types inherently afford no architectural element with which to express the hierarchical status of the entrance is also confirmed at the *Centraal Beheer*, where the company has found it necessary to put up signs directing visitors to the point of entry.

Since the mid-1970s Hertzberger has modified his structuralist paradigm, not only in terms of the labyrinthine introspective model that has since appeared in an equally complex but spatially more generous version in the Ministry of Social Welfare realized in The Hague in 1990, but also in terms of the mass forms assumed by recent works projected for and realized in Berlin – the unbuilt film centre for the *Esplanade* (1984) and the realized *Lindenstrasse* housing (1986), which are unified by circular or semicircular perimeter forms. Similarly, the four-square introspective school type developed in 1980 for his prototypical *Apollo School* in Amsterdam evolved through superimposed circular perimeters into the *Ambonplein School*, also in Amsterdam (1986), and then through freer adaptation into the curved and splayed classroom wings of a school extension at Aerdenhout completed in 1989. Of this last building, distantly related to the work of Duiker, Joseph Buch has written:



303, 304 Hertzberger, school extension, Aerdenhout, 1989. Plan and section.

Visibility from the classrooms to the central mixing space has been increased with more glazing; instead of a single, massive masonry stair, there is a mix of concrete seating steps and a light-weight open metal stair to the upper floor. Like the exterior stairs in the Amsterdam schools, this has been carefully composed, with the help of detail models, into a welded sculpture with roofs as in Berlage's *Smeedwerk*. Hertzberger's metal stairways make a direct link with nautical detailing; after all the modernists' fascination with ocean liners was not only about functionalism, but also the rich and complex spatial requirements of ship-layout. And this is indeed a rich and complex spatial experience – especially in such a small building. Hertzberger's recent work has complemented the sound basis of structuralism with a constantly increasing sense of narrative.

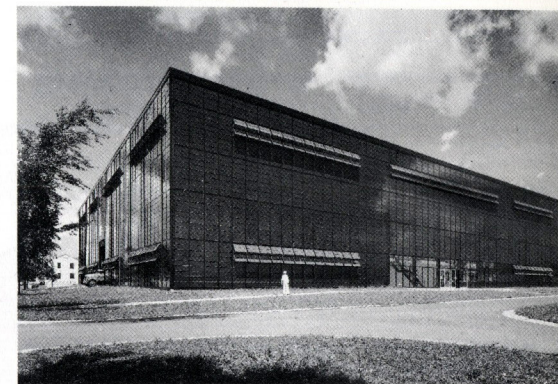
Productivism

Nothing could be further from the *Centraal Beheer* than the three-storey glass-walled Willis-Faber and Dumas insurance offices built at Ipswich in 1974 to the designs of Foster Associates. For here all the emphasis has been placed on the elegance of the production itself, on realizing that which Max Bill once

defined as the *Produktform*. It is interesting to note that Norman Foster cites just such *Produktformen* as the antecedents for his work, listing for instance Paxton's Crystal Palace, Charles and Ray Eames's own house built of 'off-the-peg' components at Santa Monica, California (1949), SOM's Marine Gunners School at Great Lakes, Illinois (1954), and Bill's Lausanne Exhibition Pavilion (1963). Following in this line, in opposition to Venturi's populism, Willis-Faber is the undecorated shed par excellence; a form whose only differentiation, aside from its faceted serpentine curtain wall (fig. 245), resides in the swimming pool on the ground floor and the garden terrace restaurant on the roof.

If *Centraal Beheer* is a hybrid building – derived in part from the 19th-century arcade (cf. Pomerantsev's *New Trading Lines*, Moscow, of 1893) and in part from the Middle-Eastern casbah – Willis-Faber with its central escalator access hall lies somewhere between the 20th-century office tower and the 19th-century department store. The case can be made, as G.C. Argan has proposed, that build-

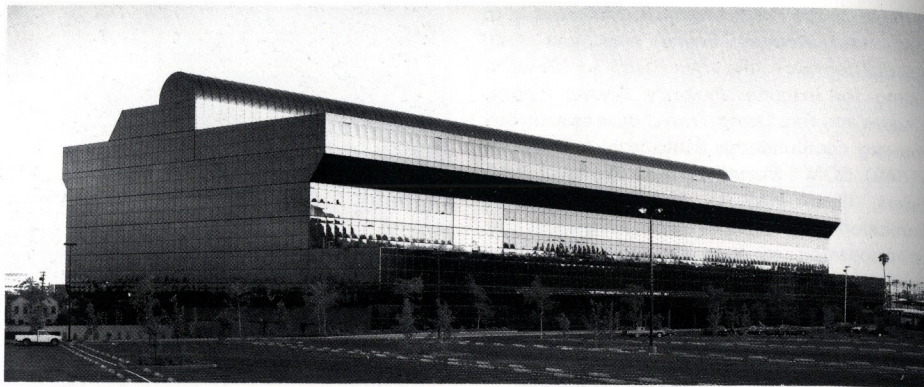
305 Foster Associates, Willis-Faber and Dumas Building, Ipswich.



306 Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, Marine Gunners School, Great Lakes, Ill., 1954.

ing types embody certain values which were inherent at their inception and which survive any subsequent transposition. It is surely pertinent to the cultural significance of these buildings that in both cases the tertiary industry of informational exchange has come to be housed in spatial types which, in part at least, were once spaces of consumption – the casbah and the department store. It is against this background that *Centraal Beheer* can be seen as an attempt to overcome the bureaucratic division of labour through the 'anthropological' occupation of its labyrinthine office landscape. As in the traditional casbah, Hertzberger's fragmented *Bürolandschaft* encourages a pattern of behaviour that oscillates constantly between moments of work and moments of relaxation. In Willis-Faber, on the other hand, we are confronted with a *Bürolandschaft* that is a natural successor to Bentham's *Panopticon* of 1791, an open plan form whose unremitting panorama of order and control is supposedly compensated for by the provision of centralized amenities such as the staff restaurant and the swimming pool. Since these facilities are equally subject to company control the scope of the *Panoptic* domain appears to be total.

The contrast between these buildings also extends to the ambience established by their detailing. The exposed concrete-block partitions used throughout the *Centraal Beheer* are supposed to provoke the 'anarchistic'



307 Pelli, Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles, 1971.

appropriation of the space while Willis-Faber posits the corporate image of a hypothetically egalitarian and affluent society through the absolute impeccability of its pristine skin and interior. Willis-Faber's undulating curtain wall evokes Mies's glass skyscraper proposals of the 1920s, although the actual technique employed, namely frameless glass sheets hung from the roof, like a necklace, connected by weatherproof neoprene joints, invites comparison with the achievements of those American minimalists who, having been trained by Eero Saarinen, came to prominence in the 1970s – Kevin Roche (Ford Foundation Building, New York, 1968, and United Nations Plaza Hotel, New York, 1973), Gunnar Birkerts (Federal Reserve Bank, Minneapolis, 1967), Cesar Pelli (Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles, 1971, and San Bernardino City Hall, 1972), and the talented but underappreciated Anthony Lumsden, whose most brilliant work remains largely unbuilt (e.g. his project for the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, Los Angeles, 1973).

The Willis-Faber building is Mies van der Rohe's 'almost nothing' stripped of its Classicism and brought through the use of mirror-glass not only to answer the contextual imperative of relating to the scale and texture of the existing urban environment – in this instance, by simply reflecting it – but also to respond to the modernist predicament of the total loss of any commonly accessible, or acceptable, 'received' language. Instead Willis-Faber proffers a range of constantly changing kinaesthetic sensations, opaque and

scintillating in overcast light, reflective in the sun, transparent at night. And yet in a paradoxical way it shares with its Dutch counterpart the lack of any naturally inflective syntax, with the result that its entry is almost as invisible as the entrance to the Centraal Beheer.

Productivism in its purest sense is virtually indistinguishable, as a 'modernist' position, from the view which holds that an authentic modern architecture can and should be nothing more than elegant engineering, or certainly a product of industrial design on a giant scale. As I have already indicated, this is a view that has many antecedents in the history of the Modern Movement, not least among them the pioneering work of the French artisan/engineer Jean Prouvé, dating back to his curtain wall detailing of the Roland Garros Aeroclub in Paris of 1935 and his modifiable *Maison du Peuple* in Clichy, Paris, built in 1939 to designs which were developed in collaboration with the engineer Vladimir Bodiansky and the architects Marcel Lods and Eugène Beaudouin.

In taking Mies literally at his word (i.e. in the cult of 'almost nothing'), one wing of Productivism has concentrated on air-supported, inflatable structures, as exemplified by Yutaka Murata's Fuji Pavilion for Expo '70 at Osaka, or on cable-suspended tent construction, of which the leading exponent is the German architect/engineer Frei Otto. Although Otto's earliest tented structures date from the mid-1950s, he came to prominence with the large tents he designed for the International Horticultural Exhibition staged in

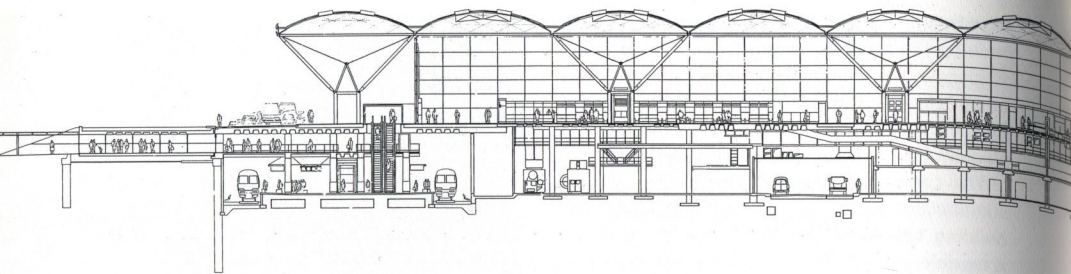
Hamburg in 1963 and with the German Pavilion built for the Montreal World Exposition of 1967. Understandably, this whole approach has been largely restricted to temporary constructions, the largest to date being Otto's roof covering the stadium for the Munich Olympics of 1972.

The basic precepts of Productivism may be summarized as follows. In the first place, the building 'task' should be accommodated, as far as is feasible, in an undecorated shed or hangar, this loft structure to be kept as open and as flexible as possible (on the model of the post-Second World War *bürolandschaft* ideal). In the second place, the adaptability of this volume should be maintained by the provision of a homogeneous and integrated network of services – power, light, heat and ventilation (see Cedric Price's concept of well-served anonymity). The third precept concerns the necessity of articulating and expressing both the structure and the services, usually achieved by following Kahn's famous separation of *served* and *servant* spaces. This last precept is patently demonstrated in the larger works of Richard Rogers, in his Centre Pompidou and more recently in his headquarters building for Lloyds of London, designed in 1976 and completed some eight years later. The same basic idea is given a more discreet (and ultimately more serviceable) expression in Foster's Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, completed at the University of East Anglia outside Norwich in 1978. Here the servant space is accommodated precisely within the depth of the trussed tubular steel supporting frames and 33-metre spans (cf. Kahn's Salk Institute at La Jolla of 1965: fig. 243). The fourth and all-important precept of Productivism is of course the 'unimpeded' manifestation of production itself, that is the expression of all component parts as *Produktformen* – a hard-line rule which is rarely obeyed within the buildings of American minimalists (who show little interest in revealed construction), though both American and British Productivists strive for a smooth all-enveloping 'consumerist' skin. As Andrew Peckham observed of the Sainsbury Centre, '[Foster's] ability to persuade us doesn't hinge on the traditional language of architecture but rather on the language of the modern material world – of industrial production and consumable finishes'.



308 Otto, German Pavilion at Expo 67, Montreal, 1967.

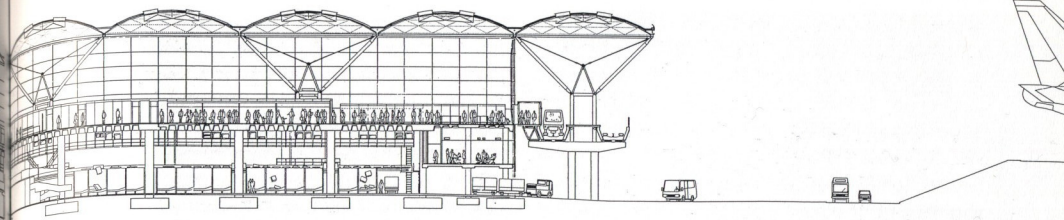
One of the few basic variables in the Productivist approach is the extent to which the skin or the skeleton is the dominant mode of expression. Until recently, this differentiation permitted one to distinguish between the respective rhetorical attitudes adopted by the Foster and Rogers practices, with the former ultimately favouring the skin and the latter placing the prime expressive burden on the structure. Foster Associates have since modified their approach, however, turning increasingly in their recent work towards the extrinsic expression of structure, most notably in their Renault factory at Swindon, Wiltshire, completed in 1983, and in their headquarters building for the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation in Hong Kong, designed in 1979. More than any of the more fantastic structures envisaged by Archigram or Buckminster Fuller, this layered skyscraper (comprising three 16.2-metre deep slabs rising to 28, 35 and 41 storeys respectively) invites comparison with the rocket-launching structures of Cape Canaveral – not for its overall size, but for the colossal scale of its articulated components, above all for its double-height deep, giant exposed tubular steel trusses, spanning 38.4 metres, from which the floors are suspended, grouped in sets, seven at the bottom, then six, then five, and finally four floors which top out the structure. Foster's own words are only too eloquent of the strange mixture of reality and techno-romanticism which determined this building's form:



309 Foster Associates, Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation headquarters, Hong Kong, 1979–84 (model).

The difficulties of building rapidly and quietly on a tight site have been resolved by a combination of technologies ranging from indigenous craft-based family units to the spin-off from aerospace and other advanced industries. For example the fastest way to place caissons is to hand-dig them – a locally based technique that also happens to be noise-free. Likewise the most elegantly efficient structures to be seen in the Colony are the spider-webs of bamboo scaffolding which mark virtually all construction sites. However given the amount of imported hardware that buildings comprise, as well as an awareness of the very real relationship between weight and performance, the design has been strongly influenced by sources outside the traditional building industry. These range from the Concorde design team, to military establishments coping with mobile bridges to take tank loadings to the world of aircraft sub-contractors, particularly in the States.

Foster's approach has been at its best in recent years when the repeated structural unit and the overall image of the building are mutually complementary, thereby yielding a structurally explicit yet self-sufficient form, as in the Renault Centre and in the athletic stadium projected for Frankfurt in 1986. The latter is shown roofed by a shallow 70-metre (230-foot) arch in tubular steel lattice work. The hollow hexagonal cells formed by this double-layered roof structure afford ample surface and interstitial volume both for the filtration of daylight and for the accommodation of ventilation and lighting. The structural thrust of this metal roof is passed through hinged joints mounted on a series of *in situ* concrete ribs cast integrally with the recessed earthwork that is stepped so as to provide for stadium seating.



310 Foster Associates, Stansted Airport Terminal, 1991. North-south section. The roadway side is to the left, the runway side to the right.

The Third London Airport at Stansted, completed in 1991, is similarly articulated about the theme of roofwork versus earthwork, the terminal building comprising a single volume poised on top of an undercroft housing baggage facilities and main-line rail connections. The square glass-sided terminal, roofed by an ingenious assembly of twenty-two shallow domes, is divided by low partitions into departure and arrival concourses running side by side within the basic shed. On the model of the 19th-century railway terminus, every effort has been made to allow the passengers freedom of movement and to afford visual access to the means of transport – in this case, a clear view of the aircraft. While there is ample provision for the extension of the terminal in length, the two fronts to roadway and runway are conceived as fixed planes, thus allowing for expansion while retaining both the basic image and the approach to the terminal as stable conditions. Here as elsewhere in their high-tech work, Foster Associates have been brilliantly assisted by the engineering skills of Ove Arup and Partners.

Post-Modernism

The architectural section of the Venice Biennale of 1980, 'The Presence of the Past', announced in various ways the emergence of Post-Modernism at a global level. While it cannot be defined in terms of a specific set of stylistic and ideological characteristics, the fact that it tends to proclaim its legitimacy in exclusively formal – not to say superficial – terms, rather than in terms of constructional, organizational or socio-cultural considerations (such as were still central to the revisionism of Team X), already separates it, as a *modus operandi*, from the architectural produc-

tion of the third quarter of the century. Notwithstanding Portoghesi's Biennale thesis, however, the past was already a presence in the major monuments of the period.

Needless to say, the most distinguished American architects of the preceding decades, Mies van der Rohe and Louis Kahn, remained committed to a deconstruction of this historical legacy and to a reassembly of its precepts and components in accordance with the technological capacity of the epoch: the work remained expressive of its time, even if certain tectonic



311 Part of the 'Strada Novissima' at the Venice Biennale, 1980. From right to left the façades are by Hollein, Kleihues, Leon Krier, and Venturi, Rauch & Scott-Brown.

elements and compositional models were patently (and even polemically) determined by historical precedents. Mies van der Rohe's Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin (commissioned 1961, built 1965–68) and Kahn's Kimbell Art Museum at Fort Worth, Texas (1967–72) illustrate this, the one tied to Schinkel and 19th-century ferro-vitreous engineering, the other to Mediterranean vaulted construction and the tectonics of reinforced concrete. Millennialistic utopianism is of course largely absent from the later work of both men, the focus being instead upon the irreducible nature of tectonic construction and upon its sublime interaction with light, as the two transhistorical conditions of architecture, and, in Kahn's case, upon a form of cosmological, cabalistic mysticism. Both Mies and Kahn would have seen the advent of Post-Modernism as cultural decadence; and indeed we have Kahn's aphoristic reproach to Venturi, on seeing his proposal for the Philadelphia Bicentennial 'strip', to the effect that 'colour ain't architecture'.

We may claim, in this regard, that no 'master' architects in history were more misunderstood by their immediate pupils and heirs than Mies and Kahn. Mies was patently gratified by his success in formulating the normative American mode of corporate building from 1950 to 1975, the Miesian format becoming standard for a certain sector of development in the postwar world (see Arthur Drexler's 'Buildings for Business and Government', MoMA, 1959), but both he and Kahn tended to find that the latent qualities of their work were better appreciated in Europe. Thus while the Skidmore, Owings and Merrill-dominated Chicago School succeeded in following Mies with verve and audacity, architects like Myron Goldsmith (United Airlines, Des Plaines, Illinois, 1962), Gene Summers (McCormick Place, Chicago, 1971) and Arthur Takeuchi (Wendell Smith Elementary School, Chicago, 1973) all failed to arrive at a fresh point of departure, possibly because they were unable to appreciate sufficiently the Romantic Classical and Suprematist dimensions which lay hidden in Mies's work. In the same way Kahn, despite his disciples of the Philadelphia School (Moore, Venturi, Vreeland and Giurgola), ultimately found a more sensitive following in Italian Neo-Rationalism and Dutch Structuralism.

This eclipse of Late Modernism in America, together with the 'consensus' rejection of what Jürgen Habermas called the 'unfinished modern project', as this had been so fervently integrated into the myth and reality of American development over the past century, is nowhere more evident than in the current repudiation of Frank Lloyd Wright, particularly when one considers Wright's indisputable status as one of the most fertile architects of this century. It is significant how, apart from the antiquarian art market, Wright continues to be ignored by the American protagonists of Post-Modernism, despite the recent efforts of Charles Jencks to validate Michael Graves by way of Wright in his book *Kings of Infinite Space* (1983). The reason for this amnesia is not hard to find, since Wright has to be counted among those modernists (Aalto would be another) whose work can in no way be dismissed as reductive or inaccessible. One may advance as evidence to the contrary the 200 Usonian houses which Wright built in his own lifetime and think of them as an attempt to render the generic suburb as a cultivated domain.

It is difficult to arrive at the fundamental character of the Post-Modern phenomenon as this has emerged in architecture and almost every other cultural field. From one point of view it has to be acknowledged as an understandable reaction to the pressures of societal modernization and thus as an escape from the tendency of contemporary life to be totally dominated by the values of the scientific-industrial complex. Yet while the utopian emancipatory aims of the Enlightenment may now have to be relinquished in the name of more effective and *reassuring* forms of realism, there is little evidence that modern society either can or, finally, wishes to renounce the fundamental 'benefits' of modernization. Moreover, as Habermas suggested in his Theodor Adorno Prize address of 1980, it is the speed and rapacity of modern development, rather than avant-gardist culture, that is responsible for disruptions and disappointments, together with this apparently popular rejection of the new. In the end, even the staunchest Neo-Conservative will admit there is little chance of resisting, in real terms, the relentless progress of modernization.

If there is a general principle that can be said to characterize Post-Modern architecture, it is the

conscious ruination of style and the cannibalization of architectural form, as though no value either traditional or otherwise can withstand for long the tendency of the production/consumption cycle to reduce every civic institution to some kind of consumerism and to undermine every traditional quality. Today the division of labour and the imperatives of 'monopolized' economy are such as to reduce the practice of architecture to large-scale packaging; and at least one Post-Modern architect, Helmut Jahn, has frankly acknowledged that this is how he sees his role. At its most predetermined, Post-Modernism reduces architecture to a condition in which the 'package deal' arranged by the builder/developer determines the carcass and the essential substance of the work, while the architect is reduced to contributing a suitably seductive mask. This is the predominant situation in city centre development in America today, where high-rise towers are either reduced to the 'silence' of their totally glazed, reflective envelopes or alternatively dressed in devalued historical trappings of one kind or another. Indeed Jahn's Popular Machinism must be regarded as an attempt to combine both strategies. Irrespective of whether this dematerialized historicism is made of actual stone and hence of necessity suspended from heavily reinforced steel skeletons, as in the case of Philip Johnson's AT&T headquarters building, New York (1978–84), or whether more moderately it is a decorative curtain wall of glass hung off steel, or even whether, as in the case of Michael Graves's Portland Building in Portland, Oregon (1979–82), it is a painted concrete 'billboard' which enlarges to a gargantuan scale the graphic image of a 'ruined' and hence idealized garden folly, the result is fundamentally the same; that is to say, it is the Populist format of Venturi's 'decorated shed'. In any event, in all three options the impulse is scenographic rather than tectonic, so that not only is there a total schism between the inner substance and the outer form, but the form itself either repudiates its constructional origin or dissipates its palpability. In Post-Modern architecture classical and vernacular 'quotations' tend to interpenetrate each other disconcertingly. Invariably rendered as unfocussed images, they easily disintegrate and mix with other more abstract, usually cubistic forms, for which the architect has no more



312 Graves, Portland Building, Portland, Ore., 1979–82.

respect than for his extremely arbitrary historical allusions.

Michael Graves has been a symptomatic figure in this whole development. The method and the substance of his Post-Cubist collages (be they painted or built) changed radically around 1975 as he fell under the influence of Leon Krier's Neo-Classical 'speculations' and as Krier himself proceeded to eliminate all traces of modernist syntax from his own work. (Compare Krier's Royal Mint Square project of 1974 to his Lilliputian St Quentin-en-Yvelines school of 1978, where this expurgation has been brought to its logical conclusion.) Similarly, Graves passed from his still 'modernist' Crooks House project (1976) to the Neo-Classical 'folly' of his Fargo-Moorhead Cultural Center, proposed in 1977 for the twin towns on either side of the state line dividing Minnesota from North Dakota. From this point onwards 'inverted' Ledoux-like motifs prevail in his work, mixed with episodic fragments drawn from Krier, Hoffmann, Gilly, Schinkel, Cubism and even Art Deco.

Graves's largest work at the time, the Portland Building, projected him into the centre of the Post-Modern furore with a public building where



313 Stirling, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, 1980–83.

the most contentious aspect derived from the arbitrary painted configurations of the façade. To start with, the clients vigorously objected to the smallness of the predominantly square, pierced windows, on the grounds that in Oregon the sky is generally overcast, and as a result the windows were slightly enlarged. Then, as built, the building was criticized on architectonic grounds for the total falseness of its seemingly large windows, much of which consists of heavily tinted plate glass 'drawn' deceptively over solid concrete walls. Finally, and perhaps most seriously, it was challenged for its surprisingly insensitive attitude towards the site. Unlike the Beaux Arts buildings on either side – the City Hall and the County Courthouse – it fails to acknowledge (except for a service entrance) the public amenity of the park to the south, and it also presents, despite its arcaded ground floor, a strangely inhospitable frontage to the surrounding streets.

Graves has since gained commissions which seem to be more suited to his imagistic approach, as one may judge from the diminutive civic scale of the Public Library in San Juan Capistrano,

California (1983), with its regionally inflected Spanish Colonial roofs. Even here, however, a feeling begins to obtrude that like Olbrich, to whom his astonishing talent may be compared more revealingly than to Wright, he is more of a designer of *objets d'art* than an architect. With the later Graves, as Peter Eisenman put it, 'a house, for example, is no longer conceived as a house (a social or ideological entity) or as an object (in itself) but rather as a painting of an object'.

As with Graves, so with many figures today who had hitherto occupied Late Modernist positions – not only James Stirling, Philip Johnson and Hans Hollein, but other more recent converts to the Post-Modernist position such as Romaldo Giurgola, Moshe Safdie and Kevin Roche. In each instance, and to different degrees, the discourse of a 'dematerialized' historicism has been selfconsciously embraced and virtually mixed at random with modernist fragments. More often than not the result is an inconclusive and seemingly pointless 'cacophony' in which the architect loses control of his material. This latter-day version of the 'disappearance of the author' is

manifest in Stirling's work, notably in his Stuttgart Staatsgalerie. While that is the most distinguished public building of Stirling's later career – emerging, as it did, out of three successive 'neo-classical' designs for German museums in the second half of the 1970s – it is also a strangely mixed and conflictive design. Framed in reinforced concrete, meticulously detailed and finished in finely wrought ashlar, the Staatsgalerie, while far from scenographic, is nonetheless atectonic in its general expression; that is to say, it is closer to Hoffmann and Asplund, above all to Asplund's Woodland Cemetery Crematorium, Stockholm, of 1939, than it is to the avant-gardist, Constructivist precepts which inspired Stirling's early career. The differences between Stirling and Asplund are equally significant, in particular the replacement of Asplund's sense of liberal *civitas* – his feeling for an egalitarian civic identity – by Stirling's 'classical-populism'. I am referring to Stirling's conviction, derived no doubt from modern museum management, that today the museum is not only an edifying institution but also a place of distraction and amusement. This last accounts for the mediation of the overall monumentality of the Staatsgalerie by certain Constructivist-influenced episodes, by a dramatically undulating curtain wall, by outsize tubular handrails, by symbolic aedicules in light tubular steel, in fact a whole plethora of brightly-coloured, toy-like elements designed to appeal to the man in the street.

A similar approach asserted itself in other museum work by Stirling, the extension to the Fogg Museum at Harvard and the extension to the Tate Gallery in London. As far as the Tate is concerned it is as though the tradition of tectonic culture was being consumed before our eyes by the fashionable rediscovery of architectural rendering.

Another form of 'disappearance' is to eliminate the building altogether, to bury it in the earth so that it at once becomes an introverted interior rather than a testament to civic virtue. Hollein's Mönchengladbach museum (1983) and Giurgola's new Australian Parliament Building in Canberra (completed in 1988) are but two recent examples of this approach.

Hollein seems to be the only figure among the Post-Modernists who has been able to

combine an indulgence in craft aestheticism with a revealing critical distance. This dichotomous brilliance was unequivocally demonstrated in his 'anti-façade' for the Venice Biennale of 1980, wherein he rang the changes from 'reality' to 'illusion' and from 'art' to 'nature' around the theme of the archetypal column (fig. 311). Greater scope for wit and high-quality finish had in fact already presented itself to Hollein some three years earlier, when he realized an elaborate ceramic exhibition at the Teheran Museum (1977). In many respects that commission served to crystallize his high metaphoric style, which he also demonstrated in his Israeli and Austrian travel bureaus in Vienna realized between 1976 and 1978. It is no accident, as Friedrich Achleitner implied in his essay 'Viennese Positions' (1981), that Hollein is at his best in the design of interiors. Achleitner's brilliant analysis of Hollein's relationship to Viennese culture merits quoting at length:

To do justice to Hollein, one cannot ignore the Viennese reality, where there is a tradition that is too old and a sensibility that is too highly developed with regard to the architectural setting as a counter-reality or a substitute reality. Going right back to Baroque, and maybe even earlier, the ambivalence of the media of music and architecture (arising out of the repression of literature by the Hapsburgs) was favoured above the presentation of evident realities, and came to reflect collective and individual psychic states. The funeral processions and parades of the Hapsburgs had heralded the enactment of the passing away of the aristocratic-upper bourgeois world that preceded the first world war and was reflected on the aesthetic level within the Viennese secession. Vienna possessed a tradition of aesthetic heightening of reality, a long praxis of artificial remoteness. The techniques of montage, collage, alienation, striking allusions and disarming quotation are not cultivated in language alone.

Hans Hollein seems not only to incorporate this tradition, but his works, seen in an extreme perspective, are to the Viennese the unwelcome confirmation of an unchanged situation. The backdrops become visible once more: he possesses the instruments to give them prominence. Or is the travel office perhaps something different from



314 Hollein, travel agency in Opernring, Vienna, 1976–78.

the visual treatment of the satisfaction of needs that are in themselves simple, represented by the task of supplying information and travel tickets? But what many may find disturbing is that the aesthetic handling of the subject does not illustrate the content in a reductive fashion but the subject itself in all its facets. It is not a question, here, of information and travel documents, but of illusions, of desires, of dreams and even of clichés about the aims of travel. The client enters a world of references and illusions, no object is merely itself. The hall itself is not the lobby of a travel bureau but of a railway station, or at least it creates this association. The allusions possess differing degrees of immediacy: they range from the banal legibility of the airline counter (Adler), of shipping companies (Reling), up to the counter for theatre tickets (moving piece of scenery – the student has to guess the reason for himself) and the most subtle references to Egypt, Greece, India. Illusion and orientation, information and learning are merged together while the money passes through the radiator grill of a Rolls-Royce – a wink at the client.

Nothing could be further from this resistant play with multiple levels of reality than the *Taller de Arquitectura's* Neo-Social-Realist *mega-classicism*, executed in prefabricated reinforced concrete construction. Confronted with Ricardo

Bofill's realization of large public housing projects in a number of French new towns – the urban quarter known as Les Arcades du Lac in St Quentin-en-Yvelines (1974–80) and the theatrical Abraxas perimeter block in Marne-la-Vallée (1979–83) – it would be hard to imagine another contemporary Western practitioner who has enjoyed such a close relationship with State power or indeed one who is so simplistically identified with power at this level. Needless to say this identification, together with the worldly success which it inevitably entails, does nothing to legitimize this 'incarceration' of collective dwelling units within a carcass of kitsch classicism. This technically accomplished parallel to Jahn's Popular Machinism understandably entails a total denial of the values placed on the monument by the *Tendenza*, for while this is by no means the first time that mass housing has been given a monumental form (cf. Karl Ehn's Karl Marx Hof, Vienna, of 1927 and Le Corbusier's *Unité*

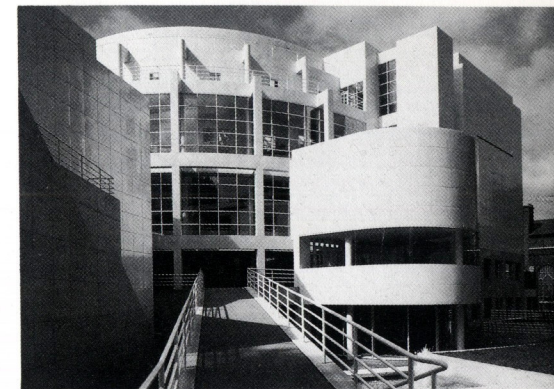


315 Bofill and the Taller de Arquitectura, 'Le Palacio', Les Espaces d'Abraxas, Marne-la-Vallée, 1979–83.

d'Habitation, Marseilles, of 1952), not since the time of the Ringstrasse – Loos's *Potemkinstadt* – has the aggregation of dwelling units been so scenographically rendered. It is surely symptomatic of our reactionary period, both from a social and an architectural point of view, that there is little accommodation or representation in Bofill's work of those 'social condensers' – nursery schools, meeting rooms, laundries and swimming pools – that public housing should demand. The absence of such amenities is as reactionary as the brutal nature of the standard apartments which are wilfully encased in these false architraves and empty columns. Deprived of a terrace, since this does not accord with the assumed syntax, the upwardly mobile resident has to be satisfied with the operatic illusion of living in a palace.

Neo-Avant-Gardism

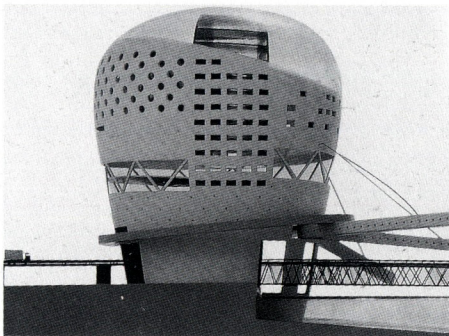
Despite the American following enjoyed by Aldo Rossi, Neo-Rationalism did not exert much influence on the evolution of architecture in the United States. In part this may be attributed to its lack of relevance to the American city, which has nowhere the same typological and morphological complexity as its traditional European counterpart. The *Tendenza* thesis about the 'continuity of the monument' could have little credibility in a society where the urban context itself was so unstable. On the other hand, an attempt was made in the second half of the 1960s to develop a theoretical and artistic production as rigorous as that achieved by the pre-war European avant garde. This effort crystallized around the work of the Five Architects, a loosely-knit association of New York-based architects under the leadership of Peter Eisenman. While two members of this group were to ground their work in pre-war avant-gardist aesthetic practice, namely Eisenman and John Hejduk, who respectively took Giuseppe Terragni and Theo van Doesburg as their models, the remaining three, Michael Graves, Charles Gwathmey and Richard Meier, assumed the Purist period of Le Corbusier as their point of departure. The New York Five's commitment to the idea of an autonomous architecture, removed from what they saw as the reductive functionalism of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, was most categorically expressed in Eisenman's



316 Meier, High Museum, Atlanta, 1980–83.

House VI, the Frank House, built at West Cornwall, Connecticut, in 1972, and in certain polemical projects by Hejduk – his Diamond House series (1963–67) and above all his Wall House (1970). While Hejduk has since abandoned his early formalism to devote his energies to the creation of a series of mythical settings such as his Berlin Masques of 1981, and Graves has left behind his early Neo-Purism in favour of a more decorative Post-Modernist approach (e.g. his Disney Hotel in Orlando, Florida, of 1991), Gwathmey and Meier have remained faithful to their Purist roots, above all perhaps Meier, whose High Museum in Atlanta, Georgia (1980–83), and Applied Art Museum in Frankfurt (1979–84) have secured him a reputation as one of the most civic-minded architects of his generation. Indeed, he has since gone on to become an architect of world renown with major public works under construction in the 1990s in cities as diverse as Los Angeles, Paris and Barcelona.

The New York Five were not the only architects of the late 1960s to ground their work in the aesthetic and ideological premises of the 20th-century avant-garde. The role they assumed in New York was echoed in London in the work of OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture), comprising Rem Koolhaas, Elia and Zoe Zenghelis and Madelon Vriesendorp. Like Hejduk, whose early work was eclectically inspired to an equal degree by Neo-Plasticism

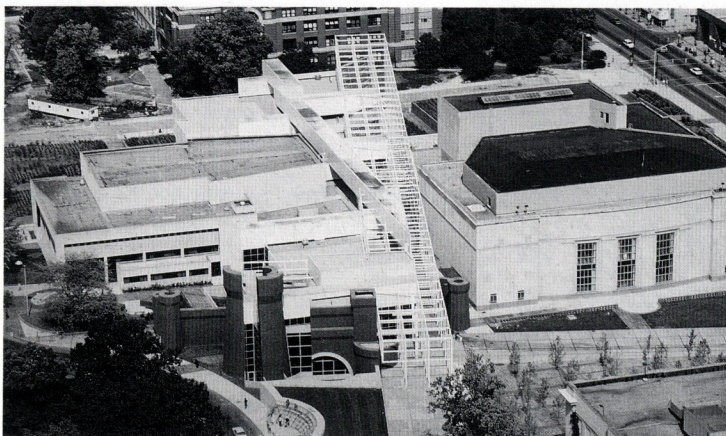


317 Koolhaas (OMA), project for ferry terminal, Zeebrugge, 1990. Model.

and the later Mies, Koolhaas and Zenghelis predicated their urban projects on the Suprematist architecture of Ivan Leonidov while at the same time turning to Surrealist practice for ways of achieving what Roland Barthes termed a 'répétition différente'.

Apart from giving rise through teaching to a further generation of latterday Neo-Suprematists, most notably Laurinda Spear of Arquitectonica (Spear House, Miami, 1979) and Zaha Hadid (Hong Kong Peak Competition, 1983), OMA created major civic design projects in the early 1980s including a villa colony for the Greek island of Antiparos and a housing quarter for Kochstrasse in Berlin.

By this date Eisenman had already produced



318 Eisenman, Wexner Center for the Visual Arts, Columbus, Ohio, 1983-89. Air view showing the insertion of the new building into the existing campus fabric.

his radical proposal for Cannaregio in Venice (1978) wherein rather than relating to the existing fabric he chose to superimpose an arbitrary grid on the city, one wilfully derived from Le Corbusier's unrealized Venice hospital project of 1964. Different-scaled versions of his House XIa, designed in the previous year, were installed at intervals where intersections of the grid coincided with existing open spaces within the Cannaregio district. This anti-humanist play with varying scales, for which Eisenman would later coin the term 'scaling', was meant to subvert any received ideas as to an appropriately anthropomorphic scale or civic dimension. With this singularly apocalyptic work Eisenman introduced the quasi-Dadaist *modus operandi* with which he has been occupied ever since – namely, the derivation of form from more or less arbitrary overlays of different grids, axes, scales and contours, irrespective of whether these happen to have any connection with the real context: see his Berlin Friedrichstrasse housing (1982-86) and his Wexner Center for the Visual Arts at Columbus, Ohio (1983-89).

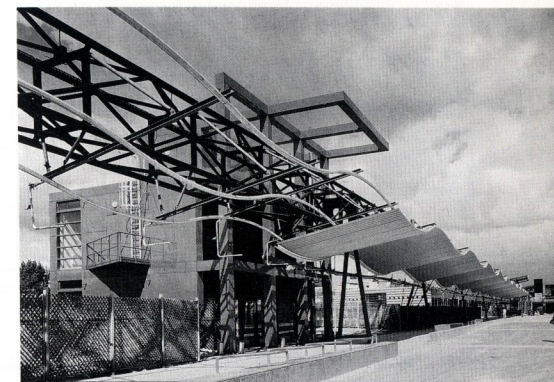
The year 1983 was decisive for Neo-Avant-Gardism, as Rem Koolhaas and the American-based Swiss architect Bernard Tschumi competed openly in the final phases for the commission to realize the Parc de la Villette in Paris as a prototypical urban park for the 21st century. Significantly enough, given the subsequent emergence of 'Deconstructivism' in architecture, Tschumi's premiated design of 1984 drew

its essential *parti* from two basic paradigms: from Wassily Kandinsky's didactic 'point, line and plane' as set forth in *Bauhausbücher No. 9*, and from an attitude to disjunctive spatial narrative, as derived from the non-sequential cutting technique pioneered by the Soviet avant-gardist filmmaker Kuleshov. Various indebted to Russian Constructivism and even to the *mariage de contour* to be found in the early landscapes of Roberto Burle Marx and Oscar Niemeyer, Tschumi aspired to an anti-classical architecture in which unexpected configurations and uses would arise out of the red constructivist 'follies' that punctuate the park at regular intervals. Tschumi differentiates between one folly and the next by ringing the changes on a series of prisms, cylinders, ramps, stairs and canopies that reflect to a limited extent basic differences in the structures' content. This partial match and miss-match between programme and form appears again in the running track incongruously projected into the main volume of Tschumi's Bibliothèque de France competition design of 1990.

Similar but by no means identical 'Deconstructivist' strategies were employed by other architects throughout the 1980s, starting with Frank Gehry's own house in Los Angeles of 1978 and continuing with a number of works all from the late 1980s, including Eisenman's Bio-Center projected for Frankfurt, OMA's apartment block realized at Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin, Daniel Libeskind's apocalyptic City Edge proposal for the same city, and Koolhaas's Dance Theatre completed in The Hague in 1987. As Mark Wigley wrote in his catalogue to the 1988 show at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, entitled *Deconstructivist Architecture*,

The form is distorting itself. Yet this internal distortion does not destroy the form. In a strange way, the form remains intact. This is an architecture of disruption, dislocation, deflection, deviation and distortion, rather than one of demolition, dismantling, decay, decomposition and disintegration. It displaces structure instead of destroying it.

What is finally so unsettling about such is precisely that the form not only survives its torture but appears all the stronger for it. Perhaps



319 Tschumi, Parc de La Villette, designed 1984.

the form is even produced by it. It becomes unclear which came first, the form or the distortion, the host or the parasite. . . . No surgical technique can free the form; no clean incision can be made. To remove the parasite would be to kill the host. They comprise one symbiotic entity.

For all its critical acuity, much of the theoretical discourse that accompanies this work is both elitist and detached, testifying to the self-alienation of an avant garde without a cause: as the Dutch critic Arie Graafland remarked, where Constructivism intended a synthesis – the creation of a new architecture for a new society – Deconstructivism's anti-thesis derives, at least in part, from the recognition that global modernization is pushing so-called technocratic order beyond its rational limits. The predicament finds reflection in the thought of the founding father of Deconstruction, the philosopher Jacques Derrida, who has collaborated with Eisenman and Tschumi on the project for a small garden in the Parc de la Villette. Disenchanted with the idealistic legacy of the Enlightenment and caught as architecture is caught between the conflicting demands of practical and poetic reason, Derrida seems to aspire to an aporetic middle ground somewhere between Heidegger's existentialist critique and a form of social pragmatism loosely related to the irreducible ambiguity of language.