

SPECIAL ISSUE

Sjoerd van Faassen, Carola Hein and Phoebus Panigyrakis [Eds.]

Dutch connections

Essays on international relationships in architectural history in honour of Herman van Bergeijk



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TU Delft Open 2020

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Series Editors: Herman van Bergeijk and Carola Hein
[Chair History of Architecture and Urban Planning, TU Delft]

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Dutch Connections

Essays on international relationships in architectural history in honour of Herman van Bergeijk

Editors: Sjoerd van Faassen, Carola Hein and Phoebus Panigyrakis

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Translations for the texts of Dolf Broekhuizen, Wietse Coppes & Leo Jansen, Marie Therese van Thoor, Mienke Simon Thomas, and Charlotte van Wijk from Dutch to English were done by Phoebus Panigyrakis and Kate Eton.

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ISBN 978-94-6366-360-1

PRINT ISSN 2667-0232

E-ISSN 2667-0240

Contents

Foreword | Carola Hein

Herman van Bergeijk:

A steady presence in my academic journey from student years at the
HfbK Hamburg to professorship at Delft University of Technology 7

Dolf Broekhuizen

'A house with skin against weather conditions'

Van Eesteren and the building materials of Maison Particulière (1923) 13

Massimo Bulgarelli

Careful considerations

Notes on some drawings of Palazzo Te in Mantua 25

Magdalena Bushart

Geschäftsfreunde J.J.P. Oud und Adolf Behne 23

Alessandro Dalla Caneva

The Orient of Hendrik Petrus Berlage 45

Orazio Carpenzano

Imperfect portrayal of a friend 53

Jean-Louis Cohen

André Lurçat, agent français des Néerlandais 59

Bernard Colenbrander

Het is niet helemaal gelopen zoals het moest 71

Wietse Coppes & Leo Jansen

The colour of black-and-white

An unknown sketch of a well-known set design 79

Marc Dubois

De compacte rijwoning:

Woning Vermaercke van Gaston Eysselinck, 1937-38 93

Sjoerd van Faassen

Beter, ruimer, mooier, gelukkiger

Modelwoningen tijdens het interbellum in twee Haagse arbeiderswijken 105

Hartmut Frank

J.J.P. Oud und die Freie Akademie der Künste in Hamburg 129

Carola Hein

The old guard modernists in Western Europe and post-war urban visions:

Cornelis van Eesteren as jury member of the

'Hauptstad Berlin' competition 1957-58 149

Herman Hertzberger

Voor Herman van Bergeijk 161

Hans Janssen

The 2017 reconstruction of Theo van Doesburg and

Cornelis van Eesteren's 1923 model of Maison d'Artiste 165

Giovanni Leoni

A portrait of the architectural historian as a young man 195

Otakar Mačel

Stam again or Hanomag, Mercedes and Tatra 197

Daniel Naegele

The *Wendingen* Edition:

What Frank Lloyd Wright wanted Holland to know in 1925 207

Winfried Nerdinger

Sind Steine unschuldig? – Zum Umgang mit NS-Architektur 217

Dietrich Neumann

Courting Frank Lloyd Wright: the Dutch-German

competition for his first monograph 239

Phoebus Panigyarakis

Arthur Staal, notes on the Greek landscape 265

Alan Powers

Mr Pick and Mr Holden go to Holland 275

Timo de Rijk

De Stijl and 'Dutch identity' 285

Mienke Simon Thomas

Architecture at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen 297

Adrian Täckman

Knud Lönberg-Holm and Cornelis van Eesteren and
the concept of circular production 311

Ed Taverne

Het esthetisch fundament van het Shell-gebouw (1938-42)
van J.J.P. Oud 325

Wolf Tegethoff

Mies van der Rohe's competition entry for the German Pavilion
at the Brussels World Fair 1935 [1] 337

Marcel Teunissen

Tussen wal en schip: Stedenbouwkundige en architectonische
karakteristieken van de Heesterbuurt in Den Haag 351

Huub Thomas

W.M. Dudok en de Raad van Vijf:
Conflicterende visies op de wederopbouw van Den Haag, 1945-50 367

Marie-Thérèse van Thoor

An extraordinary photograph: Gerrit Rietveld, Mart Stam
and El Lissitzky at the Schröder House, 1926 381

Bart Verbrugge

De architect en de auto: de dialectiek van de statische
en dynamische voertuigen 391

Kjeld Vindum

Unostentatiousness examples of relations to the ordinary
in modern danish architecture 407

Wolfgang Voigt

Delft meets Stuttgart

An excursion to Paul Schmitthenner in 1934 and a
failed dialogue twenty years later 417

Cor Wagenaar

Goodbye history 433

Michael White

Collage City?

Visualising Theo van Doesburg's *Europäische Architektur* 449

Charlotte van Wijk

Delft, city of art:

Herman Rosse's restoration plan for the seven-centuries-old Prinsenstad 463

List of contributors 471

Herman van Bergeijk: A steady presence in my academic journey from student years at the HfbK Hamburg to professorship at Delft University of Technology

I first encountered Herman van Bergeijk by name during my studies at the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg in the office of Hartmut Frank. Herman and Hartmut shared a common connection to IAUV Venice and first met in the Archives of Schmitthenner in München in the 1980s. They hit it off right away while discussing traditional modernism. At least that was the impression I had, as a beginning architecture student listening to Hartmut. The two were constantly involved in some sort of academic debate, which often became emotional and neither of them would ever give way. Among the themes of debate that emerged from Hartmut's comments were usually ones related to the different approaches of architectural historians trained respectively as architects or art historians: Those with a background in architecture saw architectural history as a way to understand the process of design and ultimately to shape future design. They had been taught to adequately capture the complexity of designing, drawing, and supervising constructions. Meanwhile, the second group was concerned mostly with artistic questions and an interest in the appearance of buildings and their reception. As a student of Hartmut, educated in an architectural faculty, I saw myself as belonging to the architects as an architectural historian and thus as someone interested in connecting the lessons of the past to the present and to the design of the future.

The particularities of the Hamburg educational tradition allowed students to graduate with a diploma thesis on a historical subject in the architectural profession. This was an opportunity that I took advantage of and that started my academic career. My focus on architectural and urban history has included a number of German-Dutch exchanges—some involving Herman in person. Thanks to Koos Bosma, I gave my very first professional talk in the Netherlands in 1991 at

the Academie van Bouwkunst on the question of the capital city Berlin competition of 1957/58, research that included several Dutch contributions. Koos also invited me to attend another conference on capital city planning in 1999, where I crossed paths with Herman in person. Koos also invited me to publish an article on my dissertation in his co-edited book *Mastering the City*.¹ The text published there received positive feedback and questions from two camps: designers, who asked me why I hadn't further developed the final paragraphs concerning the future, and historians, who asked me why I had even written those two paragraphs on future design. At that point, I clearly had entered the discussion between German and Dutch approaches to architectural history. As I started to engage with the Dutch colleagues, I had glimpses of Herman in different venues. He was certainly not someone to be overlooked or unheard.



When I left Europe for Japan in 1995 and then for the United States of America in 1999, Herman remained a steady reference through my German and Dutch friends and colleagues. When I applied in 2012 to the position of Chair History of Architecture and Urban Planning at Delft University of Technology, Herman became a more concrete presence. During my interview, he was the most challenging presence in the room. His questions implied complete disagreement with my proposals on Mother's House by Robert Venturi. At least that is what I thought, and the job offer ultimately came as a surprise. It seemed clear that taking up the job in Delft could mean a challenging working relationship with Herman. But, to my great surprise, Herman was a wonderful support upon my arrival. Who would have thought that he would take my sons, then aged 5 and 9 through BK City, showing them the hidden staircases and the attic while I was signing my contract? Over time, it became a regular pleasure to see Herman enjoy the presence of my children at events, including my inaugural speech dinner.

For the last five years, Herman has been a key partner in the development of the Chair History of Architecture and Urban Planning. Many projects developed out of our conversations. The 2016 conference of the International Planning History Society (IPHS) in Delft gave the impetus for the Inaugural Speech series and the publication of the first volume on *Van Lohuizen & Van Eesteren Partners in Planning and Education at TH Delft* (BK Open, 2015). The series has since grown and come – in this case in a larger format – to accommodate the *Festschrift*. The arrival of new PhD students in the Chair History of Architecture and Urban Planning since 2015 gave Herman new tasks as he shepherded them into and through new and diverse fields of research, including studies as diverse as that of an American magazine, the *Architectural Record* (Phoebus Panigyraakis), settlements along the Trans-Israel highway (Gabriel Schwake), oil regions in China (Penglin Zhu), and Turkish vernacular heritage (Gül Akturk). Whatever the topic, Herman pushed the students to think deeply and to reach their limits. He has intimidated many students and not every student, PhD, or colleague has found Herman easy to deal with. Over the years, we have dealt with some critical moments as people did know how to respond to Herman's intellectual and personal jibes. But through all the ups and downs of our collaboration, Herman has remained an inspirational colleague.

Throughout his career, Herman continued to build his own unique expertise on the Dutch 19th and early 20th century. He has become an inspiration for scholars in the Netherlands, Europe and beyond. The extraordinary response of colleagues when asked to contribute a chapter in this *Festschrift* stands as an example of Herman's widespread influence. Invitations for keynotes and lectures or courses keep reaching him, and he will continue to teach and write. He has an open invitation to teach in China and still bubbles with ideas for yet another new

publication series or journal. Several PhD students continue to rely on his guidance and will keep him engaged at the faculty. Herman thrives on lively discussions, in which he often plays devil's advocate and tries to be as contrary as possible. I am convinced that we will continue to collaborate and battle on diverse topics, notably the role of history in the design of future architecture. Retirement is just another step in Herman's career. We are sure that he will stay active and connected as a scholar, even us we will miss his (noisy) inspirational presence on the History floor.

Carola Hein, Professor and Chair of the History of Architecture and Urban Planning, TU Delft

Notes

- 1 Koos Bosma/Helma Hellings (ed.), *Mastering the City. North-European City Planning 1900-2000*, Rotterdam/The Hague 1997.

‘A house with skin against weather conditions’ Van Eesteren and the building materials of Maison Particulière (1923)

Visitors to the exhibition *Les Architectes du Groupe ‘de Stijl’*, in Paris in 1923, were richly immersed in the realm of ideas of De Stijl. Or, at least, the image of De Stijl as constructed under the direction of the Dutch painter Theo van Doesburg. Not only was he the curator of the exhibition, he was also the great propagandist of De Stijl as a movement in general. The primary focus of the exhibition in Galerie de L’Effort Moderne by the art dealer Léonce Rosenberg was on architecture. Prominent elements of this exhibition were three designs made especially for this occasion by Van Doesburg himself in collaboration with the architect Cornelis van Eesteren during the summer of 1923. The three projects, Hotel Particulier (or Maison Rosenberg), Maison Particulière and Maison d’Artiste, were displayed as manifestations of the new art movement. With these three architectural projects, of which drawings and scale models were on display, Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren were able to demonstrate the experimental power of De Stijl in architecture. Van Doesburg’s overriding ambition with this exhibition was to position De Stijl as the most important new movement in both art and architecture in the Netherlands.

So far, researchers have paid little attention to the materials designed by Van Eesteren in the external shell of Maison Particulière.¹ It was what Van Eesteren called the ‘skin’ in the caption of a design for a house from around 1923: ‘house with skin against weather conditions.’² In this way, Van Eesteren showed he wanted to harmonise new possibilities for living with visual and technical developments in contemporary architecture. And Van Doesburg visualised finishing a roof surface and a canopy literally using sandpaper on one of the coloured axonometries he provided.³ [1] In the present article, this aspect of the skin for Maison Particulière from 1923 will be discussed in more detail. First, I will discuss how earlier researchers analyzed this subject, and then, three main elements of the house’s skin will be addressed in detail: successively, the windows and canopies, the roofing and finally, the colour and material.

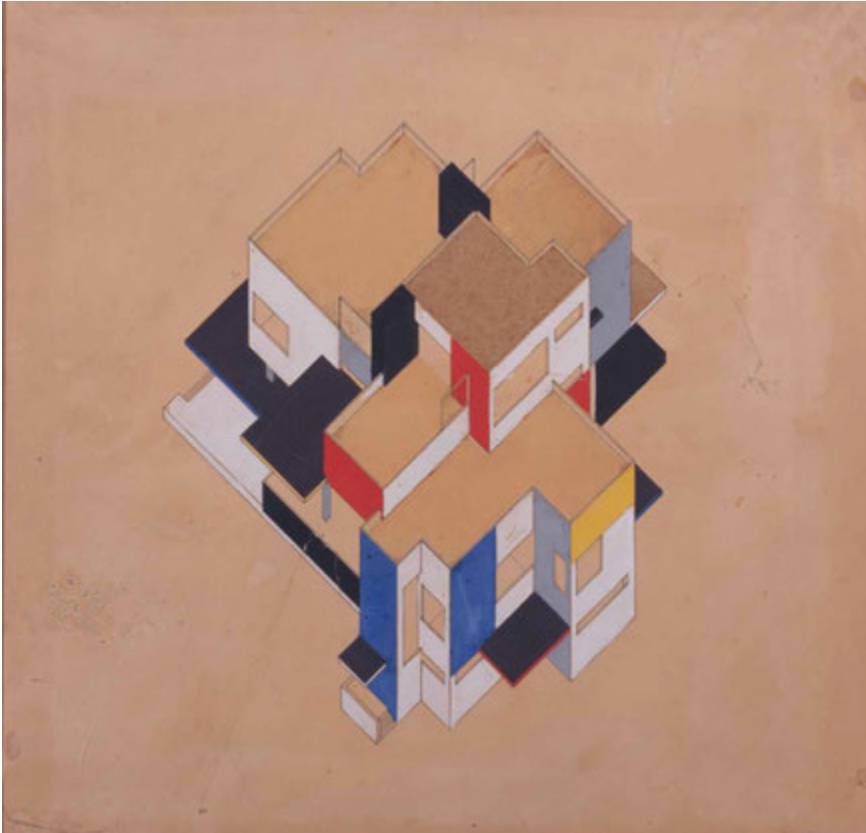


FIG. 1 Cornelis van Eesteren and Theo van Doesburg, *Maison Particulière*, 1923. Axonometry east and north façades. Sandpaper and other types of paper pasted on roof, canopy and balcony. Ink, gouache and collage on paper, 56 x 56 cm, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam

Previous research

Several researchers have published extensively on what have come to be known as the famous ‘Parisian models’.⁴ Considerable attention has been directed, alternately, to the theoretical context (which is broader than De Stijl) and the origin of the ideas on which the designs are based, their authorship, that is, the method of collaboration between Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren.⁵ In a study from 2001, architectural historian Manfred Bock was one of the first to relate the design of *Maison Particulière* to Van Eesteren’s design for the C. Pijl residence (1923).⁶ On a design sketch for a project on which Van Eesteren worked around 1923, the architect wrote: ‘house with skin against weather conditions - air supply and exhaust - heating cooling - central heating.’⁷ [2] According to Bock, this note probably accompanied a design by Van

Eesteren for a floor plan he had drawn for the house of C. Pijl from early 1923, but this is not certain. The sketch is said to have been taken by Van Eesteren to Paris, where he would work with Van Doesburg on the new joint designs. And it would have been his starting point for the design of *Maison Particulière*.

The similarity of the ground floor plans of the two designs is indeed quite striking. If we orient the drawing for the C. Pijl house in such a way that the living room is facing southeast, and place it on top of the drawing of *Maison Particulière* with the 'salle commune' on the ground floor, large parts of the floor plans match (living room, staircase, side rooms, chimney).[3] In addition, the way in which columns, walls and windows are indicated is more or less the same. In any case, the drawing indicates that the house's skin and its adaptation to the influences of the weather at that time, probably 1923, were important for Van Eesteren's design process.

To another researcher, the art historian Evert van Straaten, these three architectural models cover a short period of Van Doesburg's oeuvre during which he was searching for harmony between architecture and colour. In his dissertation on Van Doesburg's oeuvre, Van Straaten states that Van Eesteren was largely responsible for the architecture of *Maison Particulière*. And he describes the design as follows: 'The house is carried, so to speak, by two heavy, tall, straight blocks from where rectangular spaces protrude at different levels, supported on the ground floor by columns.'⁸ He describes it as if the building is basically suspended from the two cores of chimney and ventilation ducts, while the ground floor rests on a minimum number of pillars. Van Eesteren used the heavily dimensioned chimney ducts, which may have been used for air heating, as structural elements. The glass in the ground floor shell emphasises the effect of volumes floating above it. Van Straaten stresses that in this design an almost weightless, floating architecture is created that becomes a visual composition through the use of colour, creating a unity between architecture as (functional) construction, and painting. In other words, not colour that has a destructive effect on architecture, but rather forming a new, harmonious unity with it.

Crosses, windows and canopies

Van Straaten correctly points out that the character of the ground floor of *Maison Particulière* is different from that of the floors above it. In this way, Van Eesteren reinforced the floating effect of the building when viewed from outside. This was true of the experience of living in it, as well. The large plane of glass in the façade of the ground floor living rooms allows, upon entering, a very spacious view to the outside, with considerable contact between inside and outside. As a result, the separation between being inside and being outside is less abrupt.

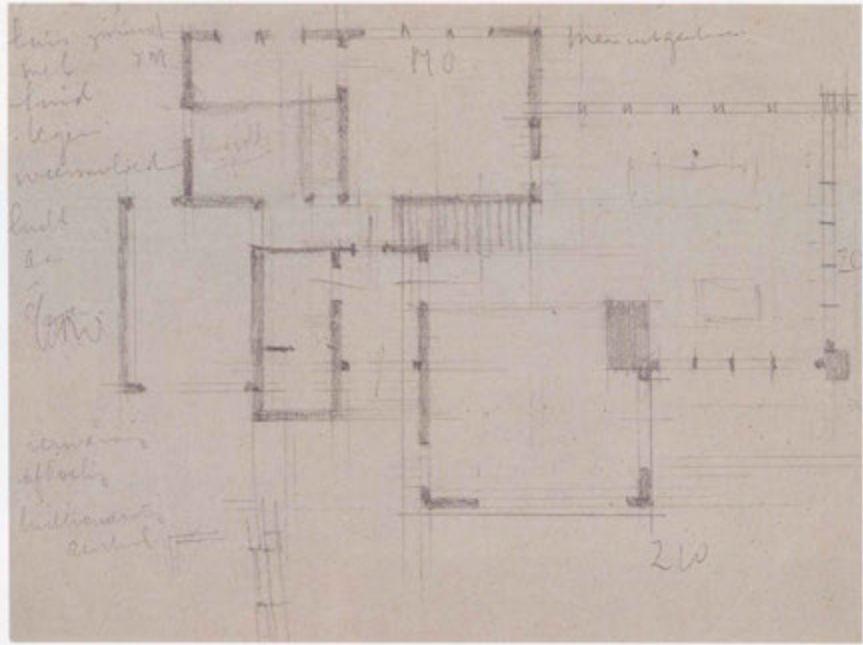


FIG. 2 Cornelis van Eesteren, design for C. Pijl house, 1923 (attributed). Floor plan with captions, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, Van Eesteren archive

In a text written on request, probably sometime between 1925 and 1931, Van Eesteren relates the open floor plan to the windows. In this explanatory note, published in 1931, he emphasises the functional requirements forming the basis for both *Maison Particulière* and *Maison d'Artiste*. 'The starting point for these designs is contemporary living, and the possibilities offered by modern materials and structures. These make a functional floor plan feasible, more than ever before; i.e., the completely free and open floor plan in which the rooms can be given the actual form they need in relation to their purpose. In which, for example, the windows are placed where light is actually needed or where they can be directed to a beautiful view'.⁹

The layout with a seemingly absent exterior wall on the ground floor is clearest in Van Eesteren's preliminary designs for the plans of *Maison Particulière*. In a series of design drawings kept in Van Eesteren's archive at Het Nieuwe Instituut, he depicts almost the entire exterior wall as made of glass.¹⁰ [3] Even interior doors appear to be made of glass. And if we look at the façade elevations, probably coloured in by Van Doesburg, what stands out is the strip of uncoloured parts where glass is supposed to be.¹¹ However, this strip of glass panels needed to be adapted to warm summers with lots of sunlight and cold winters with loss of heat.[4]

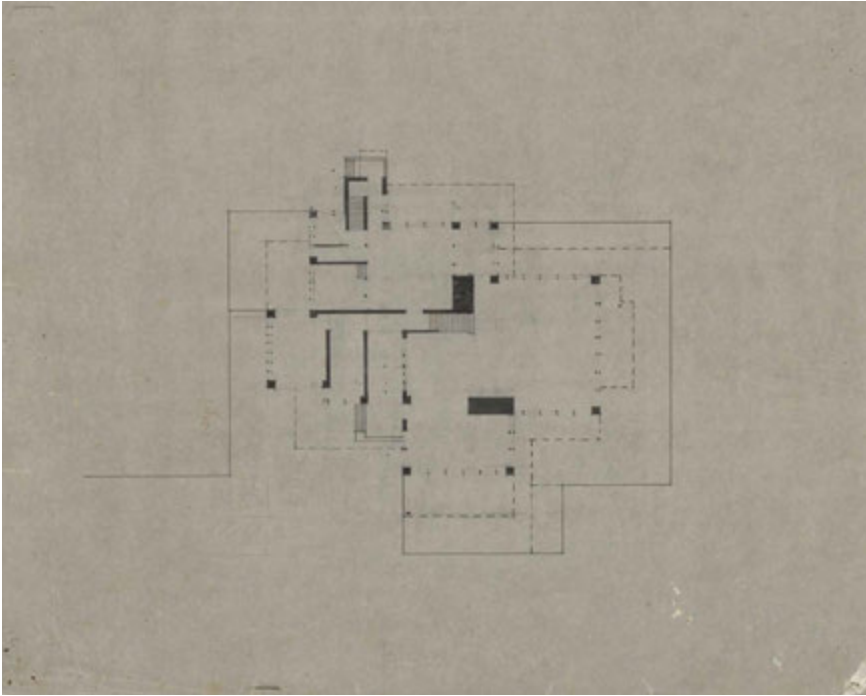


FIG. 3 Cornelis van Eesteren and Theo van Doesburg, *Maison Particulière*, 1923. Ground floor plan. Design drawing indicating a double row of crosses at strip windows between the columns. Construction lines traced in pencil indicating the measuring system are visible. Pencil and pen drawing on tracing paper, 59 x 65 cm, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, Van Eesteren archive

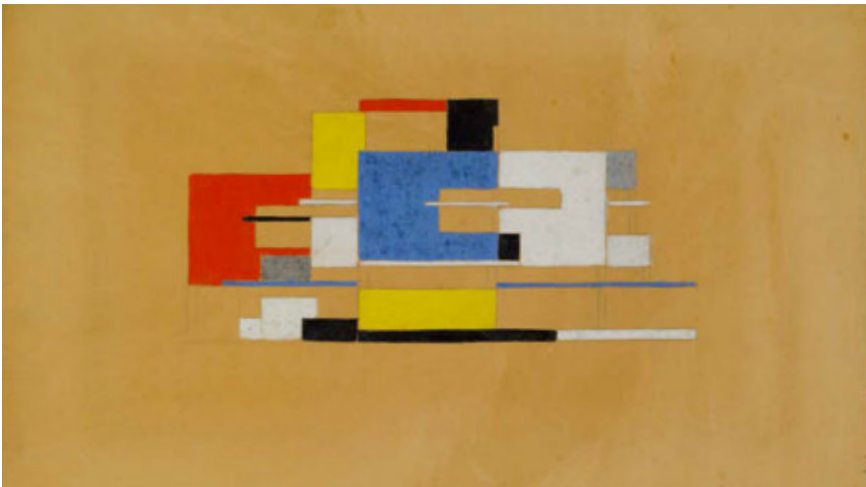


FIG. 4 Cornelis van Eesteren and Theo van Doesburg, *Maison Particulière*, west side façade, 1923. Colour design; the large quantity of glass is visible on the ground floor level. Pencil and gouache on paper, 37 x 54 cm, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, Van Doesburg archive

Van Eesteren investigated this last issue very clearly and systematically. A comparison of the floor plans with the drawings for the elevations shows that the glass indicated on the floor plans varied in height. Van Eesteren had in mind large open windows where they were possible, for example, in living rooms with canopies. Narrower, high strip windows were desirable, for example, in the toilets and the garage. On the first floor, where the bedrooms were located, he applied more closed outer walls, because privacy is, after all, desirable for bedrooms. Van Eesteren also clearly drew large canopies where he wanted to prevent sunlight from entering. In several places, a narrow strip window has been added over the canopy to allow light to enter high into a room. This would allow daylight to penetrate deeply into the house in winter.¹²

Exactly what Van Eesteren had in mind with the series of single and double crosses located on strip windows and doors is not clear. The drawings featuring them were too experimental and the design still unfinished. These crosses might very well indicate the position of window frame posts or door posts. And windows might slide in front of or behind a fixed strip of glass. A double layer of windows is also a possibility, an early form of double glazing that could increase thermal comfort during winter; with one frame of single glazing on the outside wall, and a second layer on the inside. If such a large part of the outer shell is made of glass, it would make sense for Van Eesteren to include the insulating factor of a double layer of glass in his design. This could also be deduced from using a double row of crosses in the living rooms (for the owner/client) and their absence in rooms for staff, for example, which did not need to be as comfortable. Van Eesteren may, for that matter, have had steel window frames in mind, with which relatively slenderer window frames could be realised than with wood.¹³ The slender steel might have had the most desirable optical effect: continuous strip windows could visually counteract the effect of support and load.

The many other design drawings for Hotel Particulier/Maison Rosenberg and Maison Particulière on which Van Eesteren used these crosses very consistently and accurately demonstrate that this element was not a hasty, coincidental way of drawing, but accurately embodied a considered design proposal.¹⁴ [5]

These drawings also show that Van Eesteren (at least incidentally) used a measuring system to proportion the structural elements. He had learned this working method, using orthogonal and diagonal construction lines, from the architect W. Kromhout, during his education at the department of architecture at the Rijksacademie (the V.H.B.O., or the institute of advanced and higher architectural education) in Amsterdam.¹⁵ These construction lines also show that Van Eesteren was still experimenting. At Maison Particulière, the position of a few window frames did not always work out (yet) within the measuring system. The fact that proportioning was very important to Van Eesteren, however, is evident from the

manifesto he published together with Van Doesburg and that was available for the exhibition *Les Architectes du Groupe 'de Styl'*: 'Nous avons examiné les rapports réciproques de la mesure, de la proportion, de l'espace, du temps et des matériaux et nous avons trouvé la méthode définitive de les construire comme une unité.'¹⁶

These design drawings differ in style from the presentation drawings, which are in part more schematic. On the presentation drawings, the crosses are replaced by thin lines, indicating the (thickness of the) wall below or above the glass strips, conveying more effectively the visual sense of walls. This may be the reason why little attention has as yet been given to the indication of these glass strips and series of doors. In any case, it can be deduced from his writing on the drawings that Van Eesteren took weather conditions, comfort and lighting into account.

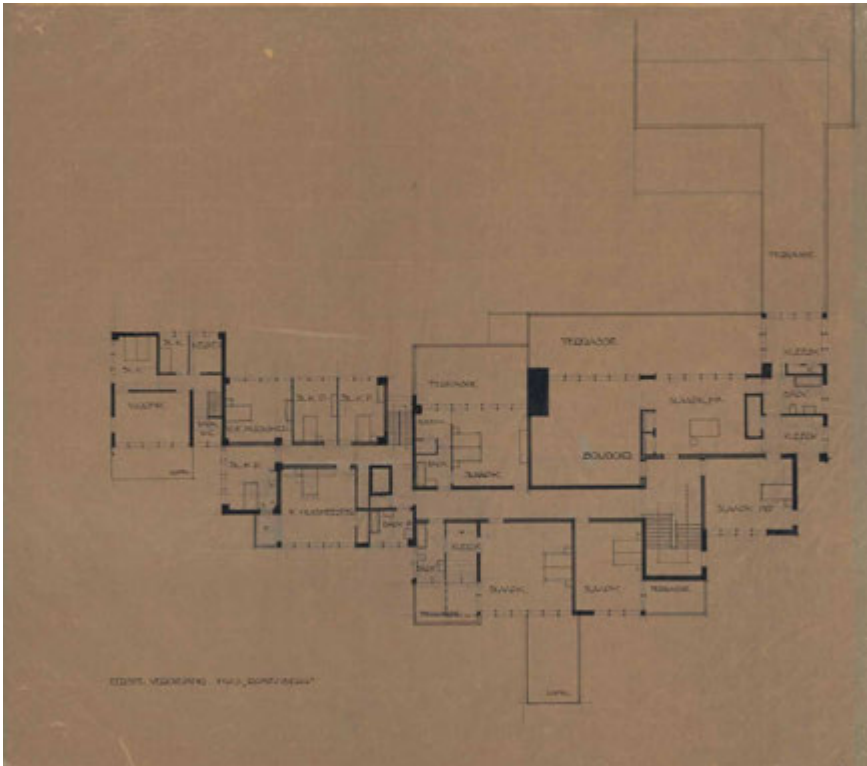


FIG. 5 Cornelis van Eesteren and Theo van Doesburg, Hotel Particulier / Maison Rosenberg, first floor plan, 1923. Detail of a design drawing with indication of a double row of crosses and single crosses at strip windows/patio doors. Pencil and pen drawing on graph paper, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, Van Eesteren archive

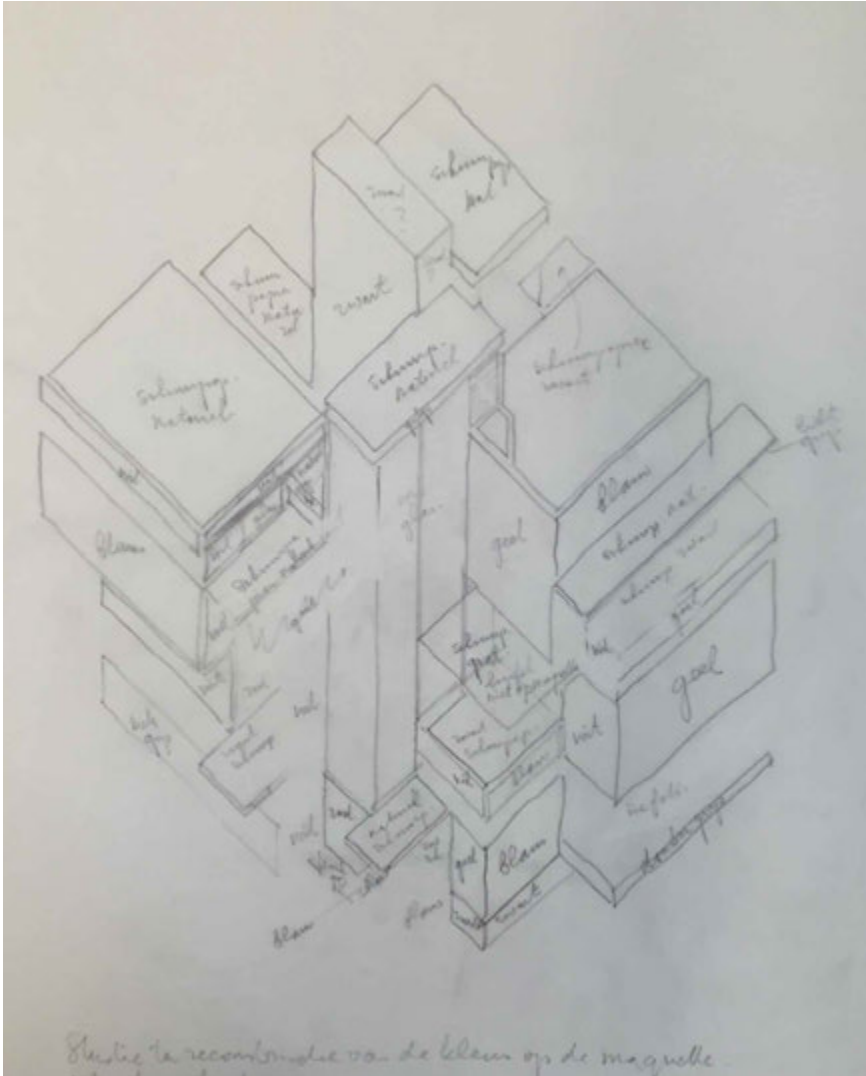


FIG. 6 Cornelis van Eesteren, reconstruction of the colour planes and finishing of the model of Maison d'Artiste, 1968. With notes: sandpaper. Pencil on tracing paper, 66 x 51 cm, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, Van Eesteren archive

Sandpaper

There is another aspect deserving further attention due to the subject of the skin or the shell of the private house. So far it has hardly been pointed out that Van Eesteren and Van Doesburg used sandpaper in their famous projects. Sandpaper

was pasted onto the roof surfaces of the models of *Maison Particulière* and *Maison d'Artiste*. It was probably an indication of the roofing material to be used when the house was actually built. One of the journalists who visited the exhibition *Les Architectes du Groupe 'de Styl'* in 1923 and saw the models mentioned it with some amazement: 'The surfaces representing roofs were pasted over with an unusual paper'.¹⁷ And the caption of the model of *Maison Particulière*, which Van Doesburg himself published in a special issue on the exhibition of *De Stijl* a year later, stated: 'model in various materials and colours'.¹⁸

On the surviving photographs of the models of *Maison Particulière* and *Maison d'Artiste*, sandpaper is visible on some roof surfaces.¹⁹ The models themselves have been lost, so this cannot be verified. The drawings of the colour reconstruction of the *Maison d'Artiste* model made by Van Eesteren in 1968 show that sandpaper was actually used.²⁰ On them, he clearly indicated the use of two types of sandpaper; he often writes variations on 'natural sandpaper' and 'black sandpaper'.²¹ [6]

These two types of sandpaper on the model of *Maison d'Artiste* may indicate gravel or roofing felt as a finishing layer on the flat roofs and canopies that would not be walked on.²² The many terraces in the designs were finished differently. Sandpaper was also pasted onto one of *Maison Particulière's* axonometries to indicate a roof and canopy (and this one has been preserved). A different kind of paper was pasted onto on some terraces (that had a parapet) possibly indicating they would be finished with tiles/floor tiles and could be walked on; the roof and canopy that could not be walked on were covered with sandpaper instead. [7]

In the report from the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* cited above, the method of using sandpaper was, incidentally, directly linked to the collage method used by artists. That was a sensible remark. Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren were familiar, for example, with the collages of Kurt Schwitters, with whom Van Doesburg had undertaken a Dada campaign through the Netherlands in the first months of 1923. Schwitters made collages from material he came across, such as tram tickets, materials sent to him and pieces of paper he found on the street.²³ This gives *Maison Particulière's* collage an implicit reference to this Dada campaign. In this context, the axonometry with the sandpaper is also interesting. Possibly Van Doesburg applied the sandpaper to the collage as an *objet trouvé* during the colour studies. These colour studies are generally attributed to Van Doesburg. He would include an element from architecture and architectural design as a realistic object in his depictions of future architecture.

An enriched life, and rest and relaxation

By now, it should be clear that the subjects of feasibility and actual implementation were well-considered ones.²⁴ Van Eesteren and Van Doesburg looked for the best way to represent their ideas. For Van Eesteren, the skin of *Maison Particulière* was an integral part of the design. Until now, researchers have paid a lot of attention to the finishing of the architecture by means of the colour planes. Van Eesteren also expresses opinions about this in the publication by Van der Sluys mentioned earlier: ‘Many modern materials are so denaturalised that they have all colour possibilities in them.’²⁵ From this analysis, it should be clear that for Van Eesteren, this was not only true of the wall finishing, but also of the detailing of the windows and the finishing of the roof surfaces and roof terraces.

With this reasoning in mind, it is also possible to take a fresh look at the model of *Maison d’Artiste*. It is plausible that the glass mica used in the model for *Maison d’Artiste* is not coincidental. The white appearance of the glass probably indicates a future application of milky white glass in an actual construction. Van Eesteren did not intend to use colourless transparent glass, to show the pivot of open life. The stairwell in this project, which is generally considered more radical than the one in *Maison Particulière*, did not have a canopy and therefore softening the sunlight in the stairwell by means of a milky white layer functioning as light-reflective glass was an obvious measure. With the models, Van Eesteren and Van Doesburg tried to depict or evoke the future of architecture as realistically as possible.

In Van Eesteren’s previously mentioned explanation of *Maison d’Artiste* and *Maison Particulière* in Van der Sluys’ publication, he discusses climate and weather. He establishes a relationship with the façade as protection against the climate: ‘The proper division of open and closed results in a significant contrast with nature, while at the same time there is the sense of being protected against all weather conditions. For this purpose, use was made of, among other things, the canopy, which offers many possibilities to regulate light and sun access in places where there is a need for openness, i.e. lots of glass’. And he even states he has thought of the wind direction on the terraces: ‘The stairwell, for example, is important because it leads to the roof terraces, which have become interesting parts of the house. They are sunny and sheltered from the wind’. And he concludes with the ultimate goal, a contemporary dwelling: ‘In this way, one arrives at the contemporary dwelling, with all its characteristics, which enriches life. Where necessary, it also offers opportunities for rest and relaxation.’²⁶

Practical feasibility

What does this mean for the existing image we have of De Stijl architecture and these designs from 1923? It offers a new view of a very important subject in modernism, the skin of architecture, which, for example, has already been discussed by the theorist Gottfried Semper in his authoritative *Der Stil* (1861-63).²⁷ With the benefit of these observations on the work of Van Eesteren and Van Doesburg, it is possible to gain a fresh look at the effort to free architecture from gravity, and realise an architecture that seems to float. For Van Eesteren, it was important to investigate the practical feasibility. The transparency of the ground floor of *Maison Particulière* shows this very clearly.

This research shows that Van Eesteren considered the consequences of this for some of the main parts of the skin, in conjunction with the entire architectural composition. For Van Eesteren it was important to analyze what the consequences for technical execution would be of the new architectural possibility. He considered the construction, the insulation and the heating. He connected a more open floor plan and a free way of life with technical possibilities. Van Eesteren investigated precisely the aspect that received so much attention among contemporary critics: (doubts about) practical feasibility. While it is mainly the designs of J.J.P. Oud (public housing, Rotterdam) and Gerrit Rietveld (*Rietveld-Schroderhuis*, Utrecht, 1924) that have so far been put forward to demonstrate feasibility, as concrete realisations of De Stijl, we can now take a fresh look at the input of Van Eesteren and Van Doesburg. Although they had an ‘experiment’ in mind, it was certainly also, and at the same time, conceived from the point of view of concrete feasibility.

Notes

- 1 Many thanks to the architect-researchers Wessel de Jonge, Joris Molenaar, Maarten Raaijmakers and Susanne Pietsch, who were willing to exchange ideas about this article.
- 2 Manfred Bock, Vincent van Rossem and Kees Somer, *Bouwkunst, Stijl, stedenbouw. Van Eesteren en de avant-garde*, Rotterdam/ The Hague 2001, 117-132, 135-208, 166.
- 3 Illustration in Els Hoek et al. (eds.), *Theo van Doesburg. Oeuvre Catalogue*, Utrecht/Otterlo 2000, 356, 702.IIt.
- 4 For a review of literature including publications on the three models, see Dolf Broekhuizen (ed.), *Maison d'Artiste. Unfinished De Stijl Icon*, Rotterdam 2016, 120-127; see also the rich theoretical analysis of Van Doesburg's design for his own studio-residence House with Studio Meudon 1927-30: Matthias Noell, *Im Laboratorium der Moderne. Das Atelierwohnhaus von Theo van Doesburg in Meudon – Architektur zwischen Abstraktion und Rhetorik*, Zurich 2011.
- 5 A recent study is: *De kleur lost de architectonische ruimte op. De briefwisseling tussen Theo van Doesburg en architect C.R. de Boer, 1920-1929* (eds. Sjoerd van Faassen and Herman van Bergeijk), Haarlem 2019, 59-75.
- 6 Bock et al., *Bouwkunst, Stijl, stedenbouw*, 2001, 152-153, 166-180.
- 7 Bock et al., *Bouwkunst, Stijl, stedenbouw*, 2001, 174.
- 8 Evert van Straaten, *Theo van Doesburg. Painter and architect*, The Hague 1988, 115.

- 9 [Cornelis van Eesteren], 'C. van Eesteren en Theo van Doesburg. Ontwerp voor een vrijstaand woonhuis (1922)', in Corn. van der Sluys, *Onze woning en haar inrichting. Een boek voor allen die belangstelling hebben voor het huis*, Amsterdam [1931], 37-38; for the attribution of this text to Van Eesteren, see Bock et al., *Bouwkunst, Stijl, stedenbouw*, 131-132.
- 10 Bock et al., *Bouwkunst, Stijl, stedenbouw*, 176.
- 11 Van Straaten, *Theo van Doesburg*, 122-123.
- 12 See also the use of high glass strips in the teachers' room of the Vocational Schools (Nijverheidsscholen) in Groningen by Wiebenga & Van der Vlugt, completed in September 1923. It contained red stained glass. Black-and-white photographs influenced the reception, in part. See also more recent colour photographs. Yko Buursma, Wessel de Jonge, Janpiet Nicolai, 'The restoration and conversion of the Wiebenga Complex', in E. Jap Sam (et al.), *Het Wiebenga complex. The Wiebenga complex*, Rotterdam 2000, 69-88, illustr. 67.
- 13 F.W. Braat's Koninklijke Fabriek van Metaalwerken in Delft supplied double-glazed windows before 1920, which were, for example, used in operating theatres. The 'Crittall-Braat' windows, in particular, had a 'draught-free and watertight closure'. Koninklijke Fabriek F.W. Braat, *Getrokken metalen ramen. System 'Crittall-Braat'*, Delft 1917, 5, 81.
- 14 Illustration in Bock et al., *Bouwkunst, Stijl, stedenbouw*, 162 and 176. The series of design drawings for Maison Rosenberg and Maison Particulière are kept in the Van Eesteren archive. Rotterdam, Het Nieuwe Instituut (HNI), Van Eesteren archive EEST 3-170-177.
- 15 On Kromhout and Van Eesteren, see Bock et al., *Bouwkunst, Stijl, stedenbouw*, 16-17. According to Joris Molenaar, Van Eesteren and L.C. van der Vlugt knew each other well from the lessons at Kromhout and had become friends. Reported by Joris Molenaar, 14 April 2020.
- 16 Theo van Doesburg and C. van Eesteren, ' []+=R4', *De Stijl* 6 (1923-1925), 6-7 ([August] 1924), 92.
- 17 'Nederlandsche kunst te Parijs', *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* 19 October 1923.
- 18 *De Stijl* 6 (1923-1925), 6-7 ([August] 1924), between 84 and 85.
- 19 On illustrations in publications, the structure of the paper is not always clearly reproduced. See, however, Broekhuizen, *Maison d'Artiste*, illustrations 64 and 82.
- 20 Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, Van Eesteren archive EEST 3-213-222.
- 21 The reconstruction from 1968 was made at the request of Jean Leering of the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. Dolf Broekhuizen, 'True-to-life experiences. Initiatives for model homes and reconstructions', in Broekhuizen, *Maison d'Artiste*, 25-33, 29-30.
- 22 C. van Eesteren, Th. van Doesburg, *Maison Particulière*, 1923, axonometry east and north façades, ink, gouache and collage on paper; 56 x 56 cm, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, Van Eesteren archive EEST 3.181. See, for an example, Van Straaten, *Theo van Doesburg*, 121; Bock et al., *Bouwkunst, stijl, stedenbouw*, 169; Els Hoek et al. (eds.), *Theo van Doesburg*, 702. Illustr.
- 23 For the collages of Schwitters and the contact with Van Doesburg, among others, see K. Schippers, *Holland Dada*, Amsterdam 1974, 30-41, 92-102.
- 24 Cf. Michael White, 'Model Living. The Maison d'Artiste as representation and idea', in Dolf Broekhuizen (ed.), *Maison d'Artiste*, 17-23, 22-23.
- 25 Van der Sluys, *Onze woning en haar inrichting*, 38.
- 26 Van der Sluys, *Onze woning en haar inrichting*, 38.
- 27 See, for Semper and modernism, Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses. The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, Cambridge MA 1995.

Careful considerations

Notes on some drawings of Palazzo Te in Mantua

During a certain period of time, years ago, when he - or whoever for him - had made the singular decision to settle in Modena, I often happened to talk and discuss a bit of everything with Herman. Like friends do. In spite of his entirely Nordic and Protestant moralizing propensity: always saying what you think, the truth, the whole truth - or the presumed so - they were pleasant chats, and, given his intelligence and innate goodness of mind, he always ended to laugh about it. Naturally we talked about the research in the archives as we were both working on the book on the Ducal Palace in Modena at that time, about architecture, about what we happened to read during that period. And we went around by car through the villages and cities of the Po Valley. At the end of the eighties we happened to visit what was destined to become one of the most famous exhibitions dedicated to an artist and architect who lived in the sixteenth century, the exhibition on Giulio Romano set up in the fruit mills of Palazzo Te in Mantua, the impressive palace with the magnificent paintings and the weird architectural details on the edge of the city. Above all I remember the wonder aroused by that impressive number of works in conversation with each other. And the bitter disappointment when, a few days later, challenged by a Po Valley fog of other times and arriving back at Palazzo Te, we were prevented, with a ridiculous reason, from attending the conference organized by the curators of the exhibition of which one of those was Manfredi Tafuri whose teachings we had both experienced in Venice. This was resolved with a dish of pumpkin tortelli alla bocciofila and with a visit to the Albertian church Sant'Andrea. Experiences that, in both cases, would have paid off.

Among the exhibition pieces on display that most impressed us I think I can indicate the drawings of Ippolito Andreasi. On the basis of which a wooden model was created that showed the original appearance of Palazzo Te, before the neglect and the inability to understand who should have taken care of it over the centuries fell upon Giulio's architecture. With a theatrical twist, the model was next to a glazed portal opening onto the garden, to allow us to compare the amazing apparatus designed for the eastern facade of Federico II Gonzaga's villa with what remains of it, an impoverished, deformed and weighed down by the eighteenth-century pediment.



FIG. 1

And precisely on some aspects of the façade overlooking the garden and the northern one, facing the city, we paused to discuss at length - that day the low number of visitors allowed this - in front of Andreasi's sheets. It therefore seems appropriate to me, on this occasion in its solemn way, and after a certain number of years, to return to the question in the light of studies I have recently conducted. Undoubtedly this is a distant topic from the research path followed by Herman after his years in Modena, but I count on the fact that his curiosity towards the most disparate aspects of our field of study has remained the same as it once was. So here begins the boring part. Which I dedicate to him with pleasure.

Ippolito Andreasi, who was born in Mantua in 1548, was a painter working in that city in the second half of the sixteenth century. In 1567, while still young, he was chosen by Jacopo Strada - an antique dealer, architect, collector, on his own and on behalf of clients of great prestige - to carry out the series of drawings for Palazzo Te and Palazzo Ducale. The interiors, representing the pictorial apparatus executed under the direction of Giulio Romano, are made alive and testify to the state of affairs at the time. The exteriors, more strictly architectural sheets, are copies of drawings probably provided by Giambattista Bertani, who, in his capacity as prefect of building activities, was able to access Giulio's project drawings kept in Federico Gonzaga's study in the palace. These are images that can be interpreted as evidence of what has been lost in Giulio Romano's architecture, and also as a document of previous phases of the project - and different, at least in part - from what was later carried out.



FIG. 2

In this regard, and by way of example, observations concerning the facades to which I have referred can be made. Observing the the drawing of the northern front, we note a progressive expansion of the measure of the bays – not considering the smaller one that contains a niche – from the western corner, to the right of the sheet, to the loggia with three arches. [1] The device is repeated on the left side of the façade represented, albeit with some differences in size, due to the greater extension of the eastern bay. A similar arrangement is found in Andreasi's hand plan. In both sheets, on the outside the windows are basically represented on the axis of the bays that contain them, and the pilasters are centric in the wall portions between one opening and another. This arrangement would have given a visually regular appearance to the façade, especially if viewed from both angles, privileged points of view. And it would have entailed an asymmetrical arrangement in the interiors, as is clear from observing the plan of the *sala dei cavalli*, where the wall sections between the windows open to the north are different from each other, and the openings on the two main walls do not correspond.

The solution created introduces the principle of subordination of the facade to the regularity and symmetry of the interior. [2] This should be related to the function attributed to this body of the building, for the use of Federico Gonzaga and the court. In the western part of the building, on the other hand, occupied by service areas and centered on the access portal, the homogeneous arrangement of the façade bays prevails, to the detriment of the interiors. Both in the built building and in the drawing that documents a previous design phase. One wonders whether this change is due to a request from the client. A change that involves a significant variation on the section of the facade corresponding to the *sala dei cavalli*, where a triumphal triadic sequence appears with a greater central bay – window aligned with the monumental chimney – and smaller side bays, approximately of the same size. The position of the pilasters in the center of the wall section between the windows remains. The ensemble indicates the presence of the monumental hall and, incidentally, also makes the eccentric position of the two side windows symmetrical. If we look at the left corner of the façade built, the one to the north-east, we have the possibility to verify how the documents that I am considering can be interpreted with another purpose, that of reconstructing the original appearance of the building. At the corner, the search for a complex solution is evident: a rusticated cantonal is placed next to the combined Doric pilasters. This complexity seems to be reflected in Andreasi's drawing: at the ashlar edge the sheet is interrupted. While the lateral volume of the oriental loggias overlooking the garden – now hidden by a late sixteenth-century building – is represented on an added strip of paper. Perhaps a correction, which nevertheless accurately shows the architectural forms at that point.



FIG. 3



FIG. 4

In the lower register, coupled pilasters again appear, of decidedly smaller dimensions than those of the supports that mark the north facade, and of a singular shape. [3] The shaft of the one close to the cantonal is shortened due to the hypertrophic dimension of the base, in particular of the plinth. While the twin pilaster shows a deformed capital, with a trapezoidal profile, a shape determined by the inclination of the astragal. By lucky chance, we are able to verify the accuracy of at least this last solution. The side pilasters, in fact, were incorporated by the building next to the corner later, and the new construction has preserved them inside, like fossils. [4]

Until some time ago they were not visible to the public, since located next to the service ramp of the palace bar. Today, the interior of the building has been restored and what remains of the twin pilasters seems to hang from the trusses that support the roof: their lower part has in fact disappeared at an unspecified moment in the history of the building. The surviving fragment, however, not only confirms the deformation visible in the drawing, but provides additional, useful information. First of all regarding the entablature, which continues on the eastern front, in the sequence of lateral loggias, alongside the monumental loggia of Davide, located in the center of the facade.



FIG. 5



FIG. 6

On the stump pilasters, it has been preserved in its original version, consisting of a single-band architrave, surmounted by astragal and smooth ovolo, drip tray and top shell, the latter made with specially shaped bricks. What is called an architraved cornice, articulated by a few massive and strongly raised moldings. Quite different from the slightly micragnose ones that today, on the façade and inside the loggias, form a contracted but extremely fragmented entablature. Moreover, the architraved cornice originally designed by Giulio Romano measures a few centimeters less in height than the one executed later, which allowed the upper molding to coincide exactly with the abacus of the capital of David's loggia. Taking the design of the eastern facade in hand, a fairly faithful correspondence can be verified again, even in size. [5] And the lower measure springer, recorded by Andreasi, makes the shape of the arches of the lateral loggias slightly higher. Similarly to that of two of the arches of David's loggia. This allows us to hypothesize that the semicircular profile of the arches - which we see today - was created later, when the entablature was modified, modified and raised. It is probably an eighteenth-century intervention - an indication of the annoyance towards solutions evidently considered incorrect - which apparently introduces minor modifications. However, together with the disappearance of the upper loggia and the painted triumphal apparatus, these contribute to profoundly alter the highly sophisticated formal and visual device developed by Giulio Romano. [6]

The examples presented here are only a small part of the work I am currently doing, and that I intend to do in the future, on the building and on the drawings. However, this is only the preliminary phase of the research, necessary, I believe, to subsequently tackle more complex and more strictly historical themes, which take into account documentary, literary and figurative sources. These are in particular the meanings, including political ones, attributed in the past to the architecture of the building, a problem that calls into question the role of the client, Federico Gonzaga, and that of the public to whom those architectural forms are addressed. But I insist: faced with such complex and innovative buildings, it is necessary to start from a reading as close as possible to those forms, which also takes into account their fortune. Proceeding by clearing the field of preconceived interpretative options such as those based on the verification of proportions, the correctness or otherwise of the orders and the correspondence to the ancient. Probably all working tools for an architect like Giulio Romano, but certainly not ends to be pursued with the project.

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Geschäftsfreunde

J.J.P. Oud und Adolf Behne

In einem Aufsatz über die Rezeption niederländischer Architektur im Deutschland der zwanziger Jahre hat Herman van Bergeijk von dem 'Heldenstatus' gesprochen, den die deutsche Architekturkritik J.J.P. Oud zuerkannt habe und bis heute zuerkenne.¹ Diesen 'Heldenstatus' verdankte der Architekt weniger seinem eigenen strategischen Geschick, als der Unterstützung durch den Berliner Kunsthistoriker und -kritiker Adolf Behne: Behne war es, der die niederländische Architektur nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg zum Vorbild für ein zeitgenössisches Bauen erhob.² Er war es auch, der Oud in die deutsche Architekturdebatte einführte und zum Gesprächspartner seiner deutschen Kollegen Walter Gropius, Bruno Taut, Erich Mendelsohn, Otto Bartning, aber auch des dänischen Architekten Knud Lønberg-Holm machte. Das Verhältnis zwischen Behne und Oud lässt sich in Teilen anhand der Briefe rekonstruieren, die in den Archiven des Literaturmuseum Den Haag, des Bauhaus-Archivs und der Abteilung Baukunst der Berliner Akademie der Künste erhalten haben.³ In der nachsichtigen Lektüre, die die Korrespondenz und die öffentlichen Stellungnahmen der beiden Akteure in Relation zueinander setzt, zeigt sich, dass sie gemeinsam ein Kapitel deutscher Architekturgeschichte geschrieben, zugleich aber sehr unterschiedliche Interessen verfolgt haben.

Prolog: Ein Expressionist auf Reisen

Adolf Behne war seit Kriegsende eine der wichtigsten Stimmen der expressionistischen Moderne in Deutschland. Anders als die meisten Kritiker seiner Zeit begnügte er sich jedoch nicht mit der Rolle eines mehr oder weniger wohlwollenden Beobachters des Kunstgeschehens, sondern definierte sich selbst als aktives Mitglied der Avantgarde, der er durch seine programmatischen Schriften die Ziele vorgeben wollte. Schon vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg war er über die Galerie *Der Sturm* und den Deutschen Werkbund bestens in der deutschen Kunstszene vernetzt. Nach Kriegsende bot ihm die Funktion als Geschäftsführer des Arbeitsrates für Kunst, die er auf Betreiben von Walter Gropius übernommen hatte, die Möglichkeit, die Entwicklung durch Stellungnahmen, Ausstellungen und Kampagnen mit zu gestalten. Für die Jahre 1919-21 wurde er für Berlin zu einer zentralen Instanz für künstlerische und kulturpolitische Belange. Sein Engagement für den Expressionismus respektive

Kubismus (die Begriffe verwendete er in seinen Schriften als Synonyme) verstand er als gesellschaftliches Engagement. Die Aufgabe von Kunst sah er darin, 'Zwecke' zu erfüllen, wobei diese 'Zwecke' nicht funktional, sondern ethisch definiert waren: ein Werk war dann 'schön', 'gut' oder 'wertvoll', wenn man in ihm eine 'notwendige' Äußerung des Lebens erkennen konnte. Weil Künstler aber auch auf Bedürfnisse und Gefühle reagierten, die noch nicht ins allgemeine Bewusstsein gedrungen waren, oblag es ihnen, kommende Entwicklungen zu antizipieren und in ihren Arbeiten modellhaft zu formulieren. Damit wurden sie zum Motor gesellschaftlicher Veränderungen. Gerade die Kunst der Avantgarde verfügte über das Potential, die schöpferischen Instinkte der Massen zu wecken, das Volk im 'Mit-Schaffen' zu einen und damit den Weg zu einer sozialistischen Gemeinschaft zu bahnen. Hatte sie sich doch schon vor 1914 aus der Abhängigkeit vom Naturvorbild gelöst und damit jenes Freiheitsstreben vorweggenommen, das auch die Revolution beflügelte. Nicht: 'Die Kunst dem Volke' lautete deshalb die Devise in Behnes Programmschrift *Wiederkehr der Kunst*, sondern: 'Das Volk der Kunst'.⁴ Im Kern war diese Utopie vom 'mitschaffenden' Volk rückwärtsgewandt. Wie viele seiner Mitstreiter im Arbeitsrat und wie die Künstler am neu gegründeten Bauhaus suchte Behne das Vorbild für sein partizipatorisches Modell im Mittelalter. Insbesondere die gotische Kathedrale schien ihm die Ziele für die Zukunft vorzugeben: Sie galt ihm als Resultat des von allen gesellschaftlichen Schichten getragenen Wunsches, ein Sinnbild des Glaubens zu schaffen, der Gemeinschaft zugleich ausdrücken und stiften konnte – und als Gesamtkunstwerk, das auf gemeinsamer handwerklicher Arbeit basiert und in dem Architektur, Malerei und Bildhauerei zu Höchstleistungen geführt worden sind.⁵

Mit seiner Utopie einer durch Kunst versöhnten (sozialistischen) Gesellschaft sprach Behne eine breite Leserschaft an. Zu seinen unbedingten Fans gehörte die in Berlin lebende Niederländerin Willemien Langeveld. Sie war so beeindruckt von den Schriften und Vorträgen des Kritikers, dass sie ihm zusammen mit einer zweiten, unbekanntenen Person als Zeichen der Dankbarkeit und der solidarischen Verbundenheit 1.000 Gulden für eine Reise in die Niederlande schenkte – im inflationsgeplagten Nachkriegsdeutschland eine enorme Summe, von der die dreiköpfige Familie zweieinhalb Monate unterwegs sein konnte: einen Monat in Rotterdam, die restliche Zeit in Hessen und Westfalen.⁶ [1] Hier wie dort verknüpfte Behne seine Aktivitäten mit seiner Rolle als Geschäftsführer des Arbeitsrates, dessen Bedeutung er auf nationaler und internationaler Ebene stärken wollte. Schließlich war er überzeugt, dass die Kunst nicht nur das Volk, sondern auch die Völker einen könne. Schon im Mai 1919 hatte er in einem Aufruf *An alle Künstler aller Länder* eine umfassende Kooperation jenseits nationaler Befindlichkeiten angeregt: 'Wir sollten einen ständigen Austausch beginnen von unseren Arbeiten. Wir sollten einander besuchen, Freundschaften knüpfen. Wir sollten unsere Regierungen bewegen, Künstler anderer Länder als Schaffende und Lehrende zu berufen. Ausstellungen

könnten durch alle Länder im Austausch wandern. Wir könnten Zentralen schaffen, von denen reisende Kameraden alle Auskunft erhalten.⁷

Nachdem der erste Teil der Reise in vertrauten Bahnen verlaufen und von Treffen mit alten Bekannten geprägt gewesen war, taten sich in den Niederlanden neue Perspektiven auf.⁸ Neben touristischen Besichtigungen, die man mit den Rotterdamer Gastgebern, einer Familie Richards, absolvierte, standen Begegnungen mit Künstlern und Künstlerinnen des Nachbarlandes auf dem Programm. In Amsterdam traf Behne Hendrik Petrus Berlage und Hendrik Wijdeveld, den Redakteur der Zeitschrift *Wendingen*, in Leiden Theo van Doesburg und in Rotterdam J.J.P. Oud, Pieter Verhagen und Willem Kromhout.⁹ Zudem besuchte er in Scheveningen eine Expressionisten-Ausstellung sowie, auf Van Doesburgs Empfehlung, in Arnhem die von der Vereinigung *Artibus Sacrum* veranstaltete Ausstellung der *Section d'Or*.¹⁰ Nach seiner Rückkehr Anfang Oktober konnte er den Architekten im Arbeitsrat für Kunst eine Einladung zu einer Fotoausstellung der Amsterdamer Architektenvereinigung *Architectura et Amicitia* sowie die Option auf ein dem Arbeitsrat gewidmetes Heft von *Wendingen* überbringen.¹¹



FIG. 1 Adolf Behne (im gestreiften Anzug) mit seiner Frau Elfriede Behne (daneben), seiner Tochter Karla Behne (vordere Reihe Mitte) und Freunden am Strand von Scheveningen, August/September 1920 [Landesarchiv Berlin, Nachlass Behne, Rep 200-93]

Die Verabredungen mit Theo van Doesburg und J.J.P. Oud kamen also im Rahmen einer halboffiziellen Mission zustande. Voneinander gehört hatte man schon vorher: Der Aufruf *An alle Künstler aller Länder 1919* war auch an die Redaktion der Zeitschrift *De Stijl* gegangen. Doesburg hatte den Text seinerzeit zwar angenommen, ihn jedoch mit einer distanzierenden Vorbemerkung versehen: Er könne keine Verbindung zwischen dem Aufruf zum übernationalen Austausch (der durchaus der Zielsetzung von *De Stijl* entspreche) und den noch 'zeer individueele en grillige uitingen der duitsche expressionistische kunst' erkennen.¹² So ging es bei den persönlichen Treffen wohl in erster Linie darum, gemeinsame Schnittmengen trotz unterschiedlicher Positionen auszuloten. Solche Schnittmengen gab es vor allem mit Van Doesburg: Auch Van Doesburg war der Überzeugung, dass sich die Aufgabe von Architektur nicht in der Funktion erschöpfen dürfe, sondern in der ästhetischen Wirkung zu suchen sei, auch er hatte wenige Jahre zuvor von einer neuen 'gemeinschaftskunst' nach Vorbild des Mittelalters geträumt und die gotische Kathedrale als ideales Modell einer nach Schönheit strebenden und die Gattungen vereinigenden Baukunst zitiert.¹³ Umgekehrt wird Behne die Fokussierung der *Stijl*-Repräsentanten auf die elementaren Mittel der Kunst und ihr Verhältnis zueinander bekannt vorgekommen sein; entsprachen sie doch der Definition expressionistischer Gestaltungsprinzipien, die er 1915 in seiner Schrift *Zur neuen Kunst* gegeben hatte. Danach bedeutete die Lösung von historischen Vorbildern für den Architekten, dass er sich auf das Wechselspiel von Wand und Öffnung, und die Lösung vom Naturvorbild für den Maler, dass er sich auf das 'Wesen der Farben' und ihr 'Verhalten' zueinander besinnen konnte.¹⁴ Differenzen gab es in der Frage nach den gestalterischen Konsequenzen. Für Oud und Van Doesburg musste sich die Kunst an der Realität einer industriellen Massengesellschaft orientieren,¹⁵ für Behne bestand ihre Aufgabe darin, einer besseren Zukunft jenseits der modernen Industriegesellschaft vorzuarbeiten. Und während die niederländischen Künstler überzeugt waren, dass sich der Gegenwartsbezug nur in klaren, geometrisch fassbaren Formen und modernen Materialien äußern könne,¹⁶ verweigerte sich Behne jeder Festlegung. Stattdessen insistierte er darauf, dass sich das gesellschaftsverändernde Potenzial von Kunst nicht in einem bestimmten Stil oder Formenapparat, sondern ausschließlich in der schon erwähnten 'Zweckerfüllung' manifestiere. 'Kubismus' (beziehungsweise 'Expressionismus') war für ihn keine Richtung, sondern eine Haltung, die ganz unterschiedliche Lösungen hervorbringen konnte. 'Kubismus,' so heißt es in der *Wiederkehr der Kunst*, 'ist das, was wir aus ihm machen werden.'¹⁷ Entsprechend groß war der Interpretationsspielraum. So, wie er Emil Nolde und Kurt Schwitters oder Walter Gropius und Hermann Finsterlin unterstützte, konnte sich Behne

für die Amsterdamer Schule und für *De Stijl* begeistern. Bei Van Doesburg und Oud rief diese Offenheit Irritationen hervor.¹⁸ Auch Behnes Erklärung, er kenne ‘nunmal kein Dogma in der Kunst’, sondern nur ‘künstlerisches Empfinden’,¹⁹ muss ihnen befremdlich erschienen sein. Abschätzig attestierte Van Doesburg dem Kritiker mangelnde Urteilskraft: ‘De Duitsers staan over het algemeen het verst van eenig waardeering af. [...] Behne praat ons naar de mond.’²⁰

Trotz solcher Vorbehalte hatte die Begegnung für alle Beteiligten Folgen: unmittelbar für Van Doesburg, der bei seinem Berlin-Besuch im Dezember 1920 durch Behne Kontakte zur Berliner Kunstszene knüpfen und Verbindung zum Bauhaus aufnehmen konnte,²¹ mittelbar für Oud, der mit seiner Unterstützung in Deutschland zur Leitfigur der modernen Architektur aufstieg. Behne schließlich nutzte die neuen Erfahrungen, um sich als Reformator der deutschen Avantgarde zu profilieren und deren Anschluss an die internationale Entwicklung zu forcieren. Schon in seinem (noch während der Reise verfassten) Bericht von der Ausstellung in Arnheim ging er auf Distanz zu den utopischen Konzepten, die er kurz zuvor noch selbst im Arbeitsrat vertreten hatte.²² Die abstrakten Werke der niederländischen und französischen Künstler beschrieb er als unbedingtes Bekenntnis zu den Herausforderungen, die aus der Gegenwart erwachsen: ‘Die Wirklichkeit schreckt nicht mehr. [...] Eine neue Schönheit blüht auf, der Technik, der Maschine, der Sachlichkeit – dem Heute verwandt.’²³ Auch sein Bild von der gotischen Kathedrale nahm eine andere Färbung an. In ‘Europa und die Architektur’, dem ersten größeren Aufsatz nach seiner Rückkehr, beschwor er nicht mehr die Gefühlswelt des ‘Volkes’, sondern den ‘europäischen, ja planetarischen Gemeingeist’, nicht mehr die Metaphysik, sondern den Realitätssinn, der sich in den Bauten des Mittelalters offenbare. Als Beispiel nannte er den Dom St. Patrokli in Soest, den er zum Produkt überregionaler Handelsbeziehungen erklärte. Die neue Ausrichtung blieb jedoch den alten Idealen verpflichtet. Bauen war weiterhin ein gemeinschaftlicher Akt, in dem die mittelalterliche Gesellschaft ihr Verhältnis zur Welt gestaltete: ‘Der Europäische Gemeingeist war ein Geist der Wirklichkeit, Tatsächlichkeit, ein aktives lebensvolles Ergreifen der Gegenwart. [...] Alles Bauen ist eben Stehen auf der Erde, Schichten, Ergreifen der Wirklichkeit, der Gegenwärtigkeit. Bauen ist der größte Gegensatz zum Fliehen.’²⁴

Der Aufsatz war Behne so wichtig, dass er ihn unmittelbar nach seinem Erscheinen an die niederländischen Gesprächspartner schickte, deren Urteil ihm besonders am Herzen lag. Ein Exemplar erhielt Berlage,²⁵ ein anderes Oud.²⁶ Eine Karte die Behne auf der Rückreise über Soest an Oud geschickt hatte, legt den Schluss nahe, dass das neue Mittelalterbild gemeinschaftlich entwickelt worden war: Sie zeigt auf der Vorderseite eben jenen Dom St. Patrokli, der in dem Artikel zum Kronzeugen

des Kulturaustauschs aufgerufen wird, auf der Rückseite nur Behnes Namen.²⁷ Offensichtlich konnte der Kritiker davon ausgehen, dass sein Adressat die Bild-Botschaft auch ohne zusätzliche Erklärung verstand.

Oud und Behne

Die Karte markiert den Beginn eines etwa zehnjährigen Gedankenaustauschs, der nicht nur durch Briefe, sondern auch über Aufsätze geführt wurde und zunächst von herzlicher Anteilnahme, später von freundlicher Distanz geprägt war. Die Basis der Verständigung bildeten wohl ähnliche gesellschaftliche Vorstellungen (beide Briefpartner sympathisierten mit sozialistischen Ideen) und gemeinsame Vorbilder: Behne hatte in Berlin bei Heinrich Wölfflin studiert, den Oud zutiefst bewunderte.²⁸ Ouds Mentor in Studienzeiten war Berlage, dem Behne größte Hochachtung entgegenbrachte.²⁹ Dass beide passionierte Briefschreiber waren, versteht sich von selbst. Allerdings war Behne bereits mehrfach Allianzen mit Architekten eingegangen. Mit Bruno und Max Taut sowie Walter Gropius hatte er sich sogar zu einer 'Baubrüderschaft' beziehungsweise 'Bauloge' zusammengeschlossen.³⁰ Für Oud hingegen war es die erste professionelle Freundschaft mit einem Kritiker, deren Möglichkeiten er gleichwohl klug zu nutzen wusste.³¹ Als ihm Behne im Oktober 1920 einen monografischen Aufsatz in Aussicht stellte, sandte er umgehend ein Konvolut von 18 Fotos nach Berlin, wobei er vor allem Entwürfe für öffentliche Bauaufgaben aussuchte.³² Damit machte er unmissverständlich klar, worin für ihn die gesellschaftliche Wirkung von Architektur lag: nicht im gemeinschaftlichen Bauen und schon gar nicht in der Zukunftskathedrale, sondern in der konkreten Gestaltung sozialer Räume.

Die angekündigte Würdigung kam nicht zustande.³³ Stattdessen erschien im Februar 1921 in der Zeitschrift *Feuer* der Aufsatz 'Von holländischer Baukunst', in dem Behne das spezifisch Holländische in der holländischen Kunst zu charakterisieren suchte. Zum Leitmotiv machte er die 'Bezwingung von Wirklichkeit', die er zuvor schon den mittelalterlichen Domen attestiert hatte: Er pries die einheitliche Kultur, die sich aus einem ausgeprägten Gemeinschaftsgefühl entwickelt habe, das 'Tektonische', das auf die flache Landschaft reagiere, und das positive Verhältnis zur eigenen Tradition, das selbst noch in den 'radikalen Beton-Architekturen' Ouds spürbar sei. Im Mittelpunkt der Darstellung stand Berlage, den Behne als Vater der niederländischen Moderne und 'feine[n], kluge[n] Gestalter der Wirklichkeit' apostrophierte. Oud hingegen taucht lediglich als Nachfolger Berlages und in Verbindung mit Jan Wils und Robert van 't Hoff auf; der Gruppe der Modernisten werden die Vertreter der Amsterdamer Schule gleichberechtigt gegenüber gestellt.³⁴ Das Bemühen um eine abwägende

Haltung ist auch in der Auswahl der Illustrationen, ja sogar im Format der Bilder zu spüren: Ganzseitig reproduziert sind Berlages Londoner Holland House sowie Kromhouts Kontorhaus De Noordezee als Beispiel für die Amsterdamer Schule und die Halle des Ferienheims De Vonk von Oud/Van Doesburg als Beispiel für *De Stijl*.

In einem ähnlichen Sinn argumentiert auch ein zweiter Aufsatz 'Holländische Baukunst in der Gegenwart' in *Wasmuths Monatsheften für Baukunst*, seit Dezember 1920 geplant, doch erst im Juni 1921 veröffentlicht.³⁵ Erneut hob Behne die zentrale Bedeutung Berlages als Wegbereiter einer modernen niederländischen Baukunst hervor; wieder wertete er die Lösungen der nachfolgenden Architektengeneration als gleichwertige Leistungen. Während er die Amsterdamer Künstler um die Zeitschrift *Wendingen* für ihre gestalterische Freiheit und Experimentierfreude lobte, gestand er den Bauten Ouds und seiner Mitstreiter das Verdienst zu, 'in besonderem Maße unserer Zeit' Ausdruck zu verleihen. Wie das Lob, so waren auch die Kritikpunkte gleichmäßig verteilt. Bei den Amsterdamern bemängelte Behne die Lösung von funktionalen und materiellen Gegebenheiten, bei *De Stijl* warnte er vor der Gefahr eines formalen Modernismus. Implizit schlug er einen stärkeren Austausch zwischen den beiden Lagern vor, wenn er erklärte: "Wendingen" und "De Stijl" – diese Spannung gerade ist von größtem Wert und verspricht viel für die weitere Entwicklung der holländischen Architektur.³⁶

Die prononciert vorgetragene Überparteilichkeit mag taktisch motiviert gewesen sein – Behne konnte kein Interesse daran haben, die geplante Zusammenarbeit des Arbeitsrates mit *Wendingen* zu gefährden.³⁷ Mit Sicherheit entsprach sie seiner Überzeugung, dass es mehr als eine Antwort auf die Herausforderungen der Gegenwart gab.³⁸ Nebenbei machte er deutlich, dass er – bei aller Sympathie für Oud – eine eigene Agenda verfolgte: Ihm ging es nicht um die Beschreibung eines Ist-Zustands, sondern um Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten. Das Plädoyer für eine moderne Architektur, die sich ihrer schöpferischen Freiheit bewusst ist, ohne darüber die Anforderungen konkreter Bauaufgaben zu vernachlässigen, war auch an die eigene Umgebung gerichtet. Zeitgleich mit dem *Wasmuth*-Aufsatz mahnte er für die deutschen Künstler eine Aussöhnung an, die neue Synergieeffekte hervorbringen könne: 'Die Realisten müssen immer wieder daran erinnert werden, daß es sich [bei der Erneuerung der Baukunst] nicht um ein paar Verbesserungen handelt, sondern um ein Ganzes, und die Utopisten müssen sich sagen lassen, daß ihnen ein Romantizismus droht, da ihre Gedanken manchmal doch mehr in die Vergangenheit weisen als in die Zukunft.'³⁹

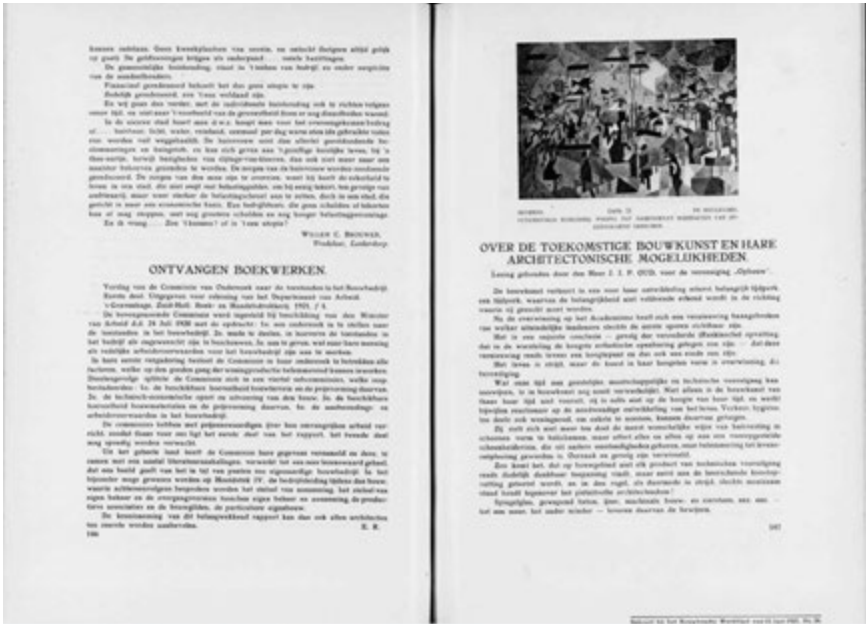


FIG. 2 Doppelseite aus J.J.P. Ouds Aufsatz 'Over de toekomstige bouwkunst en hare architectonische mogelijkheden', Bouwkundig Weekblad, 11 Juni 1921

Einen Verbündeten in dieser Strategie einer wechselseitigen Annäherung fand er in Erich Mendelsohn, der Wendingen nahestand, bei seiner Reise in die Niederlande im Mai 1921 auf Behnes Empfehlung hin aber auch Oud aufgesucht hatte. Mendelsohn lud unmittelbar nach seiner Rückkehr Gropius, Bruno Taut, Behne, Wijdeveld und Van Doesburg zu einem 'Konzil' ein, um gemeinsam über die Zukunft der Baukunst zu diskutieren⁴⁰ – eine Idee, die, wenn nicht von Behne entwickelt, so doch mit Sicherheit von ihm mitgetragen wurde. Ob das Treffen in der geplanten Form stattfand, wissen wir nicht; es scheint, dass sich der Kreis auf Mendelsohn, Wijdeveld und Van Doesburg beschränkte. Letzterer freilich wies, wie er Oud empört berichtete, den Vorschlag zur Kooperation zurück, zumal er in ihm ein Komplott witterte: 'Behne, Wijdeveld, Wendingen, Mendelsohn één kliek. En ik zat daar tusschen in.'⁴¹

Oud reagierte deutlich zurückhaltender auf Behnes Aktivitäten – immerhin waren er und Van Doesburg im Abbildungsteil von Wasmuths Monatsheften prominent vertreten.⁴² Sofern er über das abwägende Urteil der Aufsätze enttäuscht war, ließ er es sich nicht anmerken und begnügte sich mit kleinen Sticheleien – etwa dem Hinweis, dass es auch in Holland 'furchtbar viel Minderwertiges' gebe,⁴³ dass Berlages Entwürfe für den Museumneubau in Den Haag nicht mehr zeitgemäß seien,⁴⁴ oder dass der fertiggestellte Einsteinturm von Mendelsohn weit hinter

den Erwartungen zurückbleibe, die die seinerzeit in *Wendingen* vorgestellten Entwürfe geweckt hätten.⁴⁵ Vor allem aber ließ er Behne einen Vortrag über die Zukunft der Baukunst zukommen, den er im Februar 1921 vor der holländischen Architektenvereinigung *Opbouw* gehalten und im Frühsommer im *Bouwkundig Weekblad* publiziert hatte.⁴⁶ Der Aufsatz lässt sich sowohl als Stellungnahme zu den Auseinandersetzungen um Gattungshierarchien innerhalb der *De Stijl*-Gruppe wie auch als Reflexion über die internationale Architektur-Debatte der letzten 20 Jahre lesen. Dabei passte Oud unter anderem die Positionen der Expressionisten seinen Bedürfnissen an. So erhielt der Einsatz von Glas als Baumaterial, dem Bruno Taut, Behne und Paul Scheerbart eine ethische Wirkung zugeschrieben hatten, eine modernistische Wendung.⁴⁷ Als technisch erzeugtes Produkt war es ein Gestaltungsmittel, das, wie der glitzernde Stahl und blinkende Oberflächen auch, für zeitgemäße 'Kultur' stand.⁴⁸ Hinsichtlich der Relation zwischen Architektur und Bildkünsten vertrat Oud nicht mehr die Idee einer Synthese, sondern mahnte eine reinliche Scheidung an – eine 'organische' Verbindung könne nur dann entstehen, wenn sich Baukunst zunächst auf ihre ureigenen Mittel konzentriere.⁴⁹ Als dritte Voraussetzung für die Erneuerung der Architektur nannte Oud die industrielle Fertigung, die zum Verzicht auf Ornamente zwingt und eine Standardisierung der Produkte ermögliche. Als Ziel schwebte ihm eine alle Lebensbereiche umfassende gestalterische Einheit vor – und eine in höchstem Maße symbolträchtige und ästhetisch überwältigende Baukunst, die sich 'in volheid van licht, ontwikkelt naar een zuiverheid van verhouding, een blankheid van kleur, een organische klaarheid van vorm, die door het ontbreken van elke bijkomstigheid de klassieke zuiverheid zal kunnen overtreffen.'⁵⁰ Bei alledem vermied Oud formale Festlegungen, obwohl er durchaus 'Anknüpfungspunkte' für die äußere Erscheinung der neuen Architektur in der Gestaltung moderner Gebrauchsgegenstände sah. Formgebende Kraft sei ausschließlich das Lebensgefühl: 'Het levensgevoel van een tijd is richtlijn voor zijn kunst, niet de vormtraditie!'⁵¹ Die Illustrationen des Aufsatzes schienen dies noch einmal zu unterstreichen: Das bunte Sammelsurium von Bildern – neben Werken der Bildkünste und der Architektur sind unter anderem eine Lokomotive, ein Automobil, ein Herrenanzug und eine Besteckgarnitur zu sehen – setzt auf eine sehr allgemeine Art und Weise Alltags- und Kunstprodukte in Relation zueinander, ohne deshalb eine formale Einheit zu suggerieren.⁵²

Die Argumentation war nicht neu; ähnliche Gedanken fanden sich schon vorher in Ouds Schriften.⁵³ Die Bebilderung machte Anleihen bei Le Corbusier und *L'Esprit Nouveau*. Behne freilich lieferte der Aufsatz Anlass, Oud zum maßgeblichen Theoretiker modernen Bauens zu erklären. Den Ausschlag dürfte die Absage an formale Kriterien gegeben haben; vermutlich verstand der Kritiker Ouds Idee von einer dem 'Leben' verpflichteten Gestaltung als Antwort auf seine eigene Position. Mit Sicherheit erkannte er Ouds Bemühen, seine Architekturvision

in Bezug zu expressionistischen Modellen zu setzen, um sie zugleich von ihnen abzugrenzen. Von 'Licht', 'Glanz', vom 'Leuchten des Reinen, Transzendentalen' und von 'ungebrochen strahlenden Farben' sprach auch Bruno Taut, als er in der Stadtkrone das 'Kristallhaus' beschrieb, das das Herzstück seiner Idealstadt bilden sollte.⁵⁴ Während sich dieses 'Kristallhaus' allerdings jeder praktischen Forderung verweigern und seine Funktion ausschließlich in der Wirkung durch überzeitliche Schönheit liegen sollte, behauptete Oud eine kausale Verbindung zwischen Realitätsbezug und zeitenthobener 'Reinheit': Die Wirkmacht der Erscheinung basiert bei ihm auf der Auseinandersetzung mit modernen Materialien, Produktionsformen und Bedürfnissen. Für Behne ließ sich damit 'Wirklichkeit' ästhetisch codieren. Zugleich erhielt die 'Sachlichkeit' industrieller Fertigungsformen eine ethische Dimension: Sie ermöglichte gleichmäßige Qualität, die Optimierung der Ressourcen und eine größere Breitenwirkung der Produktion und stand für Arbeitsteilung, 'Individualismus', 'Vergemeinschaftung' – Begriffe, die Behne in der Auseinandersetzung mit Van Doesburg entwickelt hatte.⁵⁵ Die Anregungen flossen in dem wenige Monate später verfassten Aufsatz 'Architekten' ein. Behne zitierte hier zentrale Passagen von Ouds Text, um sie gegen den unzeitgemäßen 'Romantizismus' der deutschen Architektenschaft, aber auch gegen den Rationalismus französischer Kollegen ins Feld zu führen: Das Bekenntnis zur Gegenwart bedeute weder Phantastik noch Maschinenästhetik, weder handwerkliches Arbeiten noch schöpferische Genialität, sondern das Streben nach einer überindividuellen, 'auf den Notwendigkeiten des Lebens basierten, sachlichen Baukunst'.⁵⁶ Zu erreichen sei dieses 'sachliche' Bauen nur auf dem Wege der Rationalisierung und der Standardisierung, also den Faktoren, die zugleich das allgemeine Leben bestimmten.

Auch die Publikation dieses Textes verzögerte sich. Doch als er endlich im Januar 1922 in Bruno Tauts Zeitschrift *Frühlicht* erschien, löste er wütende Proteste aus. Nicht nur der explizit als rückwärtsgewandter 'Romantiker' bezeichnete Hans Poelzig fühlte sich angegriffen,⁵⁷ auch Gropius und Taut (der sich im Vorfeld allerdings einen 'radikalen' Artikel gewünscht hatte)⁵⁸ mussten die Kritik auf sich beziehen, weil Behne lediglich ihre frühen, nicht aber ihre aktuellen Projekte gelten lassen wollte. Indem er die Maschine zum Ausdruck eines kollektiven Gestaltungswillens erklärte, das Handwerk hingegen als 'subjektive' Äußerung abtat, stellte er überdies die Politik des Bauhauses in Frage, das sich in den Gründungsjahren ganz dem Handwerk verschrieben hatte. Zu allem Überflus präsentierte er eine Reihe von Architekten, in denen er die architektonische Zukunft Deutschlands sah. Das waren nicht die alten Weggefährten aus der 'Bauloge', sondern mit Mendelsohn, Richard Döcker und Ludwig Hilberseimer die Vertreter eines gemäßigten Funktionalismus. Taut wertete den Text denn auch als einseitiges Plädoyer für eine bestimmte Richtung und als Verrat an der viele

Jahre gemeinsam entwickelten Idee vom Schöpferischen, das sich einer formalen Beschreibung entzieht.⁵⁹ Behne warf er Adeptentum vor ('Was ist der Bräutigam ohne Braut/ [...] und Behne ohne Oud?'),⁶⁰ an Oud schrieb er: 'Wir, ich möchte fast sagen, alle sträuben uns gegen eine Doktrin, die allzu früh eine gesetzmässige Festlegung will.'⁶¹

Oud und Deutschland

Wie so oft beließ es Behne nicht bei einer publizistischen Positionierung, sondern versuchte, die architektonische Wende auch aktiv durchzusetzen. Zum einen regte er eine Neuauflage der 'Bauloge' an, in der sich die Protagonisten der 'sachlichen' Richtung zusammenschließen sollten, zum anderen verschaffte er Oud die Gelegenheit, sich in Deutschland als Architekt zu profilieren. Anlass war der beschränkte (Privat-)Wettbewerb für das Haus Kallenbach. Der Maler László Moholy-Nagy, von Heinrich Kallenbach und seiner Frau mit der Suche nach einem geeigneten Architekten für ein Haus im Grundwald in Berlin beauftragt, war auf Oud aufmerksam geworden; den entscheidenden Tipp dürfte Behne gegeben haben, der auch Vorschläge für die übrigen Kandidaten – Hilberseimer, Döcker und der 'zweite Mann' im Büro Gropius, Adolf Meyer – unterbreitete.⁶² Die Auswahl war Programm; Behne wollte, wie er selbst bekannte, 'in einer zwar kleinen Aufgabe einigen jungen modernen zielbewußten Kräften das Feld ebnen'. Oud ging auf den Vorschlag umso bereitwilliger ein, als der Sieger schon festzustehen schien. Er sei sich, so Behne, mit Moholy 'in dem Wunsch einig, dass das Haus [...] in einem gleichen Geiste gebaut würde, wie ihn Ihre [...] Arbeiten tragen.'⁶³ Der Entwurf bestätigte mit seinem schlichten L-förmigen Grundriss und dem Zusammenspiel von glatter Wand und Fensteröffnungen lehrbuchartig das Credo vom 'sachlichen Bauen', das ästhetische und funktionale Bedürfnisse gleichermaßen befriedigt. Obwohl man ihn zur Ausführung bestimmte, blieb er unrealisiert. Anfang 1922 gab Oud, von zahlreichen Änderungs- und Überarbeitungswünschen zermürbt, den Auftrag zurück. Dennoch weckte das Projekt die Aufmerksamkeit der deutschen Architektenkollegen. Bei seiner Verbreitung spielte wiederum der Opbouw-Vortrag eine entscheidende Rolle. Der Aufsatz, der in den Niederlanden weitgehend unbeachtet geblieben war, machte durch Behnes Vermittlung internationale Karriere.⁶⁴ Dabei war es ausgerechnet Bruno Tauts *Frühlicht*, in dem er erstmals in Gänze in deutscher Übersetzung zu lesen war. Im neuen Kontext fielen die Eisenbahnen, Autos und Herrenanzüge ebenso weg wie Vergleichsbeispiele aus der Malerei und den Bildkünsten. Übrig blieben zwei Bildbeispiele, von denen nur eines – das Haus Kallenbach – prominent inszeniert wurde. Ganzseitig in die Mitte des Aufsatzes gerückt übernahm es die Vorreiterrolle für die Qualitäten, die der

Text der zukünftigen Architektur zuschrieb, die 'Reinheit des Verhältnisses' und die 'Klarheit der Form'.⁶⁵ [3]

Die Publikation machte Haus Kallenbach zu einer Ikone des neuen Bauens. Zugleich sicherte sie Oud einen Platz in der deutschen Architekturdebatte. Er stieg zur maßgeblichen Autorität für die Baukunst in den Niederlanden auf, die zu Ausstellungen und Vorträgen eingeladen wurde.⁶⁶ Die Deutungsmacht, die ihm dadurch zuwuchs, wusste er strategisch einzusetzen. Die Pluralität, die Behne für die niederländische Architektur beschrieben hatte, wich einer sorgsam austarierten Einseitigkeit. In dem Vortrag über 'Die Entwicklung der modernen Baukunst in Holland: Vergangenheit, Gegenwart, Zukunft', den er am 21. März 1923 im Berliner Kunstgewerbemuseum und danach auf Vermittlung Tauts im Bürgersaal des Magdeburger Rathauses hielt,⁶⁷ erklärte Oud Berlage und die Amsterdamer Schule zu einer zwar historisch notwendigen, gleichwohl abgeschlossenen Phase, die mit den Werken der nächsten – seiner – Architektengeneration überwunden worden sei.⁶⁸ Auch in den Vorbereitungen der Ausstellung internationaler Architektur auf der Bauhauswoche 1923 lässt sich beobachten, wie er das Bild der niederländischen Kunst in seinem Sinne zu korrigieren suchte.⁶⁹ Dass die Wiederholung seines Berliner Vortrags während der Weimarer Veranstaltung als Lichtblick eines sonst eher enttäuschenden Ereignisses gefeiert wurde, unterstreicht die führende Stellung, die man ihm in Deutschland mittlerweile zuerkannte – sehr zum Erstaunen niederländischer Beobachter.⁷⁰

Dem Verhältnis zwischen ihm und Behne tat der neue Ruhm zunächst keinen Abbruch. Der briefliche Kontakt blieb eng und behandelte nicht nur geschäftliche Angelegenheiten – Behne war angesichts der dramatischen wirtschaftlichen Lage in Deutschland dringend auf Honorare angewiesen, die in Devisen ausgezahlt wurden, und Oud scheint ihn bei der Suche nach Vortrags- und Publikationsmöglichkeiten nach Kräften unterstützt zu haben – sondern auch inhaltliche Fragen: Man tauschte sich über die Konkurrenz zwischen Architektur und den Bildkünsten aus, die Oud, anders als Behne, als Bedrohung architektonischer Gestaltungsprinzipien wahrnahm,⁷¹ über die Bauhauswoche, die Behne auch öffentlich scharf kritisierte, Oud hingegen milde beurteilte,⁷² oder über Gropius, der Oud hofierte, während sich das Verhältnis Gropius-Behne zunehmend verschlechterte.⁷³ Getragen wurde das Gespräch von dem Gefühl, trotz unterschiedlicher Meinungen in grundsätzlichen Dingen überein zu stimmen – zumindest vermitteln das die Briefe. Als Behne in 1923 Oud um Material für ein Publikationsprojekt zum *Modernen Zweckbau* bat, sagte dieser seine Mithilfe mit der Bemerkung zu: 'Wollen Sie aber alles nehmen – d.h. jede Richtung – oder wollen Sie eine Auswahl machen in unserem Sinne?'⁷⁴ Behne wiederum konnte mit Befriedigung zur Kenntnis nehmen, dass Oud in der 'Entwicklung der modernen Baukunst in Holland' explizit darauf hinwies, dass die

Grundlage der Architektur nicht in der Form, sondern in der 'inneren Notwendigkeit' zu suchen sei.⁷⁵ Mit diesem Argument lehnte der Architekt 1924 allerdings auch den Vorschlag ab, seinen Weimarer Vortrag bei Walter Dexel in Jena, also im Lager der Bauhauskritiker, zu veröffentlichen: Er wolle lieber in der Reihe der Bauhausbücher publizieren, weil ihm daran liege, 'daß dem einigermaßen "formlosen Formalismus" des Bauhauses eine Betrachtung gegenüber gestellt wird, welche immer wieder auf die Ursachen und Bedingungen der Form statt auf die Form selbst hinweist.'⁷⁶ Dass er in diesem Urteil seine eigene Bauhaus-Kritik wiedererkannte, war Behne ein Beweis für die wechselseitige Annäherung der Überzeugungen.⁷⁷ Vollständig ließen sich die Differenzen aber auch jetzt nicht kaschieren. So war die Auswahl, die Behne schließlich für den *Modernen Zweckbau* traf, keineswegs in Ouds Sinn; schließlich schloss sie den mittlerweile zum Erzfeind mutierten Van Doesburg mit ein.⁷⁸ Und wenn sich Oud gegen gestalterische Festlegungen aussprach, dachte er dabei weniger an Behnes ethisch motivierte 'Notwendigkeit' als an eine neue Klassik: 'Das Gleichgewicht – schönste Eigenschaft der Kunst – fehlt überall. Das ruhige Arbeiten nach der Vervollkommnung – wie wird es nicht in der Technik gerühmt von den Architekten und wo findet man es heute in der Baukunst? Nur Eckigkeit oder nur Rund (jedenfalls aber nur), das findet Bewunderung, wenn der Ausdruck nur stark nur einseitig ist.'⁷⁹

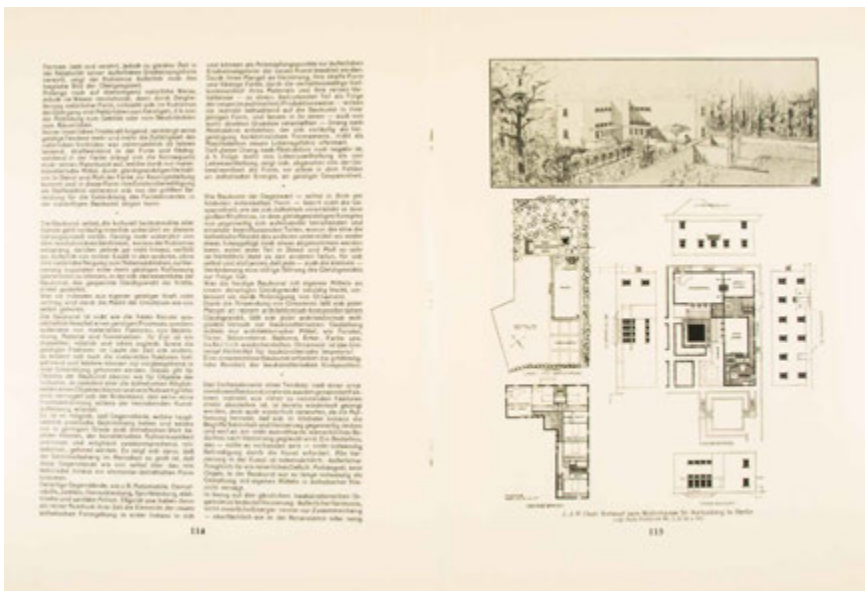


FIG. 3 Doppelseite aus J.J.P. Ouds Aufsatz 'Über die zukünftige Baukunst und ihre architektonischen Möglichkeiten' mit seinen Entwürfen für Haus Kallenbach, Frühlicht, Sommer 1922

Epilog: Rückzüge

So beharrlich man weiterhin Briefe wechselte: Ouds Etablierung als Theoretiker der Moderne bedeutete das Ende der aktiven Unterstützung durch Behne. Nach 1922 äußerte sich der Kritiker kaum mehr zu Arbeiten des Architekten, sieht man von kürzeren Einlassungen im *Modernen Zweckbau* ab.⁸⁰ In der Bilderrevue internationaler Architektur *Blick über die Grenze* stellte er Haus Kallenbach zwar wie ein Motto neben seine Einleitung, erwähnte Oud aber mit keinem Wort im Text.⁸¹ In dem Überblick 'Vom neuen Bauen', an abgelegener, aber prominenter Stelle erschienen, ersetzte er Ouds Entwurf durch den (wohl ebenfalls mit der Kallenbach-Konkurrenz in Verbindung stehenden) *Entwurf eines Landhauses* von Hilberseimer.⁸² Lediglich der Siedlung Hoek van Holland widmete er noch einmal eine eigene Besprechung.⁸³ Oud versuchte erst gar nicht mehr, Behne zum Sprachrohr seiner Interessen zu machen. Als er das Angebot erhielt, seine Arbeiten in *Wasmuths Monatsheften* zu zeigen, erkundigte er sich, ob Behne ihm einen Autor für einen erläuternden Text nennen könne, nicht aber, ob dieser bereit sei, einen Text zu verfassen.⁸⁴

1925 verschlechterte sich dann auch das persönliche Verhältnis. Behne hatte einen Boykott von *Wasmuths Monatsheften* angeregt, nachdem deren Herausgeber Werner Hegemann mehrfach briefliche Äußerungen gegen Autoren seiner Zeitschrift eingesetzt hatte. Konkreten Anlass bildete ein hämischer Kommentar zu einem architekturtheoretischen Aufsatz von van Doesburg.⁸⁵ Oud lehnte die Bitte, sich an dem Boykott zu beteiligen, ab. Mendelsohn gegenüber erklärte er, er sei ein Gegner jeder intellektuellen Diktatur, Hegemann gegenüber zog er die Relevanz der Kunstkritik insgesamt in Zweifel.⁸⁶ Die Begründung, die er Behne gab, klang noch einmal anders; sie war deutlich auch gegen den Kritiker selbst gerichtet: Er halte Van Doesburgs Versuche, sich als Architekt zu profilieren, für so gefährlich, dass er Hegemanns Verhalten nachvollziehbar finde. Damit traf er einen wunden Punkt. Behne hatte bislang eine Stellungnahme im Konflikt zwischen Oud und Van Doesburg vermieden. Allerdings hegte er durchaus Sympathien für Van Doesburgs Begriff des 'Formlosen' in der Architektur, weil man mit ihm die Vielzahl an Anforderungen und Erwartungen beschreiben könne, die einen Bau prägen.⁸⁷ Auch die Entwürfe, die der Maler im Verbund mit Cornelis van Eesteren entwickelt hatte, nahm er ernst und publizierte sie sowohl im *Modernen Zweckbau* wie in seiner Farbdruckserie *Sieg der Farbe*.⁸⁸ Für Oud hingegen waren diese Entwürfe 'Luftschlösser', die nichts mit der Realität des Bauens zu tun und keine gesellschaftliche Relevanz hatten; abschätzig sprach er von 'Studierzimmer-Kwadrat-Barock'. Mit seiner Absage verband er eine Absage an die bildkünstlerische Avantgarde insgesamt – und damit an das Lager, dem sich Behne (noch) zugehörig fühlte: 'Nein, bis jetzt habe ich die Modernen, auch

wenn ich sie schlecht oder dumm fand immer unterstützt. Doch ich glaube, dass sie die schlimmsten Reaktionäre sind: ich will sie jetzt genauso angreifen wie die Akademiker.⁸⁹

Behnes Erklärung, dass es nicht um eine Protestaktion für Van Doesburg, sondern um eine Stellungnahme gegen Hegemann gehe, verfiel nicht.⁹⁰ Oud positionierte sich klar auf der gegnerischen Seite, wo er kurz zuvor zum 'Führer neuer holländischer Baukunst' gekürt worden war.⁹¹ Behne musste die Ablehnung als Affront verstehen, zumal es Oud kaum entgangen sein konnte, dass auch er schon Opfer von Hegemanns fragwürdiger Taktik geworden war. Der Briefwechsel endete nicht sofort, nahm aber deutlich an Intensität ab. Oud lud Behne zwar 1926 zu Beiträgen für die *Internationale Revue i10* ein. Gleichzeitig übergab er jedoch, soweit bekannt, Behnes architekturtheoretische Publikationen *Neues Wohnen – Neues Bauen* (1927) und *Eine Stunde Architektur* (1928) mit beredtem Schweigen. Dass er nicht viel von den suggestiven Text-Bild-Montagen hielt, mit denen beide Schriften arbeiteten, wird in einem Brief an Sigfried Giedion deutlich, in dem er dessen Büchlein *Befreites Wohnen* mit scharfen Worten kritisierte und hinzufügte: 'Ich habe Sie immer für den besten, modernen Kritiker gehalten und finde jetzt eine Unmenge hohle Phrasen mit filmtechnischen Abbildungen, welche ich eher einem Behne als einem Giedion zugetraut hätte.'⁹² Umgekehrt meldete sich Behne nicht zu Wort, als Oud 1927 im Wettbewerb für die Rotterdamer Börse schon in der ersten Runde ausschied – ganz im Gegensatz zu Bruno Taut und Walter Gropius, die sofort bereit waren, in seinem Sinne zu intervenieren.⁹³ Auch wenn in den Briefen stets ein Rest an Sympathie und gegenseitiger Wertschätzung aufblitzt: ein Austausch über Gestaltungsfragen wie in den Gesprächen Anfang der zwanziger Jahre fand nicht mehr statt. Auch die kurze Debatte 1930 über den Zeilenbau anlässlich von Behnes Dammerstock-Rezension blieb in den Anfängen stecken, wohl, weil die Positionen unvereinbar schienen: hier der Praktiker, der die Rationalisierung als Gebot der Zeit akzeptierte, dort der Kritiker, der in der Monotonie des Zeilenbaus eine Bankrotterklärung an die Gestaltungsaufgaben der Architektur sah.⁹⁴ Immerhin gab Oud zu, dass auch die Rationalisierung nicht zu seelenlosen Standardlösungen führen dürfe: 'Hauptsache scheint mir aber: lebendig zu bleiben, d.h. nicht Konstruktion einseitig vorherrschen lassen, nicht allein Licht oder allein Luft wollen u.s.w. sondern immer zuerst das Problem richtig stellen und das Problem ist immer: das Wohn-problem.'⁹⁵

Insgesamt waren sich Oud und Behne Ende der zwanziger und Anfang der dreißiger Jahre in vielen Punkten näher, als sie nach den vorangegangenen Verwerfungen wahrnehmen wollten. Oud vertrat eine auf äußerste Zurückhaltung bedachte 'Architektur ohne Eigenschaften',⁹⁶ Behne insistierte weiterhin auf seinem Konzept, nach dem die architektonische Gestaltung nicht durch äußere

Vorgaben – und dazu gehörten für ihn mittlerweile auch die Normierung und Typisierung – sondern ausschließlich durch den ‘Zweck’ – und das war mittlerweile ‘der Mensch’ – bestimmt werden darf.⁹⁷ Als Wortführer der Architekturdebatte wurden beide nicht mehr wahrgenommen; bezeichnenderweise schlugen sie trotz enger Kontakte zu den Protagonisten Gropius und Giedion die Einladung nach La Sarraz aus, wo mit dem ersten Treffen des Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) der alte Traum einer internationalen Plattform umgesetzt wurde. Einer Moderne, die sich als Stilrichtung verstand, fühlten sie sich nicht mehr zugehörig, wenn auch aus unterschiedlichen Gründen: Ouds Rückzug war teils ideologisch, teils gesundheitlich motiviert; Behne sah seine Verbündeten mittlerweile eher unter sozialkritischen Künstlern und Künstlerinnen als bei der Riege etablierter Avantgardisten. Immerhin setzte er Oud im *Modernen Zweckbau* noch einmal ein Enkmal, das an den gemeinsamen Weg erinnerte. Das Buch endet mit jener Passage aus dem *Opbouw*-Vortrag, mit dem der Architekt die Konzentration auf die gattungsspezifischen Gestaltungsmittel zur Voraussetzung für die angestrebte neue Einheit erklärt hatte: ‘Unter dem Drange der Umstände und durch Erweiterung ästhetischer Einsicht scheint erst jetzt eine aus und durch sich selbst gestaltende Baukunst möglich, eine Baukunst, bei der nicht die anderen Künste angewendet, also untergeordnet sein, sondern mit der sie organisch zusammenwirken werden, eine Baukunst, welche schon von vornherein in ihren konstruktiven Funktionen die Schönheit erlebt, d.h. welche durch die Gespanntheit ihrer Verhältnisse die Konstruktion selbst über ihre materiellen Notwendigkeit hinaus zur ästhetischen Form erhebt.’⁹⁸

Noten

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- 1 Herman van Bergeijk, “Ein großer Vorsprung gegenüber Deutschland”. Die niederländischen Architekten auf der Bauhausausstellung von 1923 in Weimar’, *RIHA Journal* 0064 (Jan. 2013), Anm. 60: www.riha-journal.org/articles/2013-jan-mar (konsultiert am 30. Mai 2020). Zu Oud und Deutschland ferner Eva von Engelberg-Dočkal, “Holländische Architektur”, J.J.P. Oud als Vermittler der niederländischen Moderne’, *Kunstgeschichte* (2011), <https://www.kunstgeschichte-ejournal.net/discussion/2011/engelberg-dockal/> (konsultiert am 20. Mai 2020).
 - 2 Zu Behne und Oud vgl. Antonia Gruhn-Zimmermann, “Das Bezwingen der Wirklichkeit”. Adolf Behne und die moderne holländische Architektur’, in Magdalena Bushart (ed.), *Adolf Behne. Essays zu seiner Kunst- und Architekturkritik*, Berlin 2000, 117-145; Ed Taverne et al., *J.J.P. Oud 1890-1963. Poetic Functionalist. The Complete Works*, Rotterdam 2001, 31-34.
 - 3 Die Archive werden im Folgenden abgekürzt zitiert als: LM-O (Literatuurmuseum, Collectie-Oud; Sign. O451 B); BHA-GN (Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin/Gropius-Nachlass); BHA-BAB (Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin/Bestand Adolf Behne); BHA Adolf Behne 1997 (Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin/Nachlass Behne); sowie ABA (Adolf-Behne-Archiv; Akademie der Künste, Abteilung Baukunst).
 - 4 Adolf Behne, *Wiederkehr der Kunst*, Berlin 1919, 91-92. Zu Behnes theoretischen Ansätzen vgl. die Beiträge in Bushart, *Adolf Behne. Essays zu seiner Kunst- und Architekturkritik*, sowie Kai Konstanty Gutschow, *The Culture of Criticism. Adolf Behne and the Development of Modern Architecture in Germany, 1910-1914*, Diss. Columbia University 2005. Zur sozialen Dimension in Behnes Denken zuletzt Magdalena Bushart,

- ‘Ein Kritiker schafft sich ab. Adolf Behne, das Volk und die Kunst’, in Stephanie Marchal & Andreas Zeising (ed.), *Kunstschritstellerei. Konturen einer kunstkritischen Praxis*, München 2020, 324-352.
- 5 Magdalena Bushart, ‘Adolf Behne, "Kunst-Theoretikus"’, in Bushart, *Adolf Behne. Essays zu seiner Kunst- und Architekturkritik*, 17-39.
- 6 Brief Willemien Langenveld an Adolf Behne, o.D. [ABA-01-280]. Die Reise dauert von 22. Juli bis Anfang Oktober; am 8. Oktober 1920 meldete sich Behne bei Gropius zurück [BHA-GN 10/167].
- 7 Adolf Behne, ‘An alle Künstler aller Länder’, *Der Cicerone* 11 (1919) 9 (Mai), 264.
- 8 Brief Behne an Gropius, 22 August 1920 [BHA-GN 10/169].
- 9 Brief Behne an Oud, 3 Oktober 1920 [LM-O].
- 10 Karte Van Doesburg an Behne, 8 September 1920 [Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Nachlass Behne 8/1].
- 11 Rundschreiben des Arbeitsrates, 9 Dezember 1920 [BHA-GN 10/1/7].
- 12 Theo van Doesburg, ‘Rondblik’, *De Stijl* 2 (1918-19) 9 (Juli 1919), 104.
- 13 Theo van Doesburg, ‘De nieuwe beweging in de schilderkunst [1]’, *De Beweging* 12 (1916) 5 (Mai), 124.
- 14 Adolf Behne, *Zur Neuen Kunst*, Berlin 1915 (Sturm-Bücher 7), 21-22.
- 15 J.J.P. Oud, ‘Kunst en machine’, *De Stijl* 1 (1917-1918) 3 (Januar 1918), 25-27.
- 16 J.J.P. Oud, ‘Oriëntatie’, *De Stijl* 3 (1919-1920) 2 (Dezember 1919), 13-15.
- 17 Behne, *Wiederkehr der Kunst*, 38.
- 18 Das geht aus Behnes Antwort auf einen – verlorenen – Brief Ouds hervor: ‘Es ist Ihnen, was mich nicht verwundert, etwas seltsam, daß ich gleichzeitig Sympathien habe für Taut und De Stijl-Dinge, die Sie als unvereinbare Gegensätze empfinden. Ich möchte nun heute darauf noch nicht eingehen.’ [Brief Behne an Oud, 3 Oktober 1920; LM-O].
- 19 Brief 3 Oktober 1920. Wie zur Bestätigung seiner Haltung verwies Behne auf die *Wiederkehr der Kunst*, die er Oud zuvor geschickt hatte. Dort plädierte er dafür, sich nicht auf Formfragen zu konzentrieren; vielmehr gehe es ausschließlich um die Frage, ‘welche tief wirksamen Notwendigkeiten, welche fest gebahnten Wege des künstlerischen Erlebens den schöpferischen Menschen in den Zusammenhang mit der Welt einstellen’, 48f.
- 20 Brief Van Doesburg an Oud, 13 Oktober 1920; zit. nach Sjarel Ex, ‘De Stijl und Deutschland 1918-1922: Die ersten Kontakte’, in Kai Uwe Hemken/Rainer Stommer (ed.), *Konstruktivistische Internationale. Schöpferische Arbeitsgemeinschaft 1922-1927*, Düsseldorf (Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen) 1992, 74.
- 21 Vgl. dazu zuletzt die Einleitung in *De kleur lost de architectonische ruimte op. De briefwisseling tussen Theo van Doesburg en architect C.R. De Boer, 1920-1929* (ed. Sjoerd van Faassen/Herman van Bergeijk), Haarlem 2019.
- 22 Vgl. etwa Adolf Behne u.a., *Ausstellung für unbekannte Architekten*, Berlin (Graphisches Kabinett J.B. Neumann) [Flugblatt], April 1919.
- 23 Der Bericht erschien im September 1920: Adolf Behne, ‘Expressionistenschau in Scheveningen und Arnheim’, *Der Cicerone* 12 (1920) 8 (September) 19, 727.
- 24 Adolf Behne, ‘Europa und die Architektur’, *Sozialistische Monatshefte* 27 (1921) 1, 31. Der Aufsatz muss unmittelbar nach Behnes Rückkehr verfasst worden sein.
- 25 Brief Berlage an Behne, 27 März 1921 [BHA Adolf Behne, 1997-36].
- 26 Brief Oud an Behne, 31 Januar 1921 [BHA BAB-44].
- 27 Karte Behne an Oud, 23 September 1920 [LM-O].
- 28 Taverne, *J.J.P. Oud 1890-1963. Poetic Functionalist*, 21.
- 29 Besonders eindringlich ist die Bewunderung in Behnes Nachruf zu spüren: Adolf Behne, ‘H.P. Berlage, 1856-1932’, *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 68/2 (1934) 34 (August), 656.
- 30 Bushart, *Adolf Behne. Essays zu seiner Kunst- und Architekturkritik*, 35.
- 31 In der Folge entwickelte Oud auch mit Werner Hegemann, Sigfried Giedion und Carola Giedion-Welcker eine intensive Korrespondenz: Taverne, *J.J.P. Oud 1890-1963. Poetic Functionalist*, 35. Weniger intensiv waren die Kontakte zu Heinrich de Fries und Gustav Adolf Platz. Vgl. Roland Jaeger, *Gustav Adolf Platz und sein Beitrag zur Geschichtsschreibung der Architekturmoderne*, Berlin 2000, 68; Roland Jaeger, *Heinrich De Fries und sein Beitrag zur Architekturpublizistik der zwanziger Jahre*, Berlin 2001, 60.
- 32 Brief Oud an Behne, 20 Oktober 1920 [ABA-01-179/1].
- 33 Der Aufsatz scheiterte wohl nicht am Einspruch der Herausgeber (was sonst häufig vorkam), sondern an Behnes eigenen Arbeitskapazitäten; im März 1921 klagte er, es käme ihm ‘immer wieder etwas

- dazwischen, da ich den Winter über viel mit meinen Vorlesungen an der Volkshochschule zu tun hatte.' [Brief Behne an Oud, 4 März 1921; LM-O].
- 34 Adolf Behne, 'Von holländischer Baukunst', *Feuer* 2 (1920-21) 5 (Februar 1921), sukzessive 292, 286, 290, 291, 291-292.
- 35 Vgl. Brief Behne an Oud, 30 Dezember 1920 [LM-O].
- 36 Adolf Behne, 'Holländische Baukunst in der Gegenwart', *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst* 6 (1921-22) 1-2, 7.
- 37 Behne hegte durchaus Sympathien für die Amsterdamer Schule; als Gropius einen Lehrer für Bildhauerei für das Bauhaus suchte, schlug er Hildo Krop, der mehrfach skulpturalen Schmuck an Amsterdamer Bauten gefertigt hatte, als möglichen Kandidaten vor [Brief Behne an Gropius, 7 Dezember 1920; BHA-GN 10/160].
- 38 In die gleiche Richtung deutet der Wunsch, im Arbeitsrat eine Überblicksausstellung niederländischer Architektur in Berlin zu veranstalten, die die unterschiedlichen Positionen vereinen sollte [Protokoll des Arbeitsrates vom 9. Dezember 1920; BHA-GN 10/4-6].
- 39 Adolf Behne, 'Mittelalterliches und modernes Bauen', *Soziale Bauwirtschaft* 1 (1921) 14 (Juli), 163.
- 40 Brief Mendelsohn an Gropius, 14 Juni 1921 [BHA-GN 19/337], sowie Briefentwurf Gropius an Mendelsohn, 1921 [BGA-GN- 10/340].
- 41 Brief Van Doesburg an Oud, 21 Juni 1921, zit. nach *De kleur lost de architectonische ruimte op*, 20.
- 42 Von den 25 Tafeln der Bildstrecke waren vier Oud gewidmet; sein Entwurf für ein Fabrikgebäude in Purmerend stand wie eine Vignette ganz am Anfang über dem Text. Auf Betreiben van Doesburgs hatte Behne auch dessen Modell für ein Monument in Leeuwarden aufgenommen, sich allerdings gleichzeitig über Bitten Ouds, auf Bilder der Villa Allegonda zu verzichten, hinweggesetzt.
- 43 Brief Oud an Behne, 18 Mai 1921 [BHA BAB-44].
- 44 Brief Oud an Behne, 31 Januar 1921 (Durchschlag) [LM-O]. Dass sich Behne gleichwohl für den Entwurf aussprach, zeigt noch einmal sein Insistieren auf einer eigenen Position [Brief an Oud, 22 September 1921; LM-O].
- 45 Brief Oud an Behne, 17 September 1921 [BHA BAB-44].
- 46 J.J.P. Oud, 'Over de toekomstige bouwkunst en hare architectonische mogelijkheden', *Bouwkundig Weekblad* 42 (1921) 24 (11 Juni), 147-160. Behne bedankte sich für die Zusendung in einem Brief vom 29. Juni 1921 [LM-O].
- 47 Vgl. etwa Behne, *Wiederkehr der Kunst*, 66-69; Oud hatte sich von Behne, wohl im Nachgang zu seinem Vortrag, ein Exemplar von Paul Scheerbarts *Glasarchitektur* (Berlin 1914) schicken lassen, von dem er sich (vergeblich) Anregungen erhoffte [Brief Oud an Behne, 19 Februar 1921; ABA-01-179].
- 48 Oud, 'Over de toekomstige bouwkunst', 160.
- 49 Bezeichnenderweise nahm Oud hier im Satzbau, der um das Wort 'Baukunst' kreist, Bezug auf Bruno Tauts Aufruf *Eine Notwendigkeit*, in dem das 'Bauwerk' zum Schlüsselbegriff wird. Bei Oud heißt es: 'Onder den drang der omstandigheden en door verruiming van esthetisch inzicht, schijnt eerst thans een uit en door zich zelf beeldende bouwkunst mogelijk, een bouwkunst, waaraan niet de andere kunsten toegepast, en dus ondergeschikt, zullen zijn, maar waarmede zij organisch zullen samenwerken; die reeds van te voren in haar constructieve functies de schoonheid beleeft' [Oud, 'Over de toekomstige bouwkunst', 155-156]. Bei Taut, der im Gegensatz dazu einer Befruchtung der Architektur durch die Bildkünste das Wort geredet hatte, lautete die analoge Passage: 'Bauen wir zusammen an einem großartigen Bauwerk! An einem Bauwerk, das nicht allein Architektur ist, in dem alles, Malerei, Plastik, alles zusammen eine große Architektur bildet, in dem die Architektur wieder in den andern Künsten aufgeht.' [Bruno Taut, 'Eine Notwendigkeit', *Der Sturm* 196/197 (Februar 1914), 174-175]. Behne nahm eine Mittelposition ein: Er erhoffte sich eine strukturelle Angleichung der Gattungen: 'Wollten wir unser Ziel schon einmal als Gesamtkunstwerk bezeichnen, so sehen wir dieses als ein Ideal an, das erst dann und zwar ganz von innen heraus und mit Notwendigkeit auf der ganzen Linie Erfüllung wird, wenn die einzelnen Künste sich von selbst zusammenneigen.' [Behne, *Wiederkehr der Kunst*, 40].
- 50 Oud, 'Over de toekomstige bouwkunst', 160. In der deutschen Übersetzung durch Adolf Meyer klingt die Passage noch pathetischer; hier heißt es, die neue Baukunst werde 'in der Fülle des Lichtes entwickelt zu einer Reinheit des Verhältnisses, einer Blankheit der Farbe und einer organischen Klarheit der Form, welche durch das Fehlen jedes Nebensächlichen die klassische Reinheit wird übertreffen können.' [J.J.P. Oud, *Holländische Architektur*, München 1926, 21].
- 51 Oud, 'Over de toekomstige bouwkunst', 148.

- 52 Oud, 'Over de toekomstige bouwkunst', 153.
- 53 Taverne, J.J.P. Oud 1890-1963. *Poetic Functionalist*, 166-68.
- 54 Bruno Taut, *Die Stadtkrone*, mit Beiträgen von Paul Scheerbart, Erich Baron, Adolf Behne, Jena 1919, 69.
- 55 Adolf Behne, 'Kunst, Handwerk, Technik', *Die Neue Rundschau* 33/2 (1922) 10 (Oktober), 1021-1037.
Behne hob Van Doesburg gegenüber Parallelen zwischen diesem Text und Van Doesburgs 'De beteekenis der mechanische esthetiek voor de architectuur en de andere vakken [2]', *Bouwkundig Weekblad* 42 (1921) 28 (9 Juli), 179-183 hervor und erklärte, er freue sich 'daß unsere Ansichten zueinanderkommen' [Brief Behne an Van Doesburg, 20 September 1921; Den Haag, RKD - Nederlands Instituut voor Kunstgeschiedenis 0408/26].
- 56 Adolf Behne, 'Architekten', *Frühlicht* 1 (1921-22) 2 (Winter), 126-135. Wie aus einem Brief Behnes vom 22. September 1921 an Oud hervorgeht, sollte der Aufsatz eigentlich in der USPD-Zeitung *Freiheit* erscheinen [LM-O].
- 57 Vgl. den Kommentar von Paul Westheim, *Das Kunstblatt* 6 (1922) 2, 92.
- 58 Taut wollte Behnes Aufsatz mit einem Aufsatz von Van Doesburg kombinieren; seine Vorgabe lautet: 'Je radikaler, umso lieber' [Brief Bruno Taut an Behne, 3 Oktober 1921; ABA-01-235/54. g].
- 59 So heißt es im Vorwort zum ersten Heft der *Frühlicht*-Folge programmatisch: 'Diese Bewegung [in der neuen Architektur] verdammt kein Bedürfnis, keinen Wunsch unserer Zeit. Sie erkennt jedes wirkliche Wollen an und überläßt die Entscheidung: schön oder häßlich, späteren Zeiten, nach dem Grundsatz jedes Künstlers, der diesen Namen verdient. Für ihn gibt es nur die Frage, wahr oder unwahr, und was wahr ist, wird ganz gewiß auch einmal schön sein.' [Bruno Taut, 'Frühlicht in Magdeburg', *Frühlicht* 1 (1921-22) 1 (Herbst 1921), 2.
- 60 Brief Bruno Taut an Behne, 8 Juni 1922 [ABA-01-235/55].
- 61 Brief Bruno Taut an Oud vom 30 Dezember 1921 (Abschrift) [Stadarchiv Magdeburg (StAM-B)].
- 62 Auch wenn aus der Korrespondenz nicht mit letzter Eindeutigkeit hervorgeht, wie die Rollen zwischen Behne und Moholy-Nagy verteilt waren, spricht doch einiges dafür, dass Behne nicht nur als Mittelsmann fungierte, wie Eva von Engelberg-Dočkal, *J.J.P. Oud zwischen De Stijl und klassischer Tradition. Arbeiten von 1916 bis 1931*, Berlin 2006, 425 annimmt, sondern auch als künstlerischer Berater und dass er die Einbeziehung Ouds aktiv vorangetrieben hat: Zwar behauptete er dem Architekten gegenüber, Moholy sei durch den Aufsatz im *Feuer* auf ihn aufmerksam geworden [Brief Behne an Oud, 12 Oktober 1921; LM-O]. Die Text- und Bildinformationen in dem Artikel sind allerdings so spärlich, dass diese Version kaum stimmen kann. Tatsächlich eingeladen wurden nur Hilberseimer, Meyer und Oud; überliefert sind die Skizzen von Meyer (im Verbund mit Gropius) und Oud. Zum Wettbewerb und Ouds Entwürfen: Engelberg-Dočkal, 424-432; ferner Günther Stamm, *J.J.P. Oud. Bauten und Projekte 1906-1963*, Berlin 1984, 55-57; zum Entwurf von Adolf Meyer und Walter Gropius: Annemarie Jaeggi, *Adolf Meyer. Der zweite Mann. Ein Architekt im Schatten von Walter Gropius*, Berlin 1994, 147-151 und 310-311.
- 63 Brief Behne an Oud, 12 Oktober 1921 [LM-O]. Das Argument wog umso schwerer, als die Konkurrenz angesichts des schlechten Wechselkurses für Oud kaum attraktiv sein konnte.
- 64 Zu den Wiederabdrucken in internationalen Architekturzeitschriften vgl. Taverne, *J.J.P. Oud 1890-1963. Poetic Functionalist*, 166.
- 65 J.J.P. Oud, 'Über die zukünftige Baukunst und ihre architektonischen Möglichkeiten', *Frühlicht* 1 (1921-22) 4 (Sommer 1922), 113-118; die Tafel mit Ansicht, Grund- und Aufriss 115. Zur Rezeption des Entwurfs vgl. Jaeggi, *Adolf Meyer*, 151-168.
- 66 Van Bergeijk, 'Ein großer Vorsprung gegenüber Deutschland', 5.
- 67 Engelberg-Dočkal, *J.J.P. Oud zwischen De Stijl und klassischer Tradition*, 30.
- 68 Oud, *Holländische Architektur*, 8-62.
- 69 Oud versuchte nicht nur auf Tauts Auswahl niederländischer Arbeiten für *Frühlicht* Einfluss zu nehmen [StAM-O], sondern schlug auf Bitten von Walter Gropius auch die Architekten für die Ausstellung internationaler Architektur anlässlich der Bauhauswoche 1923 vor [Van Bergeijk, 'Ein großer Vorsprung gegenüber Deutschland', 6-7].
- 70 Der *Wendungen*-Herausgeber H.Th. Wijdeveld etwa beschwerte sich bei Erich Mendelsohn: 'Sie schreiben mir, dass OUD´s Vortrag so trefflich war, und Dr. Behne sagt in einem Aufsatz, welchen ich von ihm in unserer Wochenzeitschrift aufnahm, "der Vortrag von OUD war sicher am reifsten". Was sind es doch für Kerle da in Weimar, dass sie nur die ungeheure Trockenheit dieser Analytiker als Wahrheit erkennen?' [Brief Wijdeveld an Mendelsohn, 27 Oktober 1923, zit. nach: Van Bergeijk, 'Ein großer Vorsprung gegenüber Deutschland', 17].

- 71 Brief Oud an Behne, Oktober 1922 [ABA-01-179/7]; Brief Behne an Oud, 31 Oktober 1922 [LM-O].
- 72 Brief Behne an Oud, 8 September 1923 [LM-O]; Brief Oud an Behne, 25 August 1923 [BHA BAB-44].
Ferner J.J.P. Oud, 'De architectuurweek te Weimar. Het "Ariadische [sic] ballet" – Een mechanisch cabaret', *De Telegraaf* 28 August 1923.
- 73 Brief Oud an Behne, 25 August 1923 [BHA BAB-44]; Brief Behne an Oud, 18 März 1924 [LM-O].
- 74 Brief Oud an Behne, 15 Juli 1923 [BHA BAB-44].
- 75 'Die Grundlage einer neuen, einer organischen Baukunst aber [...] kann nie von einer äußeren Form, sondern soll immer von einer inneren Notwendigkeit gebildet werden. Jede Hineininterpretierung alter oder neuer Formüberlieferung erniedrigt die Baukunst vom Erlebnis zur Geschmacksache, d. h. von ästhetischer Gestaltung zur Stil-Architektur.' [Oud, *Holländische Architektur*, 53].
- 76 Brief Oud an Behne, 22 März 1924 [BHA BAB-44].
- 77 'Ich lege Ihnen hier einen Aufsatz aus der "Bauwelt" bei, den Sie kaum kennen werden – er stammt aus dem Sommer nach der Bauhaus-Woche – und mir scheint, daß sich unsere Anschauungen sehr nahe berühren.' [Brief Behne an Oud, undatiert (nach dem 23 März 1924); LM-O]. Tatsächlich hatte sich Behne schon im Vorjahr in seiner Bauhauskritik scharf gegen die Anzeichen einer Formalisierung gewendet: 'Wovor wir uns aber hüten müssen, das ist, aus der Geraden und dem rechten Winkel, aus der Geometrisierung ein formales Prinzip und also ein Mittel äußerlicher Stilisierung zu machen. Stilisierung ist das sicherste Mittel, die Entwicklung eines Stiles zu vereiteln. Oberstes Gesetz ist nicht die Gerade – nicht einmal sie – sondern die unbedingte Sachlichkeit und Notwendigkeit. Und dieses Gesetz kann unter Umständen ein Abweichen von der Geraden und dem rechten Winkel, kann unter Umständen eine Biegung fordern.' [Adolf Behne, 'Die Internationale Architektur-Ausstellung im Bauhaus zu Weimar', *Bauwelt* 14 (1923) 37 (13 September), 533]. Nicht ganz klar ist, warum Behne auf den deutschsprachigen Bauwelt-Aufsatz verwies und nicht auf die niederländische Übersetzung in der Zeitschrift *Klei*: 'De "Bauhaus"-tentoonstelling te Weimar', *Klei* 15 (1923) 21 (1 November), 253.
- 78 Adolf Behne, *Der moderne Zweckbau*, München u.a. 1926.
- 79 Brief Oud an Behne, 22 März 1924 [BHA BAB-44].
- 80 Behne, *Der moderne Zweckbau*, 21, 73.
- 81 Adolf Behne, 'Baukunst des Auslandes', in Heinrich de Fries (ed.), *Blick über die Grenze*, Berlin 1925, 3. Im Bildteil ist Oud allerdings nur mit einer Bildseite und insgesamt drei Fotografien der Rotterdamer Siedlungen Oud Mathenesse und Spangen vertreten. Sehr viel umfangreicher sind die Projekte von Berlage, Le Corbusier und Tony Garnier präsentiert; selbst Wijdeveld räumten De Fries und Behne mehrere Bildseiten ein.
- 82 Adolf Behne, 'Vom neuen Bauen', in *Flemmings Knabenbuch*, Bd. 6, Berlin 1925, 190.
- 83 Adolf Behne, 'Zwei holländische Arbeiten auf der Großen Berliner Kunstausstellung', *Bauwelt* 17 (1926) 20 (Mai), 16.
- 84 Brief Oud an Behne, 12 Januar 1925 [BHA BAB-44]. Behne riet Oud, den Kommentar selbst zu verfassen [Brief Behne an Oud, 19 Dezember 1925; LM-O]. Tatsächlich wurden die Bilder der Arbeiten zusammen mit dem Wiederabdruck von Ouds Aufsatz 'Ja und Nein. Bekenntnisse eines Architekten', gedruckt [*Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst* 9 (1925) 4, 140-145].
- 85 Theo van Doesburg, 'Die neue Architektur und ihre Folgen', *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst* 9 (1925) 12 (Dezember), 502-518.
- 86 Taverne, J.J.P. Oud 1890-1963. *Poetic Functionalist*, 32.
- 87 Behne, *Der moderne Zweckbau*, 69.
- 88 Behne nahm in das Mappenwerk *Sieg der Farbe* eine axiometrische Projektion der *Maison Particulière* von Theo van Doesburg/Cornelis van Eesteren auf; im *Der moderne Zweckbau* bildete er den Entwurf der Aubette in Straßburg ab.
- 89 Brief Oud an Behne, 14 Januar 1926 [BHA BAB-44].
- 90 Brief Behne an Oud, 21 Januar 1926 [LM-O].
- 91 Werner Hegemann, 'Bemerkung der Schriftleitung', *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst* 9 (1925) 4 (April), 140.
- 92 Brief Oud an Giedion, 20 Juni 1928 [Zürich, gta Archiv 43 B – K-1928-06-20].
- 93 Engelberg-Dočkal, J.J.P. Oud zwischen *De Stijl* und klassischer Tradition, 39-40.
- 94 Oud war nach seinen Reihenhäusern für die Weißenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart zur Teilnahme an dem Karlsruher Wettbewerb aufgefordert worden [Engelberg-Dočkal, J.J.P. Oud zwischen *De Stijl* und klassischer Tradition, 36]. Behne verfasste eine scharfe Kritik zum Resultat [Adolf Behne, 'Dammerstock',

Die Form 5 (1930) 6 (15 März), 163-166]. Vgl. die Briefe Behne an Oud vom 17. Februar 1930 [LM-O], und Oud an Adolf Behne vom 1. März 1930 [ABA-01-179/5].

95 Brief Oud an Adolf Behne, 1 März 1930 [ABA-01-179/5].

96 Van Bergeijk, 'Ein großer Vorsprung gegenüber Deutschland', 19.

97 Adolf Behne, 'Dammerstock', 163-166.

98 Behne, *Der moderne Zweckbau*, 73; für das Zitat vgl. oben, Anm. 49.

The Orient of Hendrik Petrus Berlage

Holland. Border country. Suspended on the edge between land and sea. Ensnared by the exoticism that blows from the sea and constrained by the rigidity of tradition. An unsettled land, as if held back by the ancestral silences that blow from the far North and driven to escape to imaginary worlds announced by the light of the sky beyond the infinity of the sea. The echo of the East has deep roots in Holland. Ingrained in the culture, at the beginning of the twentieth century it was part of the liveliest national, popular and intellectual tradition. The Oriental component, the monumental or imaginative one, is intimately linked to the way of depicting Dutch culture. For this reason, it is not possible to understand only with the yardstick of a prevailing rationalism the exemplary gesture of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange or the highly regarded municipal museum in Den Haag, works by the architect H.P. Berlage, one at the beginning, the other at the end, and crowning a long and successful career as a builder. Here the Master's gaze is lost in thought, transforming the built space into a vision, revealing, beyond the rigour of a construction that relies on the master builder's certainties, the alienating, exotic and mysterious image of the East. Only this would be enough to exonerate Berlage from a commonplace view that would interpret him only as a prophet of an icy rationalism, with his way of observing nature by relying on the objective laws of the intellect, leaving behind the whims of subjectivity and the disorderly representations of the imagination.

It is true that Berlage relates to the East by deciphering it with the tools belonging to European rational culture, but it is also true that Berlage's eye rests without prejudice on the symbols of the East to rediscover or transmit the sense of an invaluable initiation, the inescapable desire for a new, more intense spirituality.

In the rationalist view, everything revolves around the possibility of finding a common root between East and West, foreshadowing, beyond the superficial layer that characterizes worlds and cultures that are only seemingly distant and different, the persistence of common features, the ritual resort to the intimacy of the form with a few fundamental forms, thereby rediscovering with some amazement, in minor or instrumental architecture, the persistence of an archaic and original architectural tectonics.



FIG. 1 H.P. Berlage, Semarang, 31 May 1923
[HNI, Archief Berlage 193]



FIG. 2 H.P. Berlage, Besaki, 23 June 1923
[HNI, Archief Berlage 201]

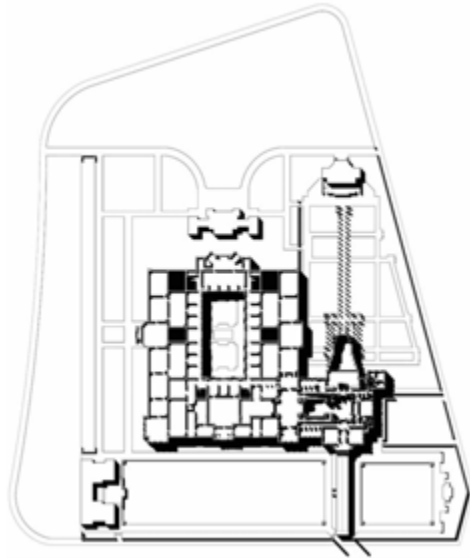


FIG. 3 Alessandro Dalla Caneva, first floor of the
municipal museum in Den Haag

In the symbolic dimension of the East, attention focuses on the monument as a work of art, an indispensable medium to lead the imagination beyond the narrow limits of reality, transforming the contingent into the vision of the ideal, thus perceiving in monumental architecture the real place of a symbolic encryption.

The theoretical background that feeds the research is substantiated by Hegelian interpretations to such a degree that in the instrumental and symbolic architectural diptych the dialectical relationship between reason and feeling, between science and art, between construction and decoration is consumed: 'One could almost say that in the West decoration is for the building, while in the East the building is for decoration' (Berlage 1934). In 1923, Berlage embarked on a journey to the distant lands of Eastern India. Not only was he amazed by the ancient monuments that were revealed before his eyes, not only was he fascinated by the exotic and a culture that has been able to give us art forms far removed from our rational vision, and precisely for this reason misinterpreted and misunderstood, but he also displayed keen intellectual interest in a culture that has common roots with the Western world.

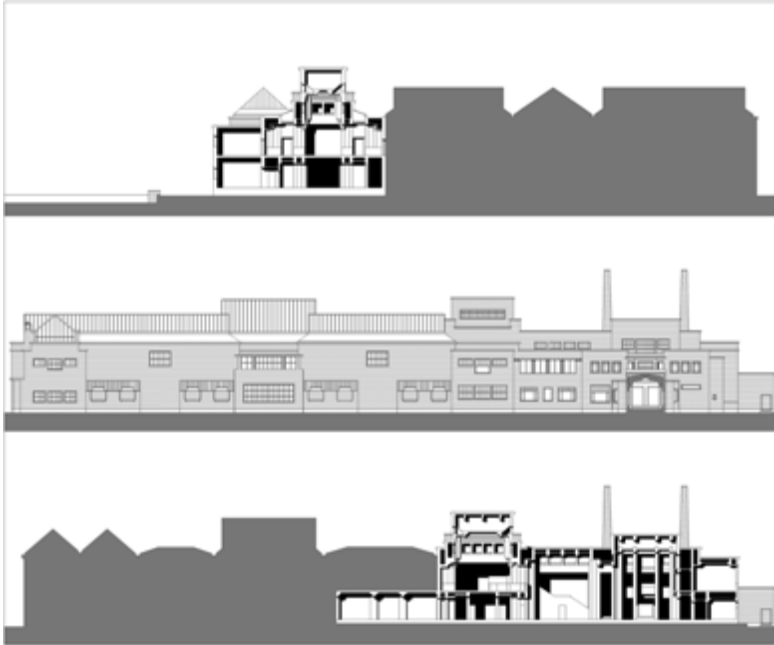


FIG. 4 Alessandro Dalla Caneva, sections and elevation of the Kunstmuseum Den Haag

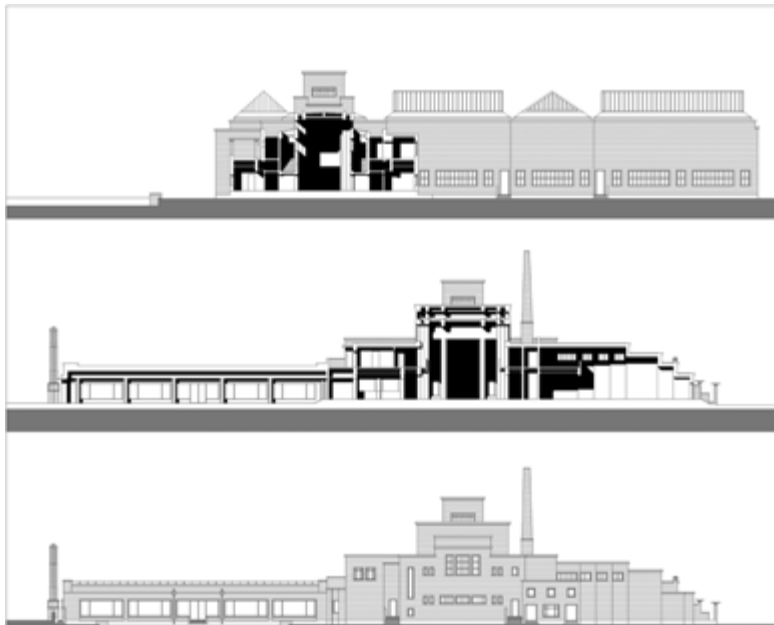


FIG. 5 Alessandro Dalla Caneva, section and elevations of the Kunstmuseum Den Haag

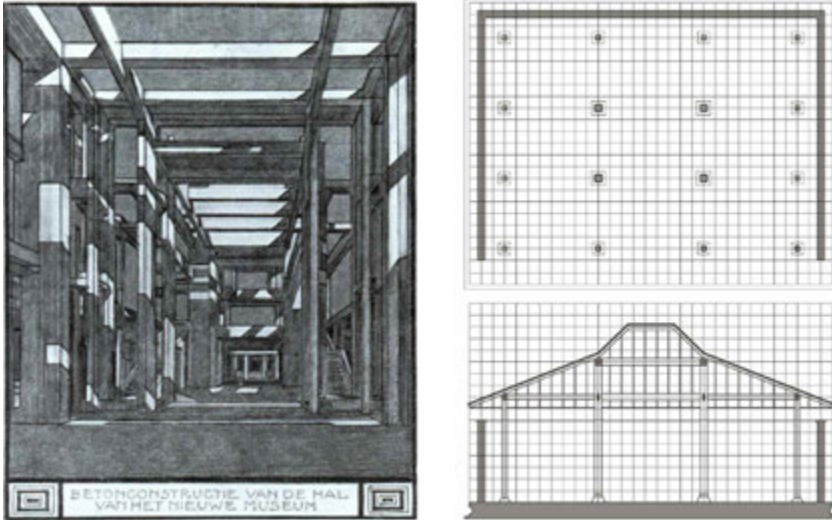


FIG. 6 H.P. Berlage, concrete structure of the foyer of the Kunstmuseum Den Haag, 1930 Alessandro Dalla Caneva, relief of the Javanese Pendopo

If he was truly amazed by the ancient monuments, he was equally swayed by those artefacts belonging to the minor architecture that honestly affirmed their technical objectivity. It is not surprising that Berlage noted in his travel diary: ‘the pendopo is hugely important in the study of Javanese architecture. This unusual square space is built on wooden supports, which support a wooden roof broken into three parts, each having a gentle slope. Each part rests on a row of supports, the central one, clearly identifiable, only on four supports. Between them there was a coffered cell, under which rested the sultan’s throne’ (Berlage 1923).

The East is now no longer a world so far away. Suddenly the boundaries between peoples are taken down, distances are shortened, differences are smoothed out: ‘And above all in the study of architectural forms we arrive at the disconcerting consideration that, just like the infinite variety of nature, these forms can also be traced back to a couple of fundamental forms. [...] Just like nature, humankind too can design an infinite number of compositions, like the composers, starting from no more than a couple of fundamental forms’ (Berlage 1934). The discovery of a lost archetype strongly proves that there are timeless fundamental laws that are a precondition for all formal beauty and independent of the various intellectual currents: ‘We are beginning to realise that an Indonesian-European style can be created by a synthesis of the western structural system and the form of oriental art, from which the definitive building could be built with the Javanese pendopo as an archetypal structure, since this could echo the example of Greek temples, which were built on a similar wooden structure’ (Berlage 1923).

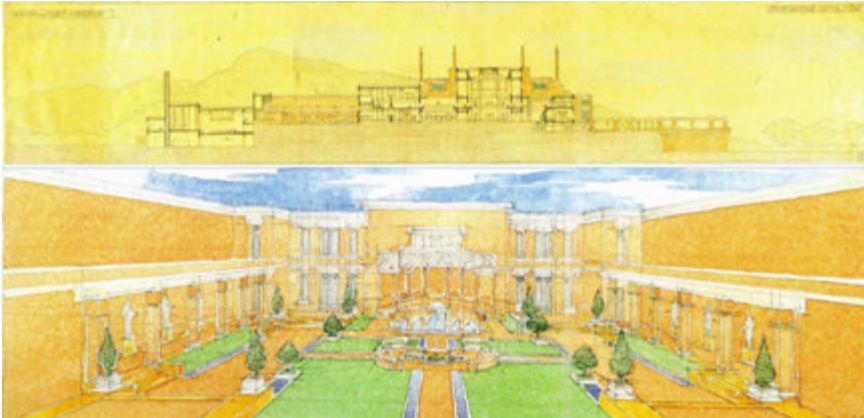


FIG. 7 H.P. Berlage, Villa-museum for the Kröller-Müller family, De Hoge Veluwe, 1917-18

This moment constituted the founding and objective principle, the content itself invariant in the infinite mutability of the spatial configurations.

The trip to the East is confirmation, from this point of view, of how ‘construction structures preceded artistic creations’. A belief that in a prophetic way had pushed Berlage to say in 1910: ‘I am convinced that the future belongs exclusively to a simple and objective type of construction. [...] Art will no longer be simply beautiful, but also sublime, because it will be animated by the power that comes from observing correct construction principles.’

It is not surprising that these initiatory reflections were formalized in the municipal museum in The Hague. All the strength of this theoretical premise is reaffirmed in the spatial virtuosity at the entrance to the museum by the complex and crystalline trilithic structure in reinforced concrete, thus evoking the common roots shared with Jean Nicolas Louis Durand’s compositions in the ways the constitutive and elementary spatial parts are combined. However, the museum cannot be incorporated within a logic of a simple game of pick and mix, a clever method capable of connecting programs, construction and technological requirements, to mechanisms of geometric and formal control. Therefore, this is not the result of the application of a method, nor the materialization of an exemplary type of museum, in the absolute novelty of the program and imposed requirements. Rather, it is an inventive design (Gino Malacarne) that also includes the typological matrix. In this sense, the logic of the arrangement also responds to an ideal system, and the architecture becomes evocative, capable of regenerating itself and constructing new symbols. Presenting itself, for this reason, as a monument.

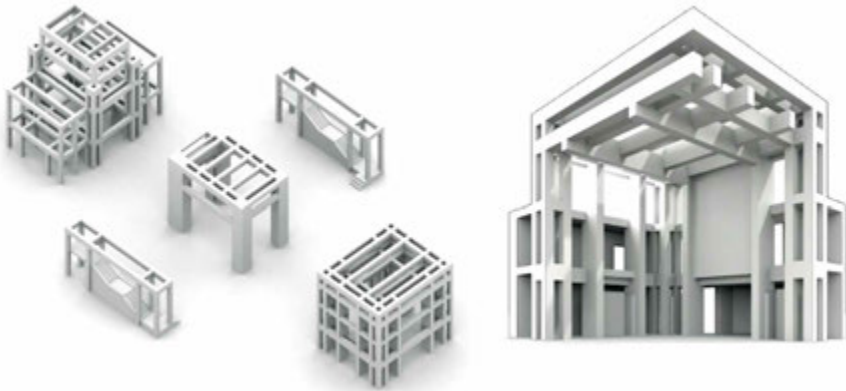


FIG. 8 Alessandro dalla Caneva, perspective reconstructions. Concrete structure (top), entrance hall to the exhibition halls (bottom left), main entrance hall (bottom right) of the Kunstmuseum Den Haag



FIG. 9 Alessandro Dalla Caneva, perspective reconstruction of the hall before the entrance to the exhibition rooms of the Kunstmuseum Den Haag

Modern historiography has underlined the fruitful relationship between the Dutch world and the Eastern world, focusing on the exotic component of an ethnological nature. The monumental component was excluded from this trend. Yet, the symbolic forms of the Eastern world certainly interested Berlage: 'But there is the case of the Eastern peoples, who in general have more imagination than Westerners, they have let this quality fully develop and consequently have created wonders of beauty. [...] The fact that architecture more than any other art is based on certain proportions of space, leaves us at first sight rather indifferent, but after careful consideration, the imagination begins to reawaken despite everything, it feels as if the soul has been gripped and even inspired' (Berlage 1934). Some formal choices adopted by Berlage could not be explained otherwise, as in the case of the monumental but disregarded project for the Kröller-Müller family: the museum villa was not Nordic enough for Helen Kröller-Müller; on the contrary, it was too explicitly oriental for the De Hoge Veluwe nature park in the centre of the

Netherlands. It seems almost natural to retrace with the imagination, in a Pindaric flight back in time, the ancient monuments of lost civilisations and stop for a moment in the distant eastern lands among the stone ruins of colossal temples erected only to preserve and pass on the mystical spiritual vitality of humankind in a fearful relationship with the gods in nature.

The images come back to mind of the original constructions, conveniently designed to give shelter to humans, but also the colossal monuments that were only created from the desire of the community to express a deep and common feeling of a spiritual nature. Thus, a shiver of amazement runs through the soul seeing the huge and massive temples of Borobudur, Prambanam, Plaosant or Mendut on the island of Java, or the temple of Besaki on the island of Bali, which managed to communicate that intimate religious conviction. The infinite nature of the spirit is not, as in instrumental architecture, a reflection that arises and operates from within, as a logical consequence of its internal composition.

On the contrary, the interior appears completely inadequate to express with any force an ideal content that can only be found using the forms of the organic world, which lend themselves to indicating that invisible inner life. Mimesis of nature pushes us to discover in the idea of the mountain our need for the infinite, which can only be represented through what is immense and massive, through the opposition between under and over, load and support, and this is why it can only be symbolic in nature.

Nostalgia for the origins does not take long to manifest when the external configuration of the museum, with its stepped arrangement, once again references the East, those symbolic forms, and therefore monumental, of the distant Indonesian lands. It certainly does not refer to a banal and naive return or explicit recovery of the symbolic forms of the ancient world, but rather to a nostalgic admonition to rediscover, embedded in the form, that single collective consciousness that seems to be lacking these days in modern Western culture: 'Do not think therefore that it [the museum] is meant to be understood as a church in which a dogmatic religious ritual is celebrated, but rather as a public building where society meets to reflect on the faith of a new time [...] so that the soul of humanity may ascend to religious sentiment' (Berlage 1934). Therefore, the high hopes that lead humanity to desire a new apprenticeship: that which comes from the awakening of an ancient spirituality, the rediscovered sense of an authentic civic passion. In the writings of Berlage, this is due to prophetic impulses, with an often apodictic tone towards a harmonious society, which however never give up challenging themselves and building themselves within the reality and contradictions of the community, and that for this reason instil in the work of

the Master that sense of the sublime or greatness that is always evoked by the monuments of the past and that can always lay claim to represent historical conscience and collective memory.

In a historical period characterized by the search for various functionalisms and by the temporary nature of avant-garde experiences that rely on the idea of the tabula rasa, the East for Berlage is not only a safe refuge or an unknown getaway but also a genuine place of knowledge where the origins of architecture can be found.

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Imperfect portrayal of a friend

As I consider my contribution to the Festschrift for my beloved friend Herman van Bergeijk -- being produced, I believe, without his knowledge -- I cannot help but return to the beginning of our friendship. I must apologize therefore if, in speaking of Herman, I cannot avoid also speaking about myself.

It was 1978, and I had already joined the Università IUAV di Venezia (previously Istituto Universitario di Architettura). Herman was setting up house in San Polo where he was going to live with Kristine Hecker, his companion at that time. Through mutual friends, I ended up helping him with the restoration work on the huge apartment he had rented from Count San Martini, near the German Center for Venetian Studies in Palazzo Barbarigo, on the very narrow Calle Corner.

From that moment on, we were inseparable. It was the start of a period of assiduous contact, even involving my help with the Italian translation of a piece he was writing for *Parametro* on the architecture and urban planning of Leo Von Klenze.¹ It was an opportunity to share many things: manual work, food, friends, study and leisure, walks, cinema, theatre, museums, music.

At that time, I learned that Von Klenze had studied architecture in Berlin and, like Schinkel, had trained in Paris at Percier and Fontaine and that, working at Ludwig's court, he could put into practice his interpretation of his beloved Neoclassicism, redesigning practically the entire city of Munich to make it 'Athens on the Isar'. Of course, Herman's gaze was directed, as it always was in the studies that engaged him, to explore the character's other preoccupations, his artistic attitudes in the broadest sense, his interests in painting, historical research, etc. I was passionate about the holistic way he had in observing, at his critical distance, the author and his works. Especially through Klenze's drawings, possibly original. But I'll come back to this later. It was the beginning of our long association.

I tell it gladly, because I am convinced that the origins of things are very important and always end up giving a genetic imprint to the quality of a long-lasting relationship.



FIG. 1 Orazio Carpenzano, HvB, Modica, 2018, [collection author]

Of course, empathy grew and I did not hesitate to introduce him to my Sicily. Always with the idea, however, not only of a journey, but also of a work to be developed together, to root that physical, emotional, environmental experience in engrossing intellectual work, in a feeling marked by shared experiences. We ended up starting a research project on Modica, with the intention of putting a decisive end to the complete lack of urban studies.²

His experiences were my experiences. First, in Munich with our respective companions, then in his Delft. Travel, architecture, exhibitions, cultural exchanges. We have known each other's affections, our fathers, our mothers, our homes, our teachers, our loves and loved ones.

Herman returned to Holland after a long period, first in Italy at the Department of History in Venice, under the guidance of Francesco Dal Cò, then in Modena and Munich, and settled in the Faculty of Architecture of the TU Delft. There, he carried out studies and research on the history of modern and contemporary architecture, taking on prestigious coordinating assignments, from which he derived splendid exhibitions, conferences and monographs, which our young researchers in Italy followed and studied.

Returning, however, to our association, I cannot help but mention here the opportunities that have allowed us to find ourselves in the field of architectural research through our collaboration: in Delft, with an exhibition on the metropolitan gates of Rome³ and a number of design workshops, a few years before his Faculty was devastated by a disastrous fire; in Rome, with Raffaele Panella; then, with Herman Herzberger to present his lecture at the Faculty; then, on the occasion of the urban studies on the historic centre of Viterbo, for the drafting of the *Masterplan*;⁴ and again, on the occasion of some conference and editorial initiatives: the re-edition of my book *Idea Immagine architettura*, edited by Gangemi, in which he wrote a generous preface;⁵ an amusing postcard sent on the occasion of the publication of *Per Le Corbusier. Corbu after Corbu (1965-2015)*;⁶ and the contribution in two volumes dedicated respectively to Manfredo Tafuri and Bruno Zevi.⁷

Herman, from my point of view, highlights a historian who represents an atypical character in the contemporary panorama and in particular of his generation. He is certainly not your typical academic, although he has written extensively and in depth on the various themes he has touched upon over time. I believe his thoughts on history can be inferred essentially from the contents and the setting of his writing, attentive, since the dawn of his training, to the methodological and instrumental indications of the department of critical and historical analysis of the IUAV developed during his doctoral internship. At the same time, his work is free from ideological implications, although less political than Manfredo Tafuri's school represented at the time. Herman always seemed to me little interested in great theories, and especially epistemological derivations on the role of history in architectural design, in particular, or in the definition of the city and urban phenomena, in general. On the other hand, Herman has always been very interested in the iconographic and figurative dimension of architectural thought, integrating action, writings and drawings, and turning his attention mainly to the figurative, interpretative skills of the architects under investigation. Free from ideological mortgages, he has written history professing the sincerity of the relationship between document and interpretation, often suggested by projects, documents conceived as perfect but in fact insidious, living organisms; creative, welcoming spaces in which to scrutinize the material and psychological dimension of the architect who imagines architecture, or the architecture imagined by the architect. And this is why the path of his studies passes through a multitude of figures integrated into the discourse by means of interpretative combinations of great interest (e.g., several monographs dedicated to Dudok, Berlage, Hertzberger, Wils, Duiker). In all his works, but above all in the interventions Herman makes on architecture and architects, he always posits the need to construct a singular, uncommon point of view from which to decrypt the judgment of critics and demolish their rigid taxonomies, at the cost of laying bare his intemperance,

his omissions, and even his (sometimes hysterical) intoxication. This attitude, however, is more public and, above all, it concerns the tension he knows how to establish in academic confrontations, confrontations that are always rigorous and methodologically probing. Other issues are his relationship with students, the sense of the task of teaching, and also his studies alone, inside his room and with his beloved books. Here Herman applies a more inclusive method, but always within a rigorously intransigent self-discipline.

Returning to the character of his work, I want to point out that I have no intention of judging Herman as a historian. Even if I wanted to, I could not do so because of obvious disciplinary limitations, so I have to limit myself to witnessing what I could observe in what he wrote, bearing in mind the ways in which he was able to weave his rhetoric. At the apex of this modality, as I have already had occasion to say, there is the datum, the strength of an idea, a construction, a drawing: complex realities, difficult to decrypt, especially when one has to control the formal, spatial relationships of a work during the analysis phase and thus make it a real instrument of understanding. This way of using drawing in history, not to illustrate but to explain, represents in my opinion the true methodology of analysis that Herman has always pursued with very interesting results. This is also true from the didactic point of view, because it indicates a process that can ideally reconstruct a phenomenon, a work of architecture, and highlight its most intimate rules of operation. Herman has always been attracted by the image, by its perceptive effects, by its destiny in the path from conception to realisation, with all possible variations. Herman is always attracted by the possibility of analysing the work in order to reveal its enigmas and discuss its effects, as well as to verify the possible 'rules' underlying the different combinations of elements, of course. In other words, he uses the graphic medium to create paradigms for understanding the object, knowing that in order to set up an operational methodology of graphical analysis of architecture, it is necessary to continue to question what the word architecture means. And also, that the credibility of the work is measured through the clarity and transparency of theoretical thought that the designer expresses through his drawings. In fact, from his studies conducted mainly on the architecture of modernity, the figurative samples taken from the archives, as well as expanding the cognitive process, reveal some important secrets that make it possible to place the events that have accumulated over time correctly in space, to compare and correctly classify the phases emerging from the analysis and to transcribe themes that are directed toward different objectives, more or less organically or consistently with the most diverse purposes. For Herman, all this represents an interscalar vision of the work, not necessarily related to the achievement of a global approach to events. Therefore, alongside the architectural qualities and contextual conditions recognisable within a reality, a multiplicity of

historical, material and constructive events can emerge from their hidden traces. In practice, these are the signs of history, which every scholar has the duty to discover, know and interpret correctly. From the acquisition of what appears through the graphic and/or photographic image, a first vision of the state of the art is given, and the historical-archival and documentary memory, through the comparison with the biblio-photographic documentation, allows the recomposition and transcription of complex data, for a critical selection of information and, finally, to reach the understanding of the roots and cultural origins of a creative path, of a project, of a work, solicited by the doubts and questions of historical research, to be projected towards the horizon of the project. Herman is also a provocateur, who wants to disseminate doubts over certainties that are too obvious, not so much to exaggerate the attitude of the historian (who has an advantage because he is extraneous to the responsibilities that the project implies), but to redirect the reflection towards those issues that generally take second place. There is one last issue that I can only touch upon here and which of course involves Herman in an absolutely implicit way, especially in his Italian period: the intergenerational transmission of the history of architecture, which remained somewhat neglected by the great story that modernity had tried to reconstruct about itself. The spread of doctoral programmes in the history of architecture at the end of the 1970s had led to a careful consideration of post-war schools: from the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, to Black Mountain College, to the School of Architecture of the University of Texas at Austin, to the Harvard Graduate School of Design. The resulting literature attempted to shed light on the educational process, beyond the rhetoric and practices of the historical avant-garde. However, the only paradigm shift took place through the Architectural Association, which tried to clarify the relationship between modern and post-modern avant-garde, ad odds with the destinies of the many protagonists of architecture at the end of the millennium (Tschumi, Liebeskind, Koolhaas, all young teachers of the school in those years and all architects who in various forms looked at the great neoliberal project and the market that was opening to the globalised world). I well remember Van Bergeijk's level of awareness of the fact that the relationship between the written word and drawn architecture (through the significant experiences that had previously been gained in Italy in the 1980s) could have had interesting effects later on, when on the international scene, the prevalence of the image over the word would come to fruition and the design of architecture would become a great success.

I am not aware of the cultural role that Herman played within the Delft faculty; I sensed a certain antagonism with the university system, consecrated by the academy, and a sort of implicit distrust of the education of architects in schools, appealing to the need to respect tradition without giving up creativity. The reality of a school to be used with a function antagonistic to the institutional narrative, to

practice cultural policies undertaken in the great archipelago of modern historical culture, I think has meant for Herman not so much the desire to position himself within the architectural debate, but the desire to extend the innovative values that the TU Delft wanted to take on in the years between the last two millennia to topics unrelated to the specific knowledge of the historian. At this point I do not know if it is correct to speak of isolation, in which Herman becomes a privileged catalyst of criticism of contemporary architectural professionalism, of the establishment of archistars, of the educational system alien to the revolutions taking place in continental Europe and on the international scene (with which he is familiar) and therefore of intolerance towards academic degeneration and the institutionalised university system. Having said this, the fact remains that Herman has exercised his role as intellectual, teacher and researcher in a full and ramified way, easily alternating an intra muros action aimed at the school community, with an important external implication, which from this point of view is the most convincing expression of the meaning of teaching and research in the name of a transparent intellectual freedom, imbued with that irony and sarcasm that sometimes leads him to say provocatively, 'Frankly I don't give a damn!'

Notes

- 1 Herman van Bergeijk, 'Monaco, l'Atene sull'Isar, un progetto per la fama', *Parametro* 122 (1983), 54-59.
- 2 The document delivered to the Municipality of Modica in the form of a typescript is kept in my and his personal archives.
- 3 Orazio Carpenzano (ed.), *Porte metropolitane per Roma*, Roma 2002.
- 4 Respectively *Lectio magistralis* by Herman Hertzberger organised by the editorial staff of ArchiDiAP (www.archidiap.com) on 10 October 2016 in the Aula Magna of the Faculty of Architecture of the Sapienza University of Rome; cf. Paolo Marcoaldi (ed.), *Per la città di Viterbo. Masterplan del centro storico*, direzione scientifica di Orazio Carpenzano, Macerata 2018.
- 5 Herman van Bergeijk, 'Every picture tells a story and every story has a picture', in Orazio Carpenzano, *Idea immagine architettura. Tecniche d'invenzione architettonica e composizione*, Roma 2013, 9-15.
- 6 Herman van Bergeijk, 'Postcard', *Per Le Corbusier. Corbu dopo Corbu 1965-2015*, Macerata 2016, 61.
- 7 Respectively Herman van Bergeijk, 'Manfredo Tafuri: from Criticism to History. Breaking the Solid Mandala', in Orazio Carpenzano (ed.), *Lo storico scellerato. Scritti su Manfredo Tafuri*, Macerata 2019, 139-145; Herman van Bergeijk, 'Zevi/Hertzberger. Affinità elettive o i Dolori di Clío', in Piero Ostili Rossi (ed.), *Bruno Zevi e la didattica dell'Architettura*, Macerata 2019, 383-393.

André Lurçat, agent français des Néerlandais

En 1926, Théo van Doesburg consacre une de ses chroniques du *Bouwbedrijf* à l'œuvre encore naissante du jeune architecte français André Lurçat.¹ Alors âgé d'une trentaine d'années – il est né en 1894 – celui-ci est alors l'auteur d'une œuvre plus abondante quantitativement que celle de Le Corbusier – né en 1887 – qui n'a pas encore inauguré les Quartiers Modernes de Pessac et que celle de Robert Mallet-Stevens – né en 1886 – qui n'a pas encore achevé la construction de la rue parisienne portant son nom. Plus engagé sur la scène européenne que la plupart des Parisiens, il entretiendra pendant quarante ans des rapports avec ses confrères néerlandais.

Formé à l'École des Beaux-Arts, Lurçat s'est fait connaître par quelques projets exposés au Salon d'Automne et surtout par les ateliers d'artistes qu'il a réalisés villa Seurat, à quelques îlots de distance de Montparnasse, grâce à son frère Jean, peintre alors fort en vue. À l'image de celui-ci, formé par Victor Prouvé à Nancy et lié au docteur Jean Dalsace et à son épouse Annie Bernheim, il est un des rares architectes de sa génération à échapper à la xénophobie et au chauvinisme régnant dans la profession. Lors de l'Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes de Paris en 1925, il n'expose qu'un meuble fort modeste, mais participe au jury où il représente l'Autriche. Il fréquente Adolf Loos à Paris, mais entretient surtout des relations avec le cercle de Josef Hoffmann.²

Bien au fait de l'activité de De Stijl depuis l'exposition *Les Architectes du Groupe 'de Styl'* de 1923 à la galerie Léonce Rosenberg,³ il joue un rôle déterminant en 1926 dans l'organisation d'une manifestation unique dans la France de l'après-guerre: l'exposition du Comité Nancy-Paris.⁴ Créé en octobre 1923 par l'écrivain Maurice Boissais, le peintre Victor Guillaume et l'étudiant Georges Sadoul, le Comité organise en 1924 une exposition commune des frères Lurçat à la galerie Mosser de la capitale lorraine, dans laquelle ils avaient tous les deux commencé leurs études avant 1914. Sa seconde exposition annuelle se tient du 12 au 31 mars 1926 dans les galeries Poirel sous le parrainage de Victor Prouvé. Sadoul rassemble des œuvres de Braque, Chagall, Derain, Dufy, Gris, Léger, Lhote, Jean Lurçat, Marcoussis, Matisse, Ozenfant, Pascin, Picasso, Masson et Miró. Certains membres du comité démissionnent pour marquer leur hostilité aux tableaux surréalistes.⁵ L'exposition est soutenue par de jeunes intellectuels lorrains comme André Thirion, des Parisiens d'origine lorraine comme Jean Dalsace, et par Hans Haug, conservateur du musée de Strasbourg.⁶



FIG. 1 Thérèse Bonney, André Lurçat, portrait vers 1928 [Centre des Monuments nationaux, cliché BNN 2961P. Crédit Bonney/© Arch. Phot. Paris/ADAGP]



FIG. 2 André Lurçat, habitations d'artistes, villa Seurat, Paris, 1925 [collection de l'auteur]

La section d'architecture, dont Sadoul confie l'organisation à André Lurçat, lui permet de présenter pour la première fois en France des projets absents de l'exposition de 1925, à laquelle les groupes radicaux n'avaient pas été conviés.⁷ Dès 1925, il contacte à Vienne Peter Behrens, Josef Frank, Oswald Haerdtl, Josef Hoffmann et Oskar Strnad. Autour de Victor Bourgeois, la section belge rassemble Louis-Herman De Koninck, Lucien François, Jean-Jules Eggerickx, Huib Hoste, Stanislas Jasinski et Louis Van der Swaelmen. Lurçat recrute aussi le Suisse Henri-Robert Von der Mühl, venu à Paris pour travailler chez François Le Cœur. Il rassemble les matériaux des Parisiens – maquettes, dessins et photographies – d'Auguste Perret, Mallet-Stevens, Jean-Charles Moreux et Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret, auxquels il ajoute ses modestes projets.⁸

Mais le contingent le plus important est placé à l'enseigne de De Stijl, bien connue du public français depuis 1923. Lurçat entretient une relation étroite avec Van Doesburg qui ressort pour l'occasion les matériaux présentés à la galerie Léonce Rosenberg, en particulier la maquette de l'Hôtel particulier, qui avait été très abîmée.⁹ Pourtant, cette relation n'a pas été prise en compte en 2009 dans l'exposition *Van Doesburg & the International Avant-Garde*.¹⁰ En tout état de cause, à Nancy, les anciens membres du Stijl comme J.J.P. Oud ou Gerrit Rietveld sont



FIG. 3 Exposition du Comité Nancy-Paris, 1926. De gauche à droite: André Lurçat, Georges Sadoul, Théo van Doesburg et Henri-Robert Von der Mühl

logiquement présents, au côté de Jan Wils, Mart Stam, Willem Verschoor et Robert van 't Hoff, tous placés sous le signe du mouvement. Ludwig Hilberseimer et Mies van [sic] der Rohe sont eux aussi considérés comme lui 'appartenant'. Quant à Walter Gropius, il est contacté par Van Doesburg lui-même.¹¹ Sollicité par Lurçat pour recruter d'autres Berlinoises, Alfred Gellhorn se dérobe, regrettant que l'exposition n'ait pas lieu à Paris.¹²

Lurçat présente la problématique de l'exposition dans le catalogue sous le titre 'Architecture Internationale', qu'il a emprunté à l'ouvrage homonyme que Gropius a publié à partir de l'exposition qu'il avait organisée à Weimar en 1923. Lurçat insiste sur l'importance d'appliquer un 'principe constructif' imposant une discipline aride et sévère. Dans son affirmation selon laquelle 'une grande époque est commencée, époque de construction et surtout de construction collective', il est difficile de ne pas percevoir l'écho du manifeste V du Stijl, que Van Doesburg, Rietveld et Van Eesteren avaient publié en 1923.¹³ Lurçat affirme: 'il fallait se débarrasser à tout prix du fardeau de l'habitude de cent années sans tradition ni lois esthétiques d'où est née la volonté aiguë de dépouillement, l'emploi exclusif d'éléments primaires, l'absence d'ornements qui donnèrent aux premières constructions ces lignes fort simples, cette pureté si froide quelquefois. [...] Indice des temps à venir, les jeunes architectes entrevoyant la solution de l'habitation dans une étude approfondie de

la ville en tant que collectivité, deviennent tous de fervents urbanistes. Une ère de grandes réalisations collectives commence.¹⁴ Outre la paraphrase du titre même de 'Vers une construction collective', Lurçat met l'accent sur la nécessité de retrouver des 'lois' esthétiques, soulignée par les Néerlandais.

L'épisode de Nancy semble avoir joué un rôle important pour Van Doesburg, car sa rencontre avec Haug est peut-être au point de départ de la commande de l'Aubette, qu'il réalisera à Strasbourg en 1928 avec Sophie Taeuber-Arp et Hans Arp. En tout cas, il n'est pas ingrat vis-à-vis de Lurçat, envoyant dès son retour à Paris un article au *Bouwbedrijf*, dans lequel il vante un propos jugé 'bien plus libre que celui de Mallet-Stevens d'intentions décoratives'. Il y détecte une certaine influence viennoise, et une sensibilité plus discrète aux Pays-Bas. Affirmant que ce n'est certes pas de France, mais plutôt d'Amérique, de Hollande ou, peut-être, de Russie que viendra l'affirmation définitive de la nouvelle architecture, il encourage Lurçat à suivre sa route autonome.¹⁵

Après ses premiers projets parisiens, Lurçat se révélera plus attentif à la démarche de Van Doesburg ou de Oud, comme le montrent à la fois son recours systématique à l'axonométrie et son utilisation de volumes parallélépipédiques et de façades rythmées par des éléments répétitifs. Ses projets attirent l'attention de Bruno Taut, qui fait de lui en 1929 un égal de Le Corbusier, considérant que 'ses maisons procèdent d'une manière moins personnelle, mais très sensible'.¹⁶ Peu de temps avant, Sigfried Giedion l'insère dans le panorama que donne *Bauen in Frankreich* de l'architecture à Paris, notant chez lui une 'rudesse et une froideur certaines'.¹⁷ Dans la première synthèse systématique de l'architecture contemporaine Gustav-Adolf Platz, qui loue la 'pureté des proportions et des détails' de ses architectures parisiennes.¹⁸ Quant à Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr., il voit en lui 'le principal collègue français' de Le Corbusier, et le seul qui empêche ce dernier d'être un « nouveau pionnier solitaire'.¹⁹ Dans l'ouvrage qu'il écrit en 1932 avec Philip Johnson pour accompagner l'exposition d'architecture moderne du Museum of Modern Art in New York, les 'quatre leaders' que sont Le Corbusier, Oud, Gropius et Mies van der Rohe, sont flanqués d'un second groupe comprenant 'Rietveld en Hollande, Lurçat en France et Mendelsohn en Allemagne'.²⁰

L'atelier parisien de Lurçat, au 40 de la rue Bonaparte, est proche des bureaux des *Cahiers d'Art*, créés par Christian Zervos en 1926, critique et historien de l'art proche de son frère et il publie dans ses pages des articles non signés, les alimentant de photographies qui lui envoient ses correspondants. La revue de Zervos présente ainsi la scène néerlandaise dès avril 1926, illustrant à la fois des immeubles d'Amsterdam et de Rotterdam.²¹ L'année suivante, elle consacre plusieurs pages à l'ensemble d'habitations construit par Oud au Hoek van Holland, qu'illustrent des

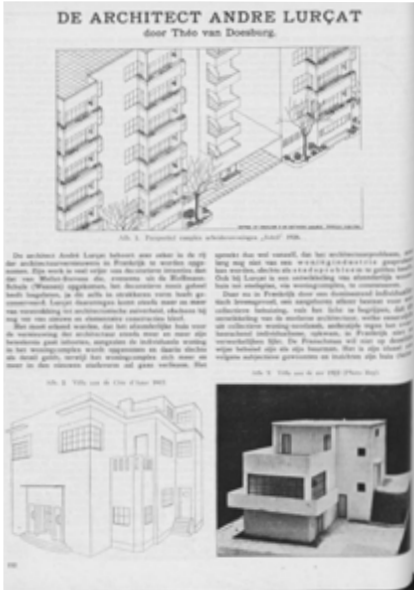


FIG. 4 Théo van Doesburg, 'De architect André Lurçat', Het Bouwbedrijf, avril 1926



FIG. 5 'Maisons ouvrières à Hoek van Holland', Cahiers d'Art, octobre 1927

photographies que le Néerlandais a envoyé par l'entremise de Lurçat, qui est en contact avec Ida Liefrinck, architecte d'intérieur alors salariée de Oud.²² À cette occasion, Oud critique dans une lettre au parisien le groupe amstellodamois De 8: ' il n'a pas encore réalisé quelque chose. À présent, il a de bonnes intentions, mais les résultats (en dessin) ne sont pas encore tout à fait à la hauteur de leur vouloir.'²³ Lurçat publie aussi un article non signé dans lequel il rend compte de l'exposition de la Weissenhofsiedlung à Stuttgart, à laquelle il n'a pas été invité, bien que son nom ait été évoqué dans sa préparation. Il se félicite de cette 'véritable et grandiose manifestation d'un esprit nouveau, créant de nouvelles formes, un nouvel espace conforme à sa nouvelle vision', et juge que les maisons en rangée de Oud sont « d'un plan très agréable et d'un aspect intérieur très équilibré.'²⁴

La relation avec Oud prend dès lors une nouvelle dimension grâce au jeune Américain Peter Van der Meulen Smith, que Lurçat embauche en 1927 sur sa recommandation, après qu'il ait travaillé dans l'agence de Rotterdam. Il sera le premier dessinateur de l'atelier de la rue Bonaparte. À Paris, Smith fait la connaissance de Hitchcock, qu'il décide à abandonner l'histoire de l'architecture médiévale pour s'intéresser au moderne. Il entretient avec lui une correspondance, lui envoyant des esquisses de ses projets, sur lesquels il recueille les conseils de Lurçat et Le Corbusier.²⁵ Après la mort prématurée de son jeune ami en 1928, Hitchcock vante dans l'article qu'il lui consacre dans la revue de Harvard *The*

Hound & Horn le seul projet qui soit resté de lui, une ‘maison de weekend’ en bord de mer, dans laquelle il voit la première expression de ce qu’il nomme – sans doute pour la première fois – un ‘style international’.²⁶ La perspective du projet de Smith, avec ses volumes étirés et ses fenêtres en longueur est d’ailleurs choisie par l’historien pour illustrer la page de titre de son premier livre, *Modern Architecture. Romanticism & Reintegration*, dédié à sa mémoire. Rendant hommage à son tour à Smith, Oud écrira en 1929 dans *Internationale Revue* i10 que son projet associe à ‘la plasticité irréelle et fascinante de Le Corbusier’ rien moins que ‘le sens solide des réalités de Lurçat’.²⁷

C’est en évoquant le souvenir de Smith que Oud présente en avril 1928 Hitchcock à Lurçat.²⁸ Ce dernier prépare alors pour les éditions des *Cahiers d’Art* une collection intitulée *Les Maîtres de l’Architecture Contemporaine*. Les monographies en préparation sont consacrées à Wright et Oud – en tête de la liste – ainsi qu’à Tony Garnier, Karl Moser, Willem M. Dudok et des ouvrages sur la ‘jeune architecture’ dans plusieurs pays d’Europe sont annoncés.²⁹ Elle est ‘destinée à vulgariser, avec des moyens de reproduction aussi parfaits que possible les figures les plus évidentes de l’architecture et les lois qui mènent cette architecture’. Il annonce un livre sur Frank Lloyd Wright, ‘l’architecte américain, si méconnu à ses débuts’, qui est ‘un des grands promoteurs de ce mouvement architectural qui, en cherchant d’exactes correspondances avec l’esprit moderne, a retrouvé les grands principes qui ont régi de tous temps l’art de bâtir’, et dont l’esprit ‘sait merveilleusement combiner les données de la raison avec les imprévus de l’imagination et de la sensibilité la plus ténue’.³⁰

Mais Lurçat travaille aussi en parallèle à un projet de livre sur Oud, censé paraître en février 1929, dont Zervos imagine initialement confier la préface à Piet Mondrian. Oud en dissuade franchement Lurçat: ‘j’en suis sûr, Mondrian n’aimera pas d’écrire cette introduction. Il n’écrit que des articles sur l’art en général. Parce que nous sommes de très bons amis, je sais qu’il serait pour lui très désagréable de refuser et vous prie de vouloir bien demander à M. Zervos de ne pas inviter Mondrian pour cela; Que pensez-vous d’une préface de M. Henry Russell-Hitchcock Jr. (Vassar Coll., Poughkeepsie, NY). C’est un Américain (ami de Mr. Smith qui je crois travaillait quelque temps chez vous) et il vient de publier une petite étude sur mon œuvre dans la revue américaine *The Arts*. Il me semble qu’il serait un bon choix et parce qu’il s’intéresse à mon travail peut-être il veut bien le faire’.³¹

Suite à sa rencontre avec Hitchcock, ainsi que l’historien américain me l’a confié en 1985, Lurçat l’aiguille vers l’autre projet, que Zervos privilégie sans doute: la monographie sur Wright, dont il lui confie la préface.³² Hitchcock se met à l’œuvre

sans tarder et rédige ainsi son premier texte sur le maître de Taliesin.³³ Si le ‘choix des documents’ est explicitement crédité à Lurçat sur la dernière page du livre, sa contribution s’étend à la mise en page, exécutée par le Zurichois Willi Boesiger, alors dessinateur dans son agence, en contact avec Zervos.³⁴ Il s’agit là de la seule publication d’envergure qui sera consacrée à Wright en France avant le second après-guerre.³⁵ Lurçat négocie avec lui l’envoi de photographies de son œuvre la plus récente, Wright vantant en réponse le ‘nouveau principe d’utilisation du béton armé’ mis en œuvre dans ses maisons californiennes et se déclarant ravi d’être ‘enfin’ publié en France.³⁶

Lurçat avait envisagé la publication d’un livre consacré à Victor Bourgeois, qui ne verra pas le jour.³⁷ En revanche, l’ouvrage sur Oud est en définitive publié en 1931, la collection étant rebaptisée à cette occasion *Les Maîtres de l’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*.³⁸ Oud n’avait publié jusque-là que le livre *Holländische Architektur*, dans la série des *Bauhausbücher* et cette monographie marque donc un seuil important dans la diffusion de son œuvre.³⁹ Oud corrige dans le détail le texte de Hitchcock, mettant notamment au clair les circonstances de la création de *De Stijl*.⁴⁰ En juillet 1930, l’Américain peut enfin l’informer que Zervos lance le projet et discute en détail le texte – qui prolonge celui qu’il a publié dans *The Arts* en 1928.⁴¹ Il l’informe que Lurçat lui a demandé d’écrire un texte sur lui pour un livre destiné à être publié à Strasbourg et que Bernard Bijvoet construit une ‘maison très excitante en pavés de verre à Paris’ – celle du docteur Dalsace.⁴² Le livre sort enfin en 1931.

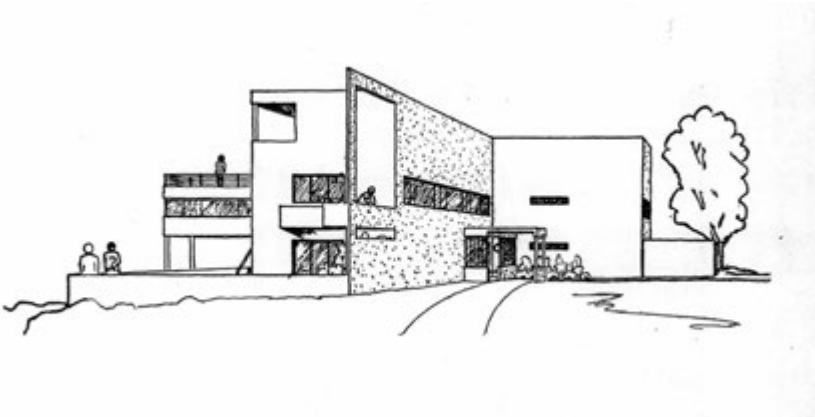


FIG. 6 Peter Van der Meulen Smith, projet pour une maison de weekend en bord de mer, 1927, frontispice de Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., *Modern Architecture. Romanticism & Reintegration*, 1929

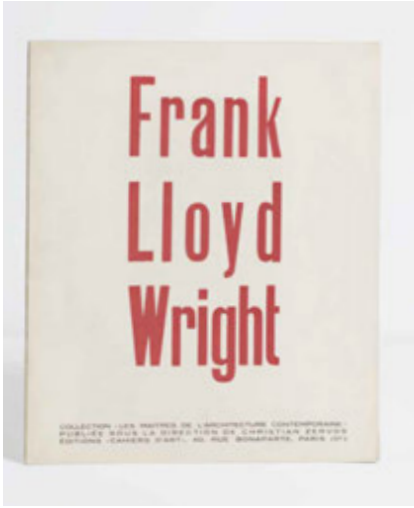


FIG. 7 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., *Frank Lloyd Wright*, Éditions Cahiers d'Art, 1928, couverture

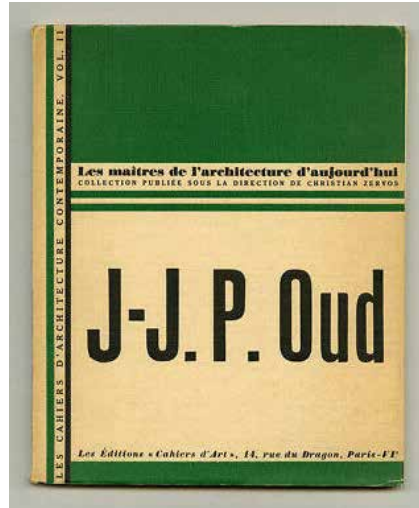


FIG. 8 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., *J.J.P. Oud*, Paris, Éditions Cahiers d'Art, 1931, couverture

De son côté, Lurçat publie en 1929 un manifeste simplement intitulé *Architecture*, en large parti inspiré de *Vers une architecture* (1923) de son ennemi déclaré Le Corbusier, dans lequel les projets présentés à Nancy et les édifices de Stuttgart sont fortement représentés. Il inclut des vues de bâtiments réalisés en Allemagne par Gropius, Otto Haesler, Ernst May et Mies van der Rohe, et de bâtiments viennois de Josef Frank, avec qui il a sympathisé lors du Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) inaugural de La Sarraz en 1928. Pour ce qui est des Néerlandais, il présente des œuvres de Oud, Rietveld et les logements de Mart Stam à Stuttgart.

Lurçat est alors actif dans les CIAM, tant au niveau européen, où il est proche des Allemands et des Autrichiens, que dans le groupe français, dont il tente de prendre le contrôle en s'opposant à Le Corbusier. Ses stratégies européennes s'inscrivent dans ce double conflit, qui surdétermine ses engagements dans la presse et ses interventions publiques. Il se prononce notamment, après le CIAM de 1929 à Francfort, sur le thème de l'habitation minimale, qu'il traite dans un article de *Monde*.⁴³ Il le développe, après le congrès de 1930 à Bruxelles, à l'occasion d'une conférence donnée à Delft, à l'invitation d'un groupe d'étudiants. Oud se flatte d'avoir eu le 'plaisir' de les 'aviser de [la lui] demander'.⁴⁴ Elle est inscrite dans un 'cours international sur l'architecture nouvelle', lors duquel interviennent Adolf Behne, Gropius, Rietveld, J. Duiker, Van Eesteren et J.B. van Loghem.⁴⁵



FIG. 9 André Lurçat, projet d'immeuble à petits logements, 1928, axonométrie [Paris, Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Fonds Lurçat]



FIG. 10 André Lurçat, groupe scolaire Karl Marx, Villejuif, 1933, couverture de *De 8 en Opbouw*, 17 février 1934 [Fonds Lurçat]

Abordant le ‘problème de la “maison minimum”’, Lurçat le pose plus sur le terrain économique et social que sur le terrain architectural, proposant la création d’un ‘service public’ du logement financé par différentes techniques fiscales. Récusant la maison individuelle, il se prononce pour le logement collectif vertical, pour lequel il a élaboré plusieurs projets radicaux, notamment une tour publiée dans *Das Neue Frankfurt*.⁴⁶ Dans sa tonalité politique, son propos se rapproche de celui du critique de gauche pragois Karel Teige, tel qu’il l’exprime en 1933 dans *Nejmenší byt* [Le Logement minimum].⁴⁷ Lors de son séjour, Lurçat a visité les réalisations de Oud, qui rapporte ses compliments: ‘il me faisait beaucoup de plaisir de lire que vous étiez content du Kiefhoek. C’est un problème très difficile et pas agréable ce problème des habitations minimum’. Il lui demande à l’occasion s’il y a des ‘maisons ouvrières’ à la villa Seurat et s’il est satisfait de ses enduits.⁴⁸

Lurçat s’attache à diffuser l’œuvre d’Oud dans la presse française, comme en fait foi sa correspondance avec *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* en 1931.⁴⁹ De son côté, Oud s’emploie à faire publier son hôtel Nord-Sud de Calvi et le groupe scolaire Karl-Marx de Villejuif, qu’il cherche à mieux comprendre: ‘j’aimerais beaucoup de voir le plan de l’école. La maquette est claire à vous, sachant l’organisation. À moi je ne vois que des toits ! Ce qui est dommage, parce que j’aime beaucoup vos travaux et pensais qu’ils gagnent toujours en les étudiant sérieusement.’⁵⁰ Au sein des CIAM, Lurçat traite Oud comme un confident, le prenant à témoin de ses conflits avec Sigfried Giedion, qui a pris contre lui le parti de Le Corbusier au sein du groupe

français. Dans une lettre de 1931, il affirme que le secrétaire général est ‘toujours aussi sectaire et théoricien, c’est à dire toujours aussi insupportable’.⁵¹ À partir de ce moment, il prend ses distances vis-à-vis des Congrès. Il ne se rend pas à Athènes en 1933 et ses calomnies contre Le Corbusier, qui font l’objet d’une sorte de procès interne, le marginalisent définitivement en 1935.

Lurçat est alors à Moscou, où il procède, sous la pression des officiels soviétiques, à ce que j’ai dénommé une ‘autocritique’, considérant que l’architecture moderne est trop simpliste et qu’elle néglige l’enjeu du monument. Ses nouvelles positions, fondées sur la redécouverte de la symétrie axiale et de l’ornement, que révèlent par exemple son projet pour l’Académie des Sciences de l’URSS, sont voisines de celles que Oud manifeste lorsqu’il réalise entre 1938 et 1942 l’immeuble Shell de La Haye, au grand scandale d’*Architectural Record*.⁵² Dans la continuité de ses mésaventures soviétiques, Lurçat rédige pendant la guerre les cinq volumes de son traité *Formes, compositions et lois d’harmonie*, dans lequel le dernier terme fait écho à ses propos des années 1920.⁵³ En dépit des figures classiques apparues dans ses projets, il évoque en 1965 ‘l’actualité des principes fonctionnalistes’.⁵⁴ La conjugaison qu’il pratique de formes modernes et de thèmes historiques le rapproche alors à nouveau de Oud, qui accuse réception en juin 1959 de ses *Œuvres récentes* et réagit à ses derniers travaux, qu’il commente ainsi: ‘le thème est le thème lequel m’a occupé pendant toute ma vie. L’architecture moderne, mais le cadre des lois éternelles de l’architecture en général. [...] L’architecture moderne c’est une chose de révolution (à l’un côté) et une chose de convention (à l’autre côté)’.⁵⁵ Trente ans après leurs premiers contacts, leurs positions tendent ainsi à partir d’expériences différentes à la formulation d’un postmodernisme précoce, devenu également inaudible dans la France et les Pays-Bas des années 1960, centrés sur d’autres doctrines et d’autres esthétiques.



FIG. 11 André Lurçat, projet de concours pour l’Académie des Sciences de l’URSS, Moscou, 1935, perspective d’ensemble, dans *Raboty arkhitektournyh masterskikh*, Moscou, Otdel Proektirovania Mossoveta, 1935, p. 26 [collection de l’auteur]

Notes

- 1 Théo van Doesburg, 'De architect André Lurçat', *Het Bouwbedrijf* 3 (1926) 4 (AVRIL), 152-155.
- 2 Sur l'ensemble de son œuvre, voir Jean-Louis Cohen, *André Lurçat (1894-1970). Autocritique d'un moderne*, Paris/Liège 1995.
- 3 Yve-Alain Bois & Bruno Reichlin (ed.), *De Stijl et l'architecture en France*, Liège 1985.
- 4 Blandine Chavanne, *Une expérience moderne: le comité Nancy-Paris (1923-1927)*, Lyon, 2006 ; Catherine Coley, 'Le Comité Nancy-Paris', *Les Cahiers de la Recherche Architecturale* 24-25 (1989), 108-114.
- 5 André Salmon, 'L'exposition Nancy-Paris', *L'Art Vivant* 34 (15 mai 1926), 371-373. Voir aussi: Georges Sadoul, 'Souvenirs d'un témoin', in *Rencontres 1. Chroniques et entretiens*, Paris 1984, 38.
- 6 André Thirion, *Révolutionnaires sans révolution*, Paris 1972, 79-80.
- 7 Catherine Coley, 'André Lurçat propagandiste du Style international à Nancy', *Le Pays Lorrain* 1 (1986), 44-53.
- 8 Voir Hans-Robert Von der Mühl, *De l'architecture*, Lausanne 1973.
- 9 Yve-Alain Bois, 'De Stijl in Paris', in *De Stijl et l'architecture en France*, 119. Al'issue de l'exposition, Van Doesburg se plaindra de 'l'état terrible' des dessins et des maquettes: lettre de Theo van Doesburg à André Lurçat, Clamart, 1 mai 1926 [Paris, Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Fonds Lurçat (FL)]. Catherine Coley, 'Organiser une exposition d'architecture moderne: l'expérience d'André Lurçat à Nancy', in Catherine Coley & Danièle Pauly (ed.), *Quand l'architecture internationale s'exposait 1922-1932*, Lyon 2010, 10-26.
- 10 Gladys Fabre & Doris WIntgens Hötte (ed.), *Van Doesburg & the International Avant-Garde. Constructing a New World*, London 2009.
- 11 Lettre de Théo van Doesburg à André Lurçat, 4 février 1926 [FL]. Doesburg a remercié chaleureusement de son invitation André Lurçat le 4 février 1926 [FL].
- 12 Lettre d'Alfred Gellhorn à André Lurçat, 23 janvier 1926 [FL].
- 13 Théo van Doesburg & C. van Eesteren, 'Vers une construction collective', *De Stijl* 6 (1923-25) 6-7 ([août] 1924), 89-92.
- 14 André Lurçat, 'Architecture internationale', *Deuxième exposition annuelle du comité Nancy-Paris*, Nancy, mars 1926, n. p.
- 15 Van Doesburg, 'De architect André Lurçat', 152.
- 16 Bruno Taut, *Die Neue Baukunst in Europa und Amerika*, Stuttgart 1929, 45. Alberto Sartoris formule un point de vue presque identique dans *Gli elementi dell'architettura funzionale*, Milan 1932, 18.
- 17 Sigfried Giedion, *Bauen in Frankreich, bauen in Eisen, bauen in Eisenbeton*, Berlin 1928, 113.
- 18 Gustav-Adolf Platz, *Die Baukunst der neuesten Zeit*, Berlin 1930, 113.
- 19 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., *Modern Architecture. Romanticism and Reintegration*, New York 1929, 171.
- 20 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr. & Philip Johnson, *The International Style. Architecture Since 1922*, New York 1932, 33.
- 21 'Habitations', *Cahiers d'Art* 1 (1926) 4 (avril), 66-68.
- 22 'Maisons ouvrières à Hoek van Holland', *Cahiers d'Art* 2 (1927) 10 (octobre), 366-368.
- 23 Lettre de J.J.P. Oud à André Lurçat, 4 janvier 1927 [FL].
- 24 [André Lurçat], 'Exposition du "Werkbund" à Stuttgart, l'habitation', *Cahiers d'Art* 2 (1927) 7-8 (juillet-août), 288.
- 25 Lettres de Peter Van der Meulen Smith à Henry-Russell Hitchcock, 1928 [Washington DC, Archives of American Art, Hitchcock Papers]. Voir Colin Rowe, *As I Was Saying. Recollections and Miscellaneous Essays* (I). Texas, Pre-Texas, Cambridge (ed. Alexander Caragone), Cambridge (Mass.) 1995, 14-16.
- 26 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., 'Four Harvard Architects', *The Hound & Horn, A Harvard Miscellany* 11 (1928-29) 1 (septembre 1928), 47.
- 27 J.J.P. Oud, 'In memoriam Peter van der Meulen Smith', *Internationale Revue* 10 19 (15 février 1929), 122-123.
- 28 Lettre de J.J.P. Oud à André Lurçat, 7 mai 1928 [FL].
- 29 *Cahiers d'Art* 2 (1927) 10 (octobre), n. p.
- 30 'Frank Lloyd Wright', *Cahiers d'Art* 2 (1927) 9 (septembre), 322 et suiv.
- 31 Lettre de J.J.P. Oud à André Lurçat, 7 mai 1928 [FL]. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., 'The Architectural Work of J.J.P. Oud', *The Arts* 12 (1928) 2 (février), 97-103.
- 32 Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr., entretien avec l'auteur, New-York, 20 février 1985.

- 33 Le manuscrit se trouve dans les Hitchcock Papers.
- 34 Willi Boesiger, entretien avec l'auteur, Zurich, 22 octobre 1984.
- 35 Frank Lloyd Wright, Paris, Éditions Cahiers d'Art, 1928. Sur la réception de Wright en France, voir: Jean-Louis Cohen, 'Wright et la France, une découverte tardive', in *Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe von Frank Lloyd Wright*, Paris 1986, 5-15.
- 36 Lettre d'André Lurçat à Frank Lloyd Wright, 29 octobre 1927 [New York, Columbia University, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, , Frank Lloyd Wright Collection] ; lettre Frank Lloyd Wright à André Lurçat, [1927] [FL].
- 37 Lettre de Victor Bourgeois à André Lurçat, 23 novembre 1927 [FL].
- 38 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., J.J.P. Oud, Éditions Cahiers d'Art, Paris 1931.
- 39 J.J.P. Oud, *Holländische Architektur*, Albert Langen, München 1926.
- 40 Lettre de J.J.P. Oud à Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr., 2 juillet 1929 [Hitchcock Papers].
- 41 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., 'The Architectural Work of J.J.P. Oud', *The Arts* 13 (février 1928), 97-103.
- 42 Lettre d'Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr. à J.J.P. Oud, 10 août 1930 [Rotterdam, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Oud Archief].
- 43 André Lurçat, 'Le problème du logement des masses ouvrières - la maison minimum', *Monde*, février 1930.
- 44 Lettre de J.J.P. Oud à André Lurçat, 27 novembre 1930 [FL].
- 45 *Internationale Leergang voor nieuwe architectuur: georganiseerd door de Bouwkundige afd. van het Civiel en Bouwkundig Studentengenzelschap Practische Studie te Delft op Maandag Dinsdag en Woensdag 1, 2 en 3 December 1930; Programma en Referaten, Delft 1930.*
- 46 *Le problème du logement des masses ouvrières dans les villes*, conférence à la Technische Hogeschool Delft, 2 décembre 1930, dactyl., 19 p. [FL].
- 47 Karel Teige, *Nejměší byt*, Prague 1932. Voir son intervention à Francfort: Karel Teige, 'Die Wohnungsfrage der Schichten des Existenz-minimum', in CIAM, *rationelle bebauungsweisen*, Stuttgart 1931, 64-70.
- 48 Lettre de J.J.P. Oud à André Lurçat, 26 décembre 1930 [FL].
- 49 Lettre de Mme Marcel-Eugène Cahen à J.J.P. Oud, mars 1931 [HNI, Oud Archief].
- 50 Lettre de J.J.P. Oud à André Lurçat, 15 février 1933 [FL]. L'article annoncé par Oud est Abraham Elzas, 'Een complex scholen te Villejuif', *De 8 en Opbouw*, 17 février 1934, 27-33.
- 51 Lettre d'André Lurçat à J.J.P. Oud, 7 décembre 1931 [HNI, Oud Archief].
- 52 'Mr. Oud Embroiders a Theme', *Architectural Record*, décembre 1946, 80 ; le débat rebondira avec, 'Mr. Oud Replies', *Architectural Record*, mars 1947, 18. Sur ce bâtiment, voir Ed Taverne & Dolf Broekhuizen, *Het Shell-gebouw van J.J.P. Oud. Ontwerp en receptie*, Rotterdam 1995.
- 53 Estelle Thibault, 'Actualiser la tradition écrite. Formes, composition et lois d'harmonie d'André Lurçat', in Jean-Philippe Garric, Émilie d'Orgeix & Estelle Thibault (ed.), *Le livre et l'architecte*, Wavre 2011, 93-100.
- 54 André Lurçat, 'Actualité des principes fonctionnalistes', *La Maison*, novembre 1965.
- 55 Lettre J. J. P. Oud à André Lurçat, 24 juin 1959 [FL].

Het is niet helemaal gelopen zoals het moest

Ofschoon architectuur bij uitstek over de vormgeving van de materiële wereld gaat, is het academische fundament van het vak wankeler dan men zou vermoeden. Afgaande op literatuur en lesprogramma's blijkt het gevoelig voor mode, is de oriëntatie eerder thematisch dan disciplinair en wat aan begrippen gehanteerd wordt, ontbeert niet zelden consistentie. Onbestendig is ook de bestudering van de geschiedenis van de architectuur en mogelijk is dat in Nederland nog meer het geval dan elders in Europa. In het midden van de jaren tachtig wijdde het tijdschrift *Archis* – passend in deze trend was dit periodiek geen lang leven beschoren – een speciale aflevering aan de stand van zaken in het architectuurhistorisch onderzoek te lande.¹ Voor zover dat onderzoek voorafgaand aan 1945 kon floreren, was het 'buiten het institutionele circuit' van de universiteit. Weliswaar plachten reguliere architectuurhoogleraren, zoals J.G. Wattjes aan de TH Delft, hun lessen met historische voorbeelden te ondersteunen, maar een zelfstandig bestaan werd de historische studie vooralsnog niet gegund. Even toegepast was de historische studie waarvan de Rijksdienst voor de Monumentenzorg zich bediende, in dit geval ter onderbouwing van de bestuurlijk opgelegde taken van selectie en behoud.

Na de Tweede Wereldoorlog werd het anders. In 1947 werd E.H. ter Kuile in Delft als hoogleraar architectuurgeschiedenis aangesteld, zij het in de buitengewone versie van het ambt. Twee jaar later volgde aan het Kunsthistorisch Instituut in Utrecht M.D. Ozinga. Dat had een goed begin kunnen zijn van een zich zelfstandig manifesterend vakgebied, maar '[v]olgens de verhalen groetten Ter Kuile (Delft) en Ozinga (Utrecht) elkaar niet eens,' dus blijktbaar werd de toegenomen relevantie door de heren nog niet meteen op waarde geschat.² De beide pioniers bedreven een vorm van geschiedenis die geënt was op een stilistisch gecodeerd historisch verloop, dat ergens in de Middeleeuwen startte en eindigde in de achttiende eeuw. Doordat de negentiende eeuw als een periode van verval gezien werd en bij vermeend gebrek aan stilistische zuiverheid buiten schot moest blijven, was het voor de historici van deze generatie niet goed mogelijk om iets zinnigs bij te dragen aan de cultuur van hun eigen tijd. Toch waren ze daarin hoe dan ook opgenomen. Ze stonden erbij en zullen ernaar gekeken hebben. Het vak had een autonome status toebedeeld gekregen, maar die werd dus meteen aangegrepen voor een heerlijk isolement.

Met deze achtergrond is het begrijpelijk dat de emancipatorische ontwikkelingen die in de roemruchte jaren zestig in de cultuur op gang kwamen ook hun weerslag hadden op de positie van de architectuurgeschiedenis. Het vak had het nodig om levensvatbaar te kunnen worden. In het overzicht in Archis wordt beschreven hoe in Delft omstreeks 1970 een discussie losbarstte over rol en betekenis van de architectuurgeschiedenis in het ontwerponderwijs. Die zou prominenter kunnen worden dan tot dan toe. Buiten de historici om was er bij ontwerpers belangstelling ontstaan voor de historische herkomst van de eigen, moderne omgeving. Daarbij kwamen de formele ontwerpvragestukken centraal te staan, die in de eerste plaats onderkend werden in de architectuur daterend uit de periode van de historische avant-garde in het interbellum. De kunsthistorische instituten bewogen vooralsnog niet mee met deze opgerekte interesse, maar in de museale wereld werd het vizier plaatselijk al wel geopend voor een ruimtelijke werkelijkheid met een meer diverse inhoud dan een reeks chronologisch achter elkaar te zetten stilistische klapstukken uit de geschiedenis. Onder het directoraat van Jean Leering leverde het Van Abbemuseum in het begin van de jaren zeventig grensverleggend werk. Het onderwerp van de tentoonstelling *Bouwen '20-'40. De Nederlandse bijdrage aan het Nieuwe Bouwen*, in Eindhoven te zien in 1971, betrof de sociale woningbouw uit het interbellum, waarbij niet zozeer werd gekeken naar de esthetische kwaliteiten van het getoonde werk als wel naar de maatschappelijke voorwaarden, productie- en werkverhoudingen, regelgeving en dergelijke. Op deze manier beschouwd en ingebed, verbreedde de architectuurgeschiedenis zich potentieel tot een materiële tak van maatschappijwetenschap. In de twee decennia die zouden volgen, trad deze verbreding inderdaad op diverse fronten aan het licht. Het sociale engagement dat bijvoorbeeld Jean Leerings Eindhovense tentoonstellingen kenmerkte, waaierde uit in veelvormige pogingen aan de universiteiten om de maatschappelijke achtergrond van planningsvraagstukken wetenschappelijk te duiden. Gelijktijdige ontwikkelingen in het buitenland wakkerden deze belangstelling verder aan. Zo bevatte de in Archis gepubliceerde stand van zaken een artikel van de jonge Herman van Bergeijk, waarin deze uitlegde hoe in Venetië een theoretische school was ontstaan rondom Manfredo Tafuri.³ De architectuurbeschouwing bleek hier in het vaarwater gebracht te zijn van de politieke theorie, wat spoedig uitmondde in diverse vormen van ideologische scherpslijperij. Aan de Nederlandse interesse, althans in beperkte kring, voor deze intellectuele richting deed dat echter weinig af.⁴

Opmerkelijk is niet alleen de snelheid waarmee in het architectuurhistorisch bedrijf de bakens werden verzet en het vak in de richting koerste van een maatschappijwetenschap. Even opvallend is hoe de architectuurgeschiedenis in de decennia na 1970 steeds beter ingebed raakte in het culturele bestel in de directe omgeving van de universiteiten. Dat verlangen accelereerde na 1970,

toen prominente kunstmusea het voorwerk van Leering navolgden en de architectuurbeschouwing een positie gunden in het museale werk.

Prominente kunstmusea volgden het voorbeeld van Leering na en gunden de architectuurbeschouwing een positie in het museale werk. In 1975 werd dit zeer zichtbaar in vier op elkaar afgestemde architectuurtentoonstellingen in evenveel musea. De afstemming betrof behalve het inhoudelijke verband van de tentoonstellingen onderling ook de combinatie van onderwerp en museum. Het Haags Gemeentemuseum, gehuisvest in een laat meesterwerk van H.P. Berlage, toonde een overzicht van diens oeuvre. In het Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller werd de relatie onderzocht tussen de Amerikaanse en de Nederlandse architectuur van de eeuwwisseling, een onderwerp dat paste bij de internationale statuur van museum en zijn grondleggers. Het Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam bood vanzelfsprekend de Amsterdamse School het verdiende podium. Als sluitstuk werd een tentoonstelling gehouden over prominente architecten van het eerbiedwaardige genootschap *Architectura et Amicitia*, met als locatie het Nederlands Documentatiecentrum voor de Bouwkunst (NDB).⁵ Dit centrum, dat hooguit op een aspirant-status als museum kon bogen, zou niet meer dan een decennium later een van de constituerende partners worden van het Nederlands Architectuurinstituut. Het NDB fungeerde als de kraamkamer voor de serie van vier gesynchroniseerde tentoonstellingen in 1975: in de aldaar opgeslagen architectenarchieven was de inhoud te vinden die nu voor het eerst volop voor het voetlicht kon worden gebracht.

Met de wind nu in de zeilen werd het kunststuk van vier gesynchroniseerde tentoonstellingen begin jaren tachtig herhaald, waarbij nog een vijfde partner aan het museale collectief werd toegevoegd, te weten het Museum Boymans-van Beuningen. Onderwerp was dit keer de geschiedenis van het Nieuwe Bouwen, waarvoor chronologisch gemakkelijk aangeknoopt kon worden bij de vorige reeks. Interessant bij de nieuwe serie van vijf tentoonstellingen en bijbehorende catalogi is de enorm uitgedijde inhoudelijke bandbreedte van het historisch onderzoek.⁶ De geschiedenis werd hier tot in het detail als evolutionair fenomeen beschreven, recht doend aan maatschappelijke omgeving waarin het Nieuwe Bouwen kon ontstaan, de progressie van het stedenbouwkundige denken, de sociale groeperingen, de technische condities en de internationale cultuur. De in concrete bouwwerken gematerialiseerde architectuur was hier veeleer illustratie van het culturele verloop dan de essentiële hoofdzaak waarvan de stilistische kwaliteiten tot iedere prijs geregistreerd moesten worden.

In niet veel meer dan een decennium was het inhoudelijke bereik van de architectuurgeschiedenis dus extreem opgerekt, terwijl het begrippenapparaat van de traditionele stijlengeschiedenis nog ternauwernood was afgeschud. Voor een net van de universiteit komende generatie van jonge architectuurhistorici hield dit mogelijk een minder comfortabel begin van hun loopbaan in. Hoe zou het vak zich op stel en sprong verder kunnen ontwikkelen in het uitdijende verband van de maatschappijwetenschappen, terwijl het vanouds op weinig anders berustte dan een combinatie van stilistische en bouwhistorische kennis? Deze overgang bleek niet zomaar te volbrengen, wellicht ook vanwege dezelfde middelpuntvliedende effecten die het de hiervoor genoemde pionierende hoogleraren van meteen na de Tweede Wereldoorlog belette om elkaar zelfs maar te groeten. De praktijk van de architectuurgeschiedenis in de jaren tachtig vertoonde weliswaar een diepere en bredere inhoudelijke interesse dan voorheen, het was ook een praktijk die op individuele prestaties berustte, zonder strak gedefinieerd theoretisch fundament of gedeeld perspectief.

Zo werd in de latere decennia van de vorige eeuw in beginsel iedere aangevangen architectuurhistorische studie een waagstuk in methodische coherentie. De kern bestond nog steeds uit de materiële erfenis van de architectuur, maar het verband waarin die concrete kern geplaatst werd, bleef vooralsnog vluchtig. Dat zelfs een biografische monografie ver uit kon stijgen boven een goed gedocumenteerd werkenoverzicht werd echter uitnemend gedemonstreerd door de architectuurhistoricus Manfred Bock. Bock was verbonden aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam, maar het essentiële deel van zijn carrière bracht hij door in het NDB, waar hij ook de intellectuele basis legde onder de tentoonstellingenreeks over het Nieuwe Bouwen aan het begin van de jaren tachtig. Zijn uit 1983 daterende proefschrift over Berlage is een extreem voorbeeld van hoe de biografische *werdegang* van een hoofdfiguur in een gelaagde context geplaatst kan worden van beschouwingen over de gelijktijdige, voorafgaande en aansluitende intellectuele en maatschappelijke cultuur.⁷ Weinig geleerden kunnen, toen en nu, in staat worden geacht een dergelijke *tour de force* te evenaren – en wie meent dat de toekomst van de geschiedschrijving vooral afhangt van toegankelijkheid zal daar misschien ook niet rouwig om zijn, want de cultuur van Berlage doet zich in dit boek voor als een onneembaar fort.

Zodra het historisch bedrijf zich erop toe wenst te leggen om het hele, maar dan ook echt het héle informatieve pakket aan het licht te brengen dat nodig is om te verklaren hoe een zekere ruimtelijke compositie tot stand is gekomen, dan loopt het kans draagvlak en publiek mis te lopen. Het is precies om deze reden dat de indrukwekkende expansie van het vak in de jaren zeventig en tachtig niet het vervolg heeft gekregen waarop destijds gerekend werd. De verdieping van het metier, al dan

niet in het bredere verband van de cultuur- of maatschappijwetenschappen, kwam nauwelijks uit de verf, integendeel zelfs. Dat het Nederlands Architectuurinstituut, waarin zich een aantal van hiervoor aangeduide expansieve bewegingen samenbalden, al verbijsterend snel na oprichting door zijn hoeven zakte, was meer dan een teken aan de wand. De bijvoeglijke bepaling *architectuur* in de naam van het instituut veranderde met ingang van 2013 in *nieuw*, waarmee tot uitdrukking kwam dat de intellectuele traditie van de architectuurbeschouwing in het algemeen en de architectuurgeschiedenis in het bijzonder nog niet stevig genoeg was om weerstand te kunnen bieden tegen de waan van de dag. Het betekende voor de nu werkzame historici ook dat het verband tussen het academische bedrijf van de architectuurgeschiedenis en het belendende culturele bestel van instituties en musea uitsluitend op losse coalities kan berusten en niet op een existentiële noodzaak die permanent onderhoud wordt gegund.

Wanneer het jaar 2013 een ijkpunt is, dan staat het voor het einde van de van de expansieve intellectuele oriëntaties van de architectuurbeschouwing, ondernomen in de decennia na 1970. Het architectuurhistorisch bedrijf fragmenteerde en viel net als voorheen terug op vooralsnog gerespecteerde reservaten van geleerdheid op de universiteiten. Die reservaten zijn nog altijd zowel te zoeken in de kunsthistorische instituten als in de academische architectuuropleidingen en daar floreren ze in meer of mindere mate; ze worden er althans voor het moment getolereerd.

In de museale omgeving verdampte ondertussen de inhoudelijke grondigheid die eerder aan de basis lag van, bijvoorbeeld, de tentoonstellingsreeksen uit 1975 en zeven jaar later. Voor zover architectuurhistorische onderwerpen aan bod kwamen in de musea werden ze aangeprezen in een verbaal repertoire dat zich nogal verwijderde van de eerdere maatschappijwetenschappelijke belangstelling. Ervoor in de plaats kwam een jargon dat aan de omgeving van de marketing ontleend lijkt te zijn, stellig passend bij de gelijktijdige beleidsmatige herschikking van het culturele veld tot 'creatieve industrie'. Zo presenteerde het Nederlands Architectuurinstituut in zijn laatste dagen een overzicht van de geschakeerde inhoud van de verzamelde archieven in '250 topstukken', bij wijze van reductie van de historische complexiteit tot begrijpelijke eenheden. Bedoelde topstukken werden geïdentificeerd als 'de ideale belichaming [...] van pioniersgeest' en een samentrekking van 'hoop, vertrouwen, empathie, nieuwsgierigheid, rentmeesterschap, lust tot experimenteren'.⁸ Ook valt te lezen dat de architectuur er is 'om de wereld een beetje mooier te maken'. Het zou onrechtvaardig zijn om dit slag wervend bedoelde praatjes als karakteristiek voor een afgeleden mentaliteit te beschouwen, ware het niet dat het er bij de manier waarop de 'topstukken' ieder voor zich geduid worden minstens even flauw aan toe gaat. De uitgave is ingedeeld in de hoofdstukken 'Experiment', 'Sober' en 'Nieuwsgierig' en veel scherper

wordt het evenmin in de beoordelingen die daarna volgen: 'Poëtische observatie', 'Mogelijkheden uitproberen', 'Onoverzichtelijke orde', 'Optimaal zicht', 'Abstractie en moderniteit' en zo verder. Iedere ambitie tot gefundeerde duiding is geweken voor het verlangen naar de pakkende omschrijving.

Dat het hier geen incident betreft, maar een patroon, blijkt uit de opzet van een tentoonstelling over het 100-jarig jubileum van *De Stijl* in het Gemeentemuseum Den Haag in 2017, georganiseerd samen met Het Nieuwe Instituut. Daarin was weinig tot niets merkbaar van decennia van voorafgaand kunsthistorisch onderzoek naar deze artistieke beweging, maar bloeide de gemeenplaats van een blijmoedig en eendimensionaal vooruitgangsgeloof: 'De ontwerpen van *De Stijl* springen eruit omdat ze vaak heel kleurrijk of onorthodox van opzet zijn'.⁹ Volledig koersend op associatie wordt het werk dat toegeschreven kan worden aan Theo van Doesburg en zijn *inner circle* door de samenstellers zodanig inhoudelijk opgerekt dat ook de ambities van wezensvreemde collega's en goed in de tijdgeest passende thema's als 'technische innovatie' en 'transparantie' bij het concept ingelijfd kunnen worden. Zelfs *De Stijl* kan blijkaar onschadelijk worden gemaakt of, met andere woorden, voor onmiddellijke consumptie geschikt gemaakt.

In de tegenwoordige tijd, 2020, gaat historische precisie, als die al wordt nagestreefd, minimaal gelijk op met het doelbewust inspelen op het incasseringsvermogen en verwachtingspatroon van de hedendaagse burger. Dat blijkt evenzeer uit de publicatie die bedoeld is om het acquisitiebeleid van het Nederlands Architectuurinstituut en zijn nazaat uit te leggen, die ook al gedateerd kan worden in de directe nabijheid van het ijkpunt 2013.¹⁰ Duidelijk wordt hier dat het eminente instituut, terugkijkend op de geschiedenis, zoekt naar geschikte architectonische demonstraties van wat nu onder het hoofdstuk 'multiculturaliteit' of 'duurzaamheid' kan worden geschikt. Dat de geschiedenis door degelijke toe-eigeningen vervreemd wordt van haar eigen verhaal, niet noodzakelijkerwijs sporend met enig actueel belang, geldt niet als een serieus te nemen overweging: de geschiedenis kan alleen in de ogen worden gekeken wanneer we haar meteen begrijpen, in termen die ons bekend voorkomen.

Al met al stemt de voortgang van de emancipatie van de architectuurgeschiedenis daarom ontevreden. Heeft het vak zijn bestaansrecht als zelfstandig intellectueel bedrijf wel voldoende aannemelijk gemaakt? Of resteert de startpositie die een eeuw geleden ook al bereikt was, namelijk die van een toegepaste deelwetenschap, bedreven in diverse perifere praktijken? In de afgelopen zeventig jaar heeft het vak zich eerst heel langzaam opgericht, te midden van zijn academische en institutionele omgeving. Het heeft zich daarna, na 1970, snel ontwikkeld en verbreed tot een onderzoeksdomein dat tegelijk de materiële wereld van de gebouwde artefacten

was toegegaan en aansluiting zocht bij de maatschappijwetenschappen. Nadien, in de jaren tachtig en negentig, heeft het zich nadrukkelijk gepresenteerd in het museale verband, zowel coöperatief als zelfstandig. Ondanks dat alles is het vak ten slotte toch te zwak gebleken om te kunnen voorkomen dat het ingelijfd werd in het intellectueel tandeloze fenomeen van de culturele industrie. Om kort te gaan, dit is niet helemaal gelopen zoals het moest.

Notes

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- 1 Dorien Boasson & Marieke van Giersbergen, 'Architectuurgeschiedenis in Nederland. Verschuivingen in de periode 1965-1985', *Archis 1* (1986) 6, 14-28.
 - 2 Boasson/Van Giersbergen, 'Architectuurgeschiedenis in Nederland', 15.
 - 3 Herman van Bergeijk, 'Van progressief bolwerk tot ivoren toren. De afdeling architectuurgeschiedenis in Venetië', *Archis 1* (1986) 6, 44-46.
 - 4 Een voorbeeld van deze interesse is het Groningse proefschrift van Rixt Hoekstra, *Building versus Bildung. Manfredo Tafuri and the construction of a historical discipline*, Groningen 2005.
 - 5 H.P. Berlage: bouwmeester, 1856-1935 (Gemeentemuseum Den Haag), *Americana. Nederlandse Architectuur 1880-1930* (Kröller-Müller, Otterlo), *De Amsterdamse School 1910-1930* (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam) en *Architectura. Nederlandse Architectuur 1893-1918* (Architectuur Museum, Amsterdam).
 - 6 *Het Nieuwe Bouwen. Voorgeschiedenis* (Nederlands Dokumentatiecentrum voor de Bouwkunst, Amsterdam), *Het Nieuwe Bouwen in Rotterdam 1920-1960* (Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam), *Het Nieuwe Bouwen. Amsterdam 1920-1960* (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam), *Het Nieuwe Bouwen. De Nieuwe Beelding in de Architectuur. De Stijl* (Haags Gemeentemuseum) en *Het Nieuwe Bouwen Internationaal. CIAM. Volkshuisvesting, Stedebouw* (Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo).
 - 7 Manfred Bock, *Anfänge einer Neuen Architektur. Berlages Beitrag zur architektonischen Kultur der Niederlande im ausgehenden 19. Jahrhundert*, Den Haag 1983.
 - 8 Ole Bouman & Behrang Mousavi (ed.), *Nederlandse architectuur in 250 topstukken. Bewaard door het Nederlands Architectuurinstituut*, Rotterdam 2012, 13-14.
 - 9 Hetty Berens & Hans Janssen, *Architectuur en interieur: Het verlangen naar stijl*, Den Haag 2017, 6.
 - 10 Ole Bouman, Behrang Mousavi, Suzanne Mulder et al., *Keuzes maken. Nieuwe principes voor het acquisitiebeleid van de NAi collectie*, Rotterdam 2012.

The colour of black-and-white

An unknown sketch of a well-known set design

On 1 June 2018, at Kunsthhaus Lempertz in Cologne, three photographs of a unique set design were auctioned.¹ [1–3] Each of them measures approximately 9 x 12 cm and depicts a model designed by Piet Mondrian in May and June 1926 for the set of a play, *L'éphémère est éternel*, by a friend of his, Michel Seuphor (pseudonym of Fernand Berckelaers). Mondrian's design includes a stage frame, a floor with side walls and three different backdrops, for the three acts of the play. He placed a stylised wooden figure on the stage floor, with nails for arms, to give an impression of the intended size and proportions. The geometric planes and black lines immediately reveal Mondrian's hand, although the colours in the black-and-white photographs are not easily identifiable for obvious reasons.

The photographs were taken by the Hungarian André Kertész.² Kertész was a friend of Mondrian and Seuphor, and like them, an émigré in Paris. Starting in the summer of 1926, Kertész took a number of photographs of Mondrian, his studio and a few visitors that became famous. The model itself can also be seen in one of the photographs taken in the studio. [4]

The photographs of the model, which are the focus of this contribution, were already published in magazines in 1927 and 1928, and again in later years, and have been reproduced repeatedly in the existing Mondrian literature. Nevertheless, the prints turn out to reveal more than can be seen in these reproductions; the reverse side of one of them, which has not previously been reproduced, contains a sketch with indications of colour. Before taking a closer look at the model and the surprising discovery of the photographs, we consider Mondrian's ideas on spatial design.

Mondrian in three dimensions

Early on, Mondrian paid attention to his own living environment. When he set up a studio in the small rural village of Uden, early in 1904, the first thing he did was attach a piece of leather to the ceiling by the window to soften the light.³ The

reddish-brown glow this gave the space is reflected in much of the work created in Brabant. When the painter was working in Amsterdam in the years following, he continued to adapt his successive studios to his aesthetic demands. He painted the walls white or – with coal tar – black, for example, and put up batik wall hangings on the walls. Mondrian only subjected his studio to the principles of his art starting in 1919. The first studio he decorated according to the principles of *Nieuwe Beelding* (or neoplasticism), which he had developed in the previous years, was located at 5 rue de Coulmiers in Paris. No photographs of his experiments with the layout of this studio have survived. There are, however, photographs of Mondrian's next studio, at 26 rue du Départ. He played with the furnishing and decorative arrangements there almost continuously from the moment he moved in, in 1921, until he moved out, in 1936, particularly by affixing alternating compositions of coloured sheets of cardboard to the walls. The earliest photograph of the neoplastic decoration of this space dates from 1924. It shows the back wall of the studio, which was also the most photographed part of this room in later years. What is missing in the photograph is the black cupboard that would visually divide the irregular, pentagonal space into two interlocking rectangles in later years.⁴

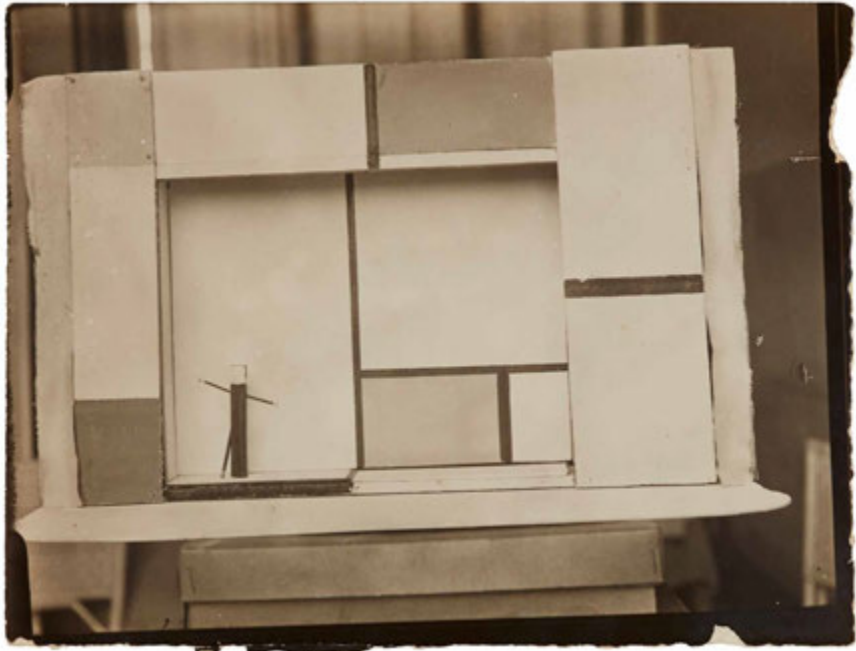


FIG. 1 André Kertész, Stage set model for Michel Seuphor's *L'éphémère est éternel* by Piet Mondrian, first act (1926), gelatin silver print, ca. 8.9 x 11.9 cm, courtesy Lempertz Auction House, Cologne

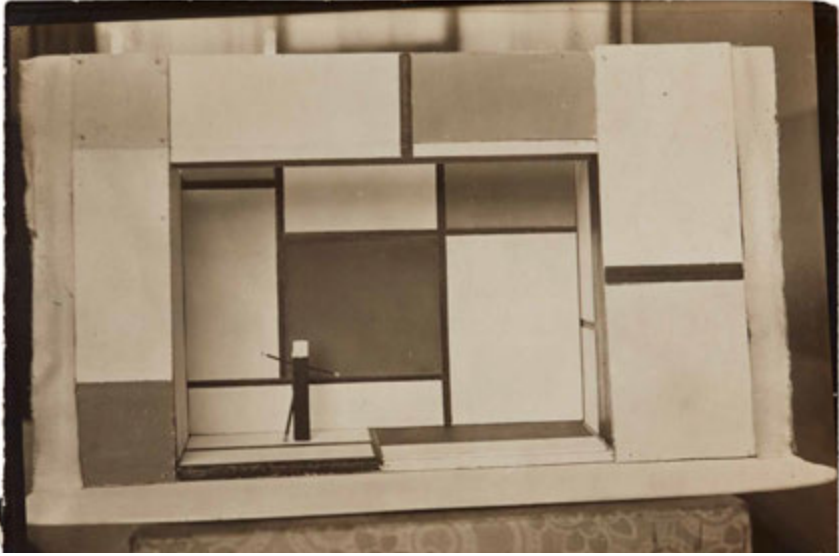


FIG. 2 André Kertész, Stage set model for Michel Seuphor's *L'éphémère est éternel* by Piet Mondrian, second act (1926), gelatin silver print, c. 8.9 x 11.9 cm, courtesy Lempertz Auction House, Cologne

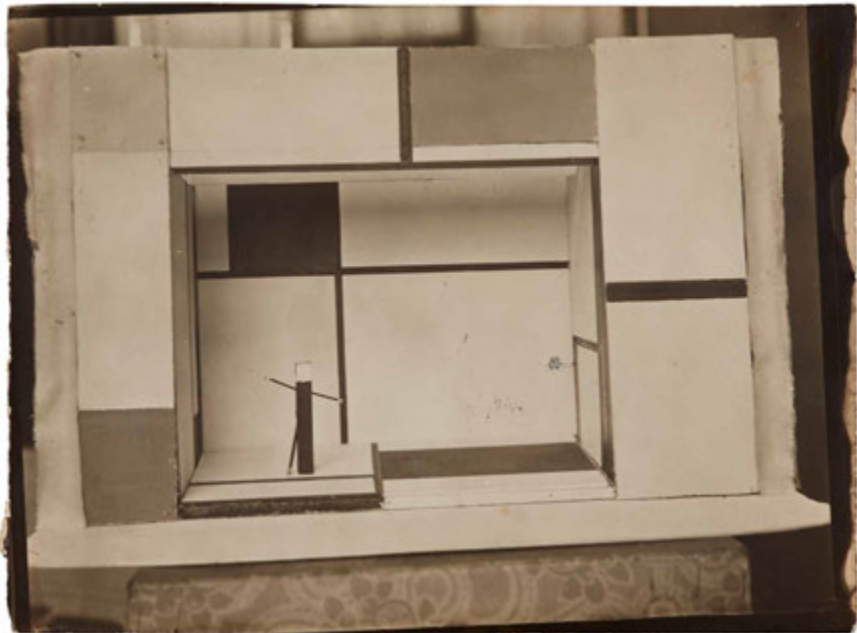


FIG. 3 André Kertész, Stage set model for Michel Seuphor's *L'éphémère est éternel* by Piet Mondrian, third act (1926), gelatin silver print, c. 8.9 x 11.9 cm, courtesy Lempertz Auction House, Cologne

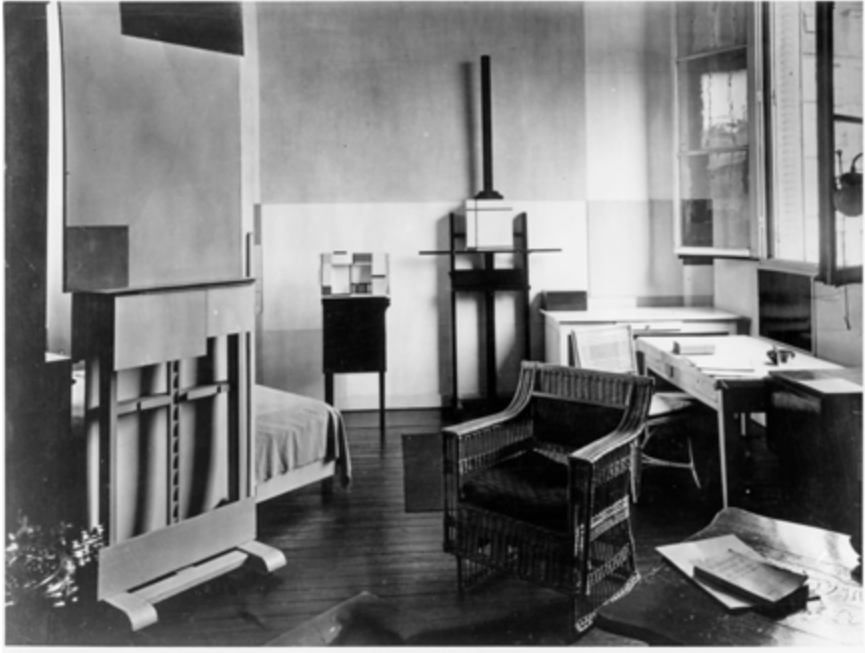


FIG. 4 André Kertész, Studio of Piet Mondrian, 26 rue du Départ, Paris (1926), gelatin silver print, dimensions unknown, collection unknown (modern print is present in the archive of Joop Joosten, RKD)

Although the first illustrated publications on the studio furnished in neoplastic style only appeared in the second half of 1926, the studio had already gained its share of fame before then by word of mouth. In addition, Mondrian had already written several times about the application of neoplasticism in architecture. An example is the article 'The Realization of Neo-Plasticism in the Distant Future and in Architecture Today', which appeared in *De Stijl* in the spring of 1922 and was included in the 1925 *Neue Gestaltung. Neoplastizismus, Nieuwe Beelding*, the Bauhaus edition of a number of Mondrian's theoretical writings. As a result of the spread of his ideas about spatial design, Mondrian was approached in August 1925 to make a colour design for the Dresden-based collector Ida Bienert.⁵ A month later an exhibition opened in Dresden with work by Mondrian, the Hanoverian Dadaist Kurt Schwitters and the American photographer Man Ray.⁶ His presence in the German city did not go unnoticed, as evidenced by the letter from Hans Posse that Mondrian received around March 1926. Posse was in charge of organising the *Internationale Kunstausstellung* (International Art Exhibition), which was to take place in Dresden at the end of 1926. He approached Mondrian with the request to make a spatial design for one of the corner rooms of the exhibition complex.⁷ Partly due to a lack of funds, the design was not realised, but it did provide an impulse to Mondrian's thinking about neoplasticism in architecture.

In the design for Bienert, it becomes clear Mondrian envisaged a different application of neoplasticism in architecture than in painting. The colour planes for the Bienert design meet without being separated by black lines. This corresponds to the way he decorated his studio and differs from his paintings, where the colour planes are separated by black lines. In *De Stijl* in 1922, Mondrian described the reason for this difference as follows: 'The entrenched belief that architecture deals only with three-dimensional "plastic" helps to explain why the "plane" expression of Neo-Plasticism is regarded as impossible for architecture. That architecture must be **form-expression** is a traditional view, however. It is the (perspective) vision of the past. [...] The new vision (even before Neo-Plasticism) does not proceed from one fixed viewpoint: it takes its viewpoint everywhere and is not limited to any one position. [...] Practically, it takes its position in front of the plane (the most extreme possibility of plastic intensification). Thus it regards architecture as a multiplicity of planes: once more the plane'.⁸

In Mondrian's design for *L'éphémère est éternelle*, the stage frame forms a transition between the architecture of the theatre and the neoplastic world Mondrian created on stage. Partly due to the combination of architectonic and painterly neoplasticism, the model occupies a special place within Mondrian's oeuvre. Moreover, as far as is known, it is the first and only time the artist entered the field of set design in practice.

History of the set design

In the first part of his article 'The Realization of Neo-Plasticism in the Distant Future and in Architecture Today', Mondrian also considered theatre: "'theater" is displaced by the cinema and the music hall; "music" by dance music and the phonograph, [...] and so on'.⁹ Whereas neoplasticism had in the meantime shown painting the 'right way', at the time of writing the dramatic arts had not yet had a pioneer 'demolishing the old'. Michel Seuphor would pave the way for this in 1926. In February of that year, on a tour of Europe in connection with an exhibition of modern art to be organised in Antwerp, he stayed with the futurist Giacomo Balla in Rome. Spurred on by the Italian, Seuphor typed out the play *L'éphémère est éternelle* in a single night, on his portable Corona typewriter. He had already been walking around with the idea for the play for some time.¹⁰ A few months later he returned to Paris, via Venice, Budapest and Antwerp: 'As soon as I arrived, I went to see Mondrian, who, of course, asked me to explain my seven month's absence. I handed him the typed text of *Very short is everlasting* as my only justification.'¹¹ Mondrian was pleased with the text because it could fulfil the role he had in mind: that of deconstructing the notion of traditional theatre, paving the way towards renewal. When Seuphor visited him

again a few days later, Mondrian surprised him with a model for the play's decor.¹² The model's rough finishing – evident in the photographs – supports Seuphor's claim that it was quickly produced. Nails are, for example, sticking out of the tilting frame here and there and the materials used seem to have been largely those readily at hand. Like the strips of canvas, for example, that Mondrian attached to the left and right of the frame and must indicate the stage curtain. Was Mondrian's haste prompted by Seuphor telling him the Italian futurist artist Enrico Prampolini, his friend and also Mondrian's, who was living in Paris, was now working on sketches for a set?¹³ If it was indeed his intention to take the wind out of the Italian's sails, we can conclude in retrospect that this was a successful manoeuvre. In the end the piece would get stuck in the design phase, as is apparent in a letter from Mondrian to J.J.P. Oud of December 1926: 'I made the model for a play of his [= Seuphor] that will be staged in Lyon (not a play, actually, but more of a criticism on the Theatre, a very good one) but again there is no money for decor. I'm happy to have made it anyway, because I now see that there is a whole field to be worked in there.'¹⁴ For all that, the model would become well known, partly thanks to photographs of it, which were published several times in the late 1920s.

The model photographed

Michel Seuphor took the Hungarian photographer André Kertész to Mondrian's studio for the first time in August 1926.¹⁵ Judging from the wide-open window that is visible on the right, he took the photograph of the studio showing the set design on that same summer's day.¹⁶ [4] In addition, he also took three detailed photographs of the model, which can be dated between mid-August and mid-December 1926. In the letter to Oud from December, mentioned previously, Mondrian wrote: 'Vantongerloo visited M. Stevens a few times last year and, as he says, found him quite open to the new and our work. [...] Anyway, Vantong. reads here that M. Stevens is going to give a lecture on theatre, and writes to him to ask if he knows that I was working on it and so on. After a fortnight, when Vantong. was gone, he drops in, is very nice (just like Van Doesb. in the beginning), has a good look around and wants photographs of the stage model to have slides made for the lecture. I agreed to it: of course some of it will be nicked by others but it's also possible that I'll execute it myself someday. I don't bother about it myself but Seuphor (Bercelaers [sic]) has his contacts'.¹⁷ So Mondrian put photographs at the disposal of the French architect Robert Mallet-Stevens, who had some very progressive buildings to his name. The Frenchman showed particular interest in the set design, in connection with the lecture 'Les décors et l'architecture', which he was preparing at the time. He would use the photographs to have slides made of them for his lecture. If these were coloured slides, the colour indications would obviously have been very useful, even necessary.¹⁸

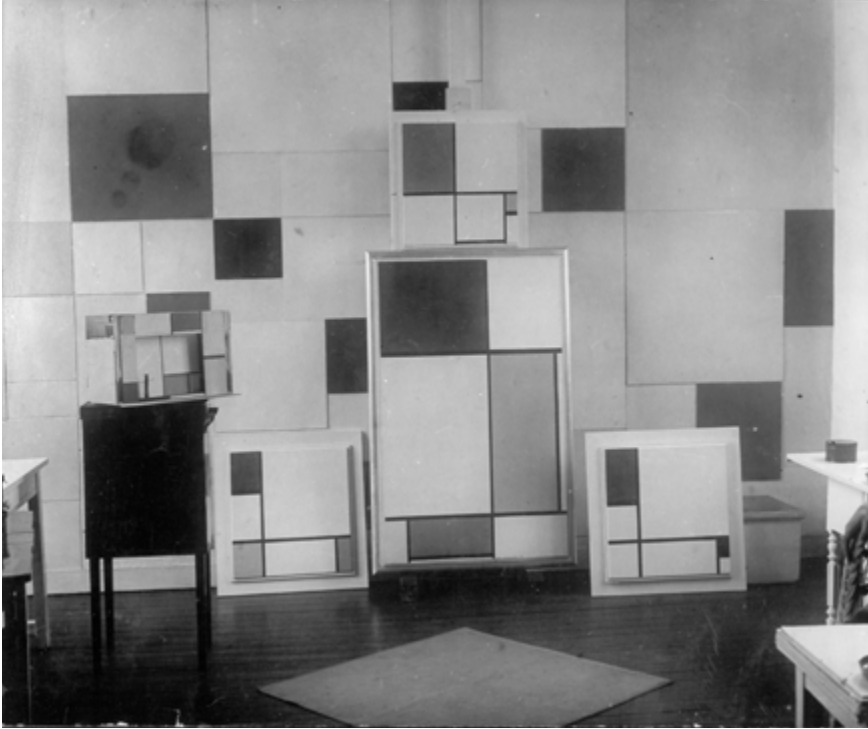


FIG. 5 Charles Karsten, Studio of Piet Mondrian, 26 rue du Départ, Paris (1929), gelatin silver print, 15 x 20 cm, private collection, Amsterdam

Whether Mondrian already had the photographs at that time or had them made especially for the Frenchman is not known. Since he shared the reproductions with Mallet-Stevens, however, we can conclude that Mondrian regarded the design as a fully-fledged expression of his artistry. In 1927, the French architect published the photographs in the magazine *La Gazette des Sept Arts*, which he edited. That year, they were also reproduced in the *Documents Internationaux de l'Esprit Nouveau*, under Seuphor's editorship. Later studio photographs show that the model was given a prominent place in Mondrian's studio from its creation. This can be seen, for example, in a studio photograph from 1929, which is attributed to the architect Charles Karsten and which best shows the size of the model.¹⁹ [5] After 1929, the design no longer appears in photographs of Mondrian's studio. There is, however, an eyewitness who remembers having seen it in the studio late in 1934.²⁰ Presumably Mondrian disposed of the model when he moved to a new studio in 1936. What remains are the photographs documenting the existence of this unique work of art.

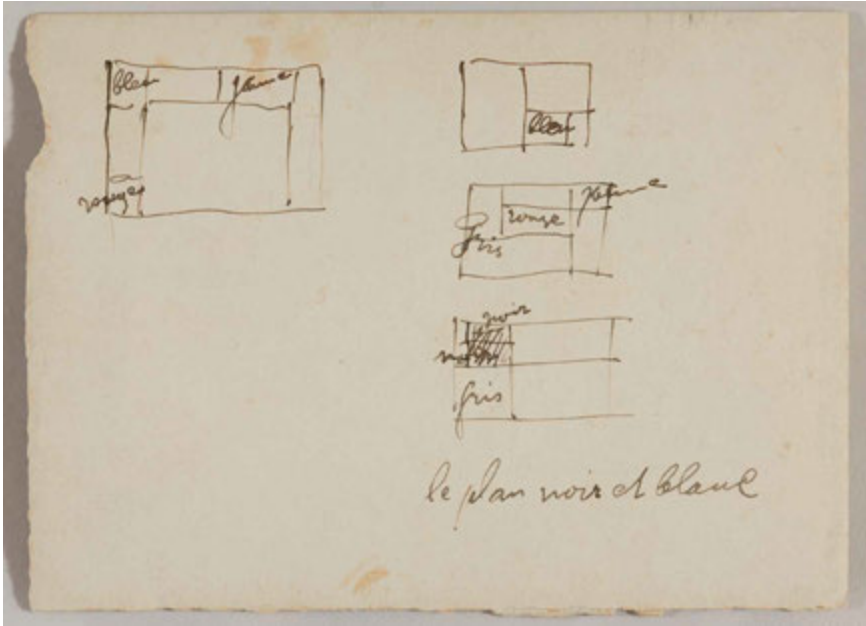


FIG. 6 Piet Mondrian, Sketch with color instructions for the 'Stage set model for Michel Seuphor's *L'éphémère est éternel*', on the back of André Kertész' photograph for the first act (1926) (ill. 1.), black ink on photographic paper, courtesy Lempertz Auction House, Cologne

The Lempertz photographs

The vintage photographs that were auctioned by Lempertz in 2018 offer opportunities to study details hard to see in the reproductions published earlier. No one even knew that on the back of the print depicting the stage for the first act, rough sketches of the set and the three backdrops were drawn by Mondrian in pen and ink, including indications of colour. [6] This naturally raises the question whether the sketches correspond to the photographs. For the most part, they do; there are, however, interesting differences. In the frame, the horizontal line on the right-hand panel is missing in the sketch, and on the backdrop for the second act, a horizontal line is also missing at the top left. Furthermore, the proportions in the drawing are not entirely in line with those in the photographs, not surprising given its spontaneous or informal character. The caption 'le plan noir et blanc' seems to refer to the stage floor; apparently Mondrian did not think it necessary to add a sketch of it and found the photographs – especially III – clear enough. Remarkably, however, the sketch says nothing about the side walls of the stage, for which the photographs seem to indicate he had specific intentions as well.

It is also worth mentioning that the photographs have been retouched: in photographs II and III, a thick, black line has been drawn along the top of the stage opening, where it borders on the frame. Photograph I, the most frontal one, shows that at the lower edge of the frame above the stage no black horizontal line was intended. We suspect the added black line was intended to indicate that the underside of the top of the frame – as far as it ran across the stage – had to be black. It is not clear how deep this ‘ceiling’ of the stage had to be.

The assumption that the photographs and colour indications served Mallet-Stevens was already discussed previously. However, this is not the only possible explanation for the status and function of the photographs and sketches. Contrary to what some published versions suggest, they are not carefully framed and highlighted photographs, but rather appear to be quick snapshots. The original photographs are printed slightly obliquely and are probably contact prints.²¹ The sketches and colour indications may have been a reminder for Mondrian, although this seems unlikely because he had the model at his disposal. Given the differences between sketches and model, it is conceivable that the sketches represent a new version of the design, a next phase in Mondrian's thinking about what the set should be like. On the other hand, the differences are minor and, as far as we know, Mondrian left the model as it was for years. All this reinforces the impression that the photographs and sketches together were meant to be a kind of instruction. This might have been intended for someone who had to ‘translate’ or redesign it entirely, into something new.²² The instructions may have been associated with the reproduction of the photographs in one of the magazines in which they appeared in 1927 and 1928; they could then have been intended for the lithographer. Another possibility is that they are connected with staging *L'éphémère est éternel* in Lyon, which must have been planned for late 1926 or early 1927, but according to Seuphor was cancelled due to financial problems after rehearsals had already started.²³ In the passage from a letter to Oud quoted previously, Mondrian already remarked that there was ‘no money for decor’. The information about origins known to us, found in the catalogue of the auction at Lempertz, does not tell us anything useful with respect to the use or function of the photographs.²⁴

The model reconstructed

The play *L'éphémère est éternel* was not staged during Mondrian's lifetime and therefore the design was never realised during that time. The model was not reconstructed until 1964. This took place as part of the exhibition *Beeldend experiment op de planken* (visual experiment on stage) at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. The subject of this exhibition was the relationship between theatre

and the avant-garde in France, Russia and Italy in the years 1910-1940. The model was probably reconstructed by the museum's technical department and the colours were applied by the artist Ad Dekkers, who based his work on black-and-white reproductions of the model and Michel Seuphor's recollections. [7] The Belgian had written colour indications accompanying reproductions of Kertész's photographs in a copy of his publication *Théâtre anti théâtre* from 1963.²⁵ The result was examined by Seuphor in Dekkers's studio.²⁶ An undated inventory card of the Van Abbemuseum reveals there were already doubts about the correctness of the reconstruction at the time. In addition to metadata such as title, maker and dimensions, the card contains the following remark: 'Due to a misunderstanding, some parts have been executed incorrectly'.²⁷ Yet this reconstruction deserves our attention precisely because of Seuphor's cooperation. Our comparison is a reprise of a similar exercise by Carel Blotkamp, who already discussed the Eindhoven reconstruction in an article, without, however, having access to the sketches on the back of the photograph auctioned in 2018.²⁸



FIG. 7 Van Abbemuseum (model), Ad Dekkers (color) and Michel Seuphor (directions). Reconstruction of stage set for the play *L'éphémère est éternel* by Piet Mondrian, 1964, 53.2 x 76.7 x 26.2 cm, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

In his article, Blotkamp critically examines the reconstruction on the basis of the well-known photographs. First of all, he observes that the proportions of the reconstruction are correct but that it is larger (i.e., 53.5 x 76.5 x 26.5 cm) than Mondrian's piece was (estimated at 30 x 44 x 14 cm) and that the first makes 'a much cleaner impression' than the original. However, his interpretation of the colours is most interesting. He takes into account that in old black-and-white photographs, dark/light differences turn out very differently than we experience them in coloured reality; for example, yellow comes across as rather dark, while blue becomes lighter; original grey tones and colours in photographs can also be confused. 'Taking all this into account,' writes Blotkamp, 'the reconstructed scale model seems to be largely correct with regard to the stage frame and the backdrops for the various acts'. He does, however, doubt the yellow plane at the bottom centre of the backdrop of the first act, both from the grey shades of the (reproduced) photographs and from the (understandable) argument that such a second yellow plane is difficult to reconcile with the proximity of the large yellow plane on the frame [1]. The sketches show that the plane referred to indeed had to be blue. The argument advanced, however, does not seem to have played a role for Mondrian: the plane at the top right of the second backdrop, which is blue in the reconstruction (and for which Blotkamp does not propose any change), should be yellow according to the sketch, bordering directly on the large yellow plane on the frame. What is remarkable here is the white(?) line, closing off the yellow plane on the stage frame at the bottom. It is exceptional, if not unique, for Mondrian, in this phase of neoplasticism, to enclose a coloured plane with a white line. Although later studio photographs show that he did not correct this, the white line is not indicated in the sketch on the back of the photograph. However, the same applies, for example, to the black horizontal line that divides the right part of the stage frame into two planes.

It is not entirely clear to which planes the 'Gris' (grey) at the bottom left of the sketch of the second backdrop refers. Our impression is that, by writing the word diagonally across both the left-hand plane and the horizontal lower plane, he meant that both surfaces should be grey. This was also done in the reconstruction, but many other areas that do not have a colour indication in Mondrian's sketches were also executed in shades of grey. This remains unsolved: did the unmarked parts all have to be white? In our opinion, the photographs do not justify using the rather dark grey tones of the Van Abbemuseum reconstruction on the right-hand part of the stage frame. It is, of course, quite possible that Mondrian had grey in mind for some of the sections in question; he also used a number of variants of grey in his paintings during these years. It is unclear whether Seuphor remembered the grey exactly as it was applied by Ad Dekkers. It is not inconceivable that Seuphor allowed himself some freedom in this – and the above proves he could well have been mistaken here and there. If Mondrian actually intended all unmarked planes

to be white, then the original set must have had a much cooler look than the reconstruction by Seuphor/Dekkers.

New insights – new reconstruction?

After the Van Abbemuseum's attempt, Mondrian's set has been reconstructed several more times, both in (approximately) actual size and in the format originally intended for the performance. In 1968, for example, a performance of *L'éphémère est éternelle* by theatre group Il Parametro was staged in Milan in the set designed by Mondrian, reconstructed by the Italian painter Carlo Nangeroni.²⁹ In 1972, the play was published in a French-Italian-English edition by the Turin publishing house Martano. Seuphor once again contributed to this publication; he wrote a short introduction about the creation of both the text and the design. An artist's impression of Mondrian's decor adorns the cover of the book. In a number of places, it differs strikingly from the reconstruction of the Van Abbemuseum. This can probably be explained by the fact that the Italians relied on black-and-white photographs of the Eindhoven reconstruction, for which they had to fill in the colour themselves. This would at least explain the large red plane closing off the stage frame and part of the stage floor at the bottom left.

Set designer Claude Confortès also seems to have based his work for the 1979 staging by the Théâtre de l'Esprit Frappeur in Brussels and Paris on the original Van Abbemuseum reconstruction. This can be concluded from the dark grey sections on the right-hand side of the stage frame. In 1982, the piece was performed at The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden by the Smithsonian Institution Division of Performing Arts. The brochure produced on that occasion reports that the reconstructions were made by Joe Shannon and Bob Allen, although no photographs of the reconstruction are included. Photographs of the 1964 reconstruction were, however, used, confirming again the status of that model as the generally accepted reconstruction.

Finally, the model is also included in the two life-size reconstructions of Mondrian's Paris studio; Frans Postma's from 1994 and the one in the Mondriaanhuis Amersfoort by Bob Kauffman from around 2009. Here, too, we see the same shades of grey in the stage frame that have been used since 1964, but may be misinterpretations of Seuphor's sketch. The fact that the model reconstructed by Ad Dekkers and Michel Seuphor is still regarded as the standard version fifty years later says something about the authority attributed to Seuphor in particular. However, the vintage photographs that turned up and especially the sketch on the back of one of them would justify a new attempt at a meticulous reconstruction.

Notes

- 1 Auction 1st June 2018, lot 79: André Kertész - Untitled (Three stage sets designed by Piet Mondrian for 'L'éphémère est éternel'); see <https://www.lempertz.com/en/catalogues/lot/1109-1/79-andre-kertesz.html>. With thanks to Lempertz's auction house for making the high-quality scans of the photographs available.
- 2 Although the glass negatives are not part of Kertész's legacy, the authorship of the photographs has been confirmed repeatedly by Michel Seuphor; for example in a letter to Joop Joosten dated 21 February 1991 [The Hague, RKD - Netherlands Institute for Art History, archive Joop Joosten, file B174], and Frans Postma, 26, rue du Départ. *Mondrian's studio in Paris, 1921-1936*, Berlin 1995, 14. Although most of the glass negatives have been preserved, the studio photograph reproduced in this article (FIG. 4) by Kertész in 1926 at Mondrian's is not part of the Donation André Kertész [Paris, Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Paris].
- 3 Charles de Mooij & Maureen Trappeniers, *Piet Mondriaan. Een jaar in Brabant 1904-1905*, Zwolle 1989, 14.
- 4 Postma, 26, rue du Départ, 40.
- 5 Matthias Wagner, "But rooms like these require new men" - Piet Mondrian's room for Ida Bienert', in *Visionary Spaces. Kandinsky, Mondrian, Lissitzky and the Abstract-Constructivist Avant-Garde in Dresden 1919-1932*, Dresden (Albertinum) 2019, 157.
- 6 The exhibition P. Mondrian - Man Ray - Kurt Schwitters was on during the month of September at Kunstaussstellung Kühl & Kühn in Dresden. See the photograph of the arrangement of the room in: Wietse Coppes, 'From the archive of Joop M. Joosten: a German Mondrian exhibition (1925) pictured', *RKD Bulletin* 2017/1, 4.
- 7 Andreas Dehmer, "une chose très bien Neo-Plasticienne". Zwei unveröffentlichte Briefe von Piet Mondrian zur Internationalen Kunstaussstellung Dresden 1926', *Dresdener Kunstblätter* 2019/1, 22-31.
- 8 P. Mondrian, 'De realiseering van het Neo-Plasticisme in verre toekomst en in de huidige architectuur [2]', *De Stijl* 5 (1922) 5 (May), 68; the word 'form-expression' is in bold there; spaced text in periodical is reproduced here in italics.
- 9 *De Stijl* 5 (1922) 3 (March), 41.
- 10 Michel Seuphor, *L' éphémère est éternel. Teatro antiteatro*, Turin 1972. In 1958, Seuphor wrote that the piece was written in March or April 1926 [Michel Seuphor, 'Les arts plastiques et le spectacle-theatre. Mondrian', *Aujourd'hui, Art et architecture* 3 (1957-58) 1 (May 1958), 40]. That, in other cases too, Seuphor's recollections were not always consistent is also evident from the next note.
- 11 Seuphor, *L' éphémère est éternel. Teatro antiteatro*, 74. In his monograph on Mondrian, Seuphor wrote that he read the text to Mondrian [Michel Seuphor, *Piet Mondrian. Life and work*, New York 1956, 194]. According to Henri-Floris Jaspers, Seuphor returned to Paris in or shortly after April 1926. During the seven preceding months, Seuphor had travelled through Europe, from Antwerp to Naples and from Menton to Budapest [Michel Seuphor, *Het vergankelijke is eeuwig. Een theatertekst met decors van Mondriaan met een inleiding van Henri-Floris Jaspers*, Antwerp 1999, 22-25].
- 12 Seuphor claimed in 1972 that Mondrian made the model on his own initiative [Seuphor, *L' éphémère est éternel. Teatro antiteatro*, 74]. In September 1926, however, a Dutch journalist wrote that 'our compatriot was requested to create a "colour atmosphere" for this'. [W.F.A. Röell, 'Bij Piet Mondriaan', *De Telegraaf* 12, September 1926, our italics].
- 13 Henri-Floris Jaspers in Seuphor, *Het vergankelijke is eeuwig*, 26-27.
- 14 Letter Piet Mondrian to J.J.P. Oud, 20 December 1926 [Paris, Fondation Custodia, 1972-A.428].
- 15 On 19 August 1926, Kertész recorded a visit to Mondrian's studio in his diary for the first time; this therefore seems to have been the first visit [M. Frizot & A. Wanaverbecq, *André Kertész*. Paris 2010, 328].
- 16 Seuphor's recollection that the photograph was taken in October-November 1926 seems to be inconsistent with the wide-open window [Postma, 26, rue du Départ, 74].
- 17 The Belgian painter and sculptor Georges Vantongerloo had ended up in the Netherlands as a wartime refugee in 1914, where he became friends with Theo van Doesburg and became involved in *De Stijl*.
- 18 The lecture was printed in the magazine *Conferancia* no. 18 (5 September 1927), 308-316. Mallet-Stevens briefly discussed Mondrian's set design: 'Mondrian, l'artiste hollandais bien connu pour ses recherches de couleurs et de lignes simples, a conçu des décors faits de carrés et de rectangles polychromes pour la

pièce L'Ephémère est Eternel. Cet essai très curieux doit souligner profondément l'action.' (With thanks to Sjoerd van Faassen.)

- 19 This photograph was reproduced in the book edited by Paul Citroen, *Palet. Een boek gewijd aan de hedendaagsche Nederlandsche schilderkunst*, Amsterdam 1930, 77, and thus contributed further to the reputation of the design.
- 20 Harry Holtzman, 'Piet Mondrian's Environment part 2', in *Mondrian: The Process Works*, London (Pace Gallery) 1970, 5.
- 21 Kertész used a Goertz Ango Anschutz camera during this period. At 10 x 12.5 cm, the rear standard of this camera type roughly corresponds to the size of the photographs [Frizot & Wanaverbecq, *André Kertész*, 328].
- 22 We make grateful use of Carel Blotkamp's insights, which he shared with us by e-mail dated 13 May 2020.
- 23 Seuphor, *L'éphémère est éternel. Teatro antiteatro*, 74.
- 24 The auction catalogue *Photographie/Photography* by Lempertz (June 1 & 2, 2018) successively mentions: Nachlass Eberhard Steneberg; Eckhard Neumann, Frankfurt; Privatsammlung. Deutschland. In the exhibition catalogue *Mondrian* (Centre Pompidou, Paris 2010), 298, there is also a vintage photograph of the stage decor printed with the provenance: private collection, via Galerie Françoise Paviot. The dimensions of 9 x 14 cm mentioned with the photograph suggest this is a print from a private collection other than the latter in the Lempertz catalogue.
- 25 A photocopy of Michel Seuphor's copy, *Théâtre anti théâtre* (1963), owned by Ad Dekkers, containing Seuphor's instructions, is in the Joop Joosten archives [The Hague, RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, file B178]. This shows that Seuphor indicated, among other things, that Mondrian had used different shades of grey. For reference, Seuphor could rely on original prints of at least two of the three photographs made by Kertész, as is apparent in a letter to Joosten from 1991.
- 26 Carel Blotkamp, 'Verwickelingen rond een toneeldecor van Piet Mondriaan', in Ankie de Jongh-Vermeulen et al. (ed.), *Mondrian Montparnasse*, Amersfoort 2005, 78-79.
- 27 Unfortunately, the imperfections were not specified. A photocopy of the inventory card is part of the Joop Joosten archives mentioned in note 25.
- 28 Blotkamp, 'Verwickelingen rond een toneeldecor van Piet Mondriaan', 78.
- 29 Blotkamp, 'Verwickelingen rond een toneeldecor van Piet Mondriaan', 82.

De compacte rijwoning: Woning Vermaercke van Gaston Eyselinck, 1937-38

Gedurende eeuwen vormde het rijhuis de kern van het compacte stedelijk weefsel. Naar gelang de beschikbare perceelbreedte ontwikkelde zich een planconcept waarbij verschillende factoren bepalend zijn geweest. De gevelbreedte was een indicatie van iemands welstand en maatschappelijke positie. De plattegronden vertellen veel over de wijzigingen die zich hebben voorgedaan op het vlak van wooncultuur met een directe impact op de distributie van de functies. Uiterst belangrijk zijn de verschillende technische mogelijkheden die de mens introduceerde om zijn levenscomfort te verbeteren, zoals verwarming, sanitair en elektriciteit. Ook de aanleg van straatriolering in de eerste helft van de 20ste eeuw was bepalend voor veranderingen. Het toilet was achteraan gelegen met een directe aansluiting op een beerput. Door de aansluiting op een rioleringsnet kon het toilet naar voor komen, meestal geplaatst naast de voordeur. De omschakeling van open haarden naar gietijzeren kachels om uiteindelijk te worden vervangen door centrale verwarming had ingrijpende consequenties op de evolutie van de plattegrond van de rijwoning.

Victor Horta en het herdenken van de rijwoning

Veel auteurs legden er de nadruk op dat de bijdrage van Victor Horta (1863-1957) meer is geweest dan het bedenken van slanke plantaardige vormen en lijncomposities. Hij 'herdacht' de stedelijke rijwoning waarbij een specifieke vraagstelling van de opdrachtgever medebepalend werd in het gehele ruimtelijk concept tussen twee gesloten gemeenschappelijke muren. Het typegrondplan van de 19de-eeuwse rijwoning bestaat uit een voorkamer gericht naar de straat en een achterkamer met uitzicht op de binnenzijde van een stedelijk bouwblok. Horta herdenkt deze ordening. Terecht wordt de Woning Tassel (1893-95) beschouwd als een mijlpaal in de ontwikkeling van de moderne architectuur. De traditionele opdeling met individuele kamers en een afzonderlijk trappenhuis werd verlaten om tot een organisch geheel te komen, waarbij in het midden van het gebouw een oase ontstond van licht. De trap wordt ingezet als 'promenade architecturale' om het interieur te dynamiseren,

jaren voor Le Corbusier dit thema ontwikkelde. De straatgevel is de uitdrukking van de inwendige ordening, waarbij specifieke vragen van de bouwheer richtinggevend waren. Bij Tassel werd het mogelijk om diapositieven (lichtbeelden) te projecteren vanuit een kleine tussenverdieping met fotolaboratorium tot in de woonkamer.

In de architectuur in België van de jaren twintig lijkt het accent te liggen op de verschillende tuinvijken die werden gebouwd. De 'Cité Moderne' van architect Victor Bourgeois werd door de vele publicaties in de avant-garde tijdschriften synoniem van de vernieuwing die zich in België voordeed.¹ Gelijktijdig werden in de steden appartementen voor de begoede burgerij opgetrokken, uitgerust met het recentste comfort. Résidence Palace in Brussel (1923-26) van de Zwitserse architect Michel Polak was wat programma betreft grensverleggend in Europa.² Omwille van de eerder klassieke vormtaal komt deze 'pakketboot aan land' nauwelijks voor in overzichten van de Europese architectuur. Antwerpen kreeg een torengebouw, de 'Boerentoren' (1929-31), toen het hoogste wooncomplex in Europa. Bij de stedelijke uitbreidingen bleef de rijwoning een gebruikelijk basistype en werd ze vaak door aannemers opgetrokken zonder architect. In de jaren twintig werden er mappen uitgegeven voor arbeiderswoningen waarbij er varianten werden gepresenteerd van gevels zonder dat er sprake was van planvernieuwing.³ Het merendeel van de rijwoningen in de jaren dertig had geen garage. Met de komst van de auto werd de begane grond geleidelijk ingenomen als garage en verhuisde het woongedeelte naar de eerste verdieping.

De rijwoning tijdens de jaren twintig en dertig: Gaston Eysselincks inbreng

De jonge architect Gaston Eysselinck (1907-1953) maakte in 1927 en 1929 reizen naar Nederland. Onmiddellijk ziet men in de eerste werken daarna de invloed.⁴ Woning Serbruyns (1930) bezit een gevelcompositie met elementen die verwijzen naar Nederland en De Stijl. Eysselinck introduceerde een buitentrap naar de eerste verdieping, een ongebruikelijke oplossing die tot dan niet voorkwam in België. Het dakterras met horizontale en verticale vlakken en het gebruik van kleur is schatplichtig aan De Stijl.

Het jaar 1930 is een kantelmoment in het leven en werk van Eysselinck. Hij maakt in maart het eerste ontwerp voor zijn eigen woning in Gent waarbij de invloed van Le Corbusier de bovenhand krijgt.⁵ Hij huwt in de zomer en bezoekt Duitsland, onder meer de Weisenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart. In november 1930 neemt hij deel aan de bijeenkomst van het Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) in Brussel en staat hij op de legendarische groepsfoto van de Europese avant-garde. In 1931 en 1932 werkt hij aan zijn eigen woning en aan woning Peeters (1932) in Deurne.⁶



FIG. 1 Woning Vermaercke, Gentbrugge, 1937 [Foto: Design Museum Gent, archief Eysselinck]



FIG. 2 Woning Vermaercke, detail voorgevel
[Foto: Marc Dubois]

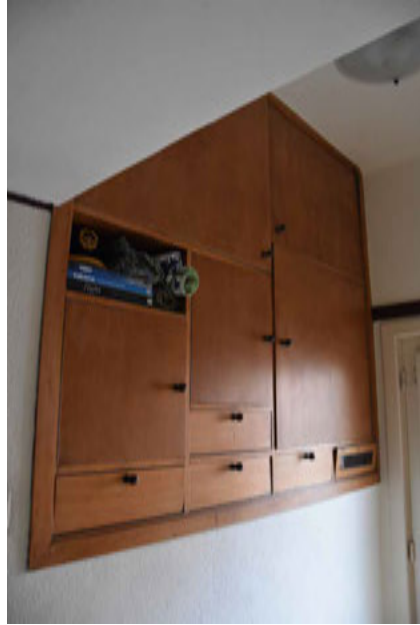


FIG. 3 Woning Vermaercke, detail kast naast
voordeur [Foto: Marc Dubois]

De invloed van Le Corbusier is bepalend voor de gevelopbouw van Woning De Waele (1933) in Gent. Een oefening om 'les fenêtres en longueur' te gebruiken evenals de 'façade libre'. Vooraan op de begane grond is een klein kantoor en het sanitair, met beide even hoge ramen.

In 1934 koopt Eysselinck een klein boekje met het werk van Adolf Loos.⁷ Dit betekent een ommekeer, Eysselinck verlaat een dogmatische toepassing van 'de vijf punten van de nieuwe architectuur'. De openingen in de gevel worden bepaald door het plan en de functie. In de gevel van woning Haerens (1935) komt dit tot uiting en er is ook een vernieuwing in planopdeling. Voor de eerste maal is de keuken gesitueerd aan de straatzijde. In 1937 krijgt Eysselinck voor deze rijwoning de Van de Ven-architectuurprijs, de belangrijkste onderscheiding in België in de jaren dertig.

De keuken in de moderne woning

Veel auteurs die zich toegedden op de ontwikkeling van de keuken verwijzen naar een uiterst belangrijke in 1913 in Amerika verschenen publicatie: *The New Housekeeping. Efficiency Studies in Home Management* van Christine Frederick.⁸

Daarin worden de ideeën verkondigd die Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915) ontwikkelde over de wetenschappelijk organisatie van de arbeid, gekoppeld aan de organisatie van de keuken. Via Engeland kreeg het boek van Frederick ook grote weerklank in Duitsland, in het bijzonder bij de ontwikkeling van de 'Frankfurter Küche' uit 1926, ontworpen door Grete Schütte-Lihotzky. De gehele avant-gardebeweging in Europa hechtte veel belang aan de woonverbetering waarbij de keuken een centrale plaats kreeg. De keuken werd gezien als een 'équipement' binnen het moderne huis, een goed uitgeruste machine waar elke plaats een functie heeft en elke functie een plaats. Ook bij Eysselinck wordt de rationeel geordende plattegrond, inclusief de keuken, de motor van de nieuwe architectuur. Niet alleen een goede schikking van de keuken wordt voor hem essentieel, ook de plaatsing van de keuken aan de straatzijde wordt een bijna vast gegeven vanaf 1935 met Woning Haerens.

Tijdens de CIAM-bijeenkomst in Brussel in 1930 was de expositie *Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum* te zien. Daarnaast was er ook de presentatie van de CUBEX-keuken ontworpen door architect L.H. De Koninck in opdracht van de firma Van de Ven.⁹ In 1933 brengt het Franse tijdschrift *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'Hui* een themanummer uit rond diverse aspecten van de moderne keuken.¹⁰

Woning Vermaercke (1937-38)¹¹

In Eysselincks reeks rijwoningen uit de jaren dertig is Woning Vermaercke in de Gentse deelgemeente Gentbrugge de interessantste [1].¹² Door de zichtbare buitentrap en de twee voordeuren wijkt de woning sterk af van de toen gangbare typologie. De gevelcompositie is echter niet de resultante van een formele preoccupatie, zij is het logisch gevolg van een ander planconcept. [2] De eerste deur geeft toegang tot een fietsenberging, de andere tot de woning. Zoals in woning Haerens ligt de keuken aan de straatzijde, maar door de insprong wordt het zicht vanuit de keuken naar buiten aanzienlijk vergroot. De keuken had een opendraaiend houten raam waardoor de huisvrouw de boodschappen, die toen aan huis werden gebracht, in ontvangst kon nemen. Door de ligging van de keuken is er de mogelijkheid voor een vuilniskoker. De vuilnisemmer kan men rechtstreeks via een klein deurtje op straat zetten. Al deze kleine voordelen zijn er om het leven van de huisvrouw te verbeteren. De voordeur heeft een groot metalen netwerk met daarachter een beglaasd opendraaiend deel. Dit laat toe bij warm weer een natuurlijke ventilatie te hebben terwijl de voordeur gesloten blijft. De brievenbus werd geïntegreerd in een ingebouwde kast naast de voordeur. [3]

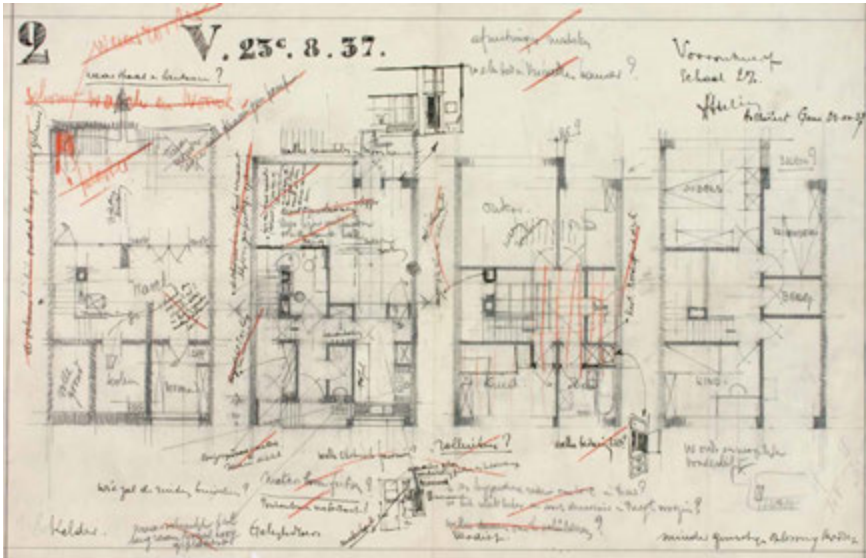


FIG. 4 Woning Vermaercke, voorontwerp december 1937 [Foto: Design Museum Gent, archief Eysseleinck]

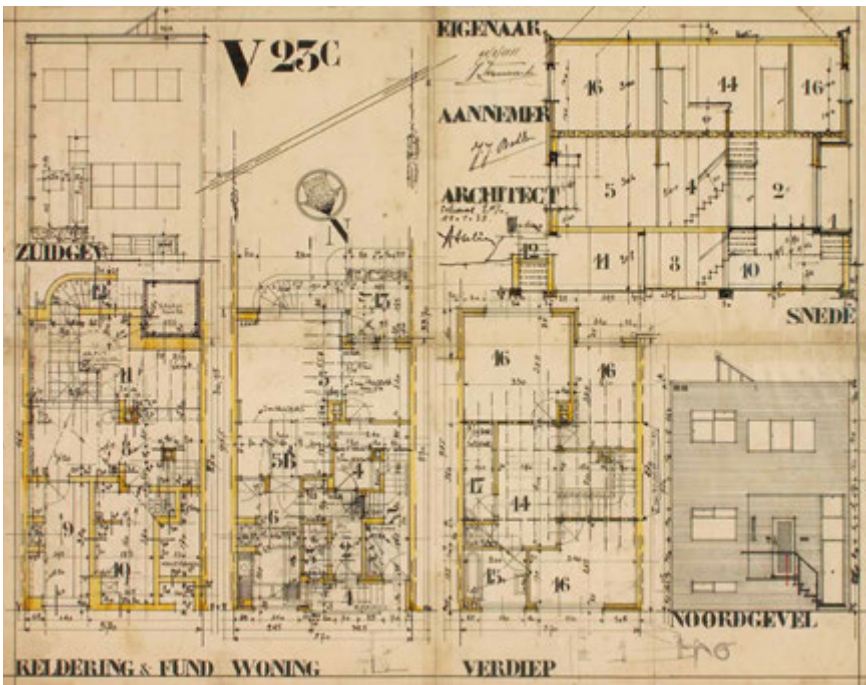


FIG. 5 Woning Vermaercke, plattegronden, gevels en doorsnede [Foto: Design Museum Gent, archief Eysseleinck]

In het archief is een tekening met de plattegronden bewaard, gedateerd 23 december 1937. Het voorontwerp werd besproken met de bouwheer en op de tekeningen zijn een aantal notities aangebracht. [4] Eysselinck toonde alleen plattegronden, geen gevels. Gevels kwamen steeds op het einde van het ontwerpproces. De definitieve plannen voor de bouwaanvraag werden de eerste dagen van januari opgesteld en door de bouwheer ondertekend op 11 januari 1938. Zoals bij Eysselincks andere rijwoningen wordt alles op één vel kalkpapier getekend, een rationele ordening. [5]

Er is een aantal aanpassingen, zoals de verplaatsing van de keuken van rechts naar links. De positionering van de binnentrap wordt geoptimaliseerd om minder ruimte in te nemen. Boven de trapruimte is een lichtkoepel voorzien. [6] In tegenstelling tot de 19de-eeuws rijwoning met schouwmantels tegen de zijmuren kiest Eysselinck om de schouw voor de centrale verwarming te situeren in de trapruimte, een efficiënte oplossing, zodat niet de muren van de burens maar het eigen huis werd opgewarmd.

Door het verhogen van de toegang ontstaat een grotere privacy. Inkijk van op het voetpad in de keuken wordt geëlimineerd. Hierdoor ontstaat ook een andere relatie tussen de woning en de publieke ruimte. Eysselinck groepeerde de hal, de keuken, de trap, het toilet en de berging in het voorste deel van de woning, wat toelaat het achterste gedeelte met eet- en woonkamer optimaal te verbinden met de tuin. Het principe van een 'zondags salon' met zicht op de straat, in het Frans vaak omschreven als 'Belle Place', wordt door Eysselinck verlaten.

Het optillen van het woongedeelte heeft extra voordelen. De kelderverdieping heeft een klein raampje aan de straatzijde en dat verlicht de wasruimte. Hier voorzag hij een klein liftje om onder andere kledij naar de kelderverdieping te brengen. Eysselinck beschouwde dit als een belangrijk onderdeel van het 'équipement' van de moderne woning. Vanuit deze semi kelderdieping was een directe verbinding met de tuin om de natte was op te hangen.

Eysselincks invloed

In 1938 krijgt Woning Jansens in Deurne de Van de Ven-architectuurprijs, een bescheiden rijwoning ontworpen door Renaat Braem en Marc Segers.¹³ Ook hier is de keuken aan de straatzijde geplaatst.



FIG. 6 Woning Vermaercke, trapruimte met bovenaan lichtkoepel [Foto: Marc Dubois]

In 1945 wordt een foto van Woning Vermaercke gepubliceerd in het tijdschrift *La Maison*.¹⁴ In de jaren vijftig, toen het autobezit nog gering was, kreeg Eysselincks voorbeeld navolging in de woning van de interieur- en meubelontwerper Jos De Mey. [7] Dit gebeurde in samenwerking met de oudere architect Albert Vergaert, een generatiegenoot van Eysselinck. De keuken is vooraan met uitzicht op straat. In de toelichting staat vermeld dat voor de verhouding beroep werd gedaan op Le Corbusiers Modulor.¹⁵ Ook in de gemeente Vilvoorde nabij Brussel werden kleine rijwoningen gebouwd met de keuken en toilet vooraan. Het is het werk van de architecten Lucien Engels en Roger De Winter.¹⁶ Woning Mannaerts uit 1950 is de eerste in een reeks compacte woningen.

Na 1960 krijgen meer en meer rijwoningen een garage op de begane grond en verhuist het wonen, inclusief de keuken, naar de eerste verdieping. Het Gentse bureau BARO bouwt eind de jaren zestig een rijwoning waarbij de keuken vooraan is gesitueerd op de eerste verdieping.¹⁷ [8] Deze jonge architecten hadden grote waardering voor het werk van Eysselinck en in het bijzonder voor de eigen woning. Ook in Woning Cleyman in Gent (1973) met splitlevel opbouw opteerden de architecten Raman & Schaffrath om de keuken vooraan op de eerste verdieping te plaatsen.¹⁸

De Woning Vermaercke is vrij intact bewaard gebleven, zowel wat de architectonische details betreft, als het vast meubilair. Alleen de kleine lift voor was of eten werd gesupprimeerd om een ijskast te kunnen plaatsen.

Omwille van deze typologisch boeiende oplossing werd Woning Vermaercke in 1995 op de monumentenlijst geplaatst. Het is een interessant voorbeeld van een vernieuwende benadering voor een eeuwenoude bouwopdracht, een rijwoning tussen twee gesloten muren. Eysselinck plaatste zijn naam in de gevel, niet onderaan wat gebruikelijk is. De zijkant van de vloertegel ter hoogte van de inkomdeur was voor hem beter geschikt en voor de voorbijgangers goed leesbaar. Eysselinck, een gedreven functionalist was bewust van zijn kunnen en vakmanschap. De Europese avant-garde lanceerde het begrip 'Existenz-Minimum' met een rationeel geconcipteerd grondplan. De compacte rijwoning was Eysselincks antwoord op deze vraag voor de volkshuisvesting.

Plantypologie of stilistische kenmerken

Maar al te vaak wordt de bouwkunst gerangschikt volgens stijlkenmerken, als Art Nouveau, Art Déco, Modernisme, Nieuwe Zakelijkheid. Deze stilistische begrippen vertellen niets over de mutatie en vernieuwing die zich hebben voorgedaan in plantypologie en veranderende distributiepatronen en ruimteontwikkeling.

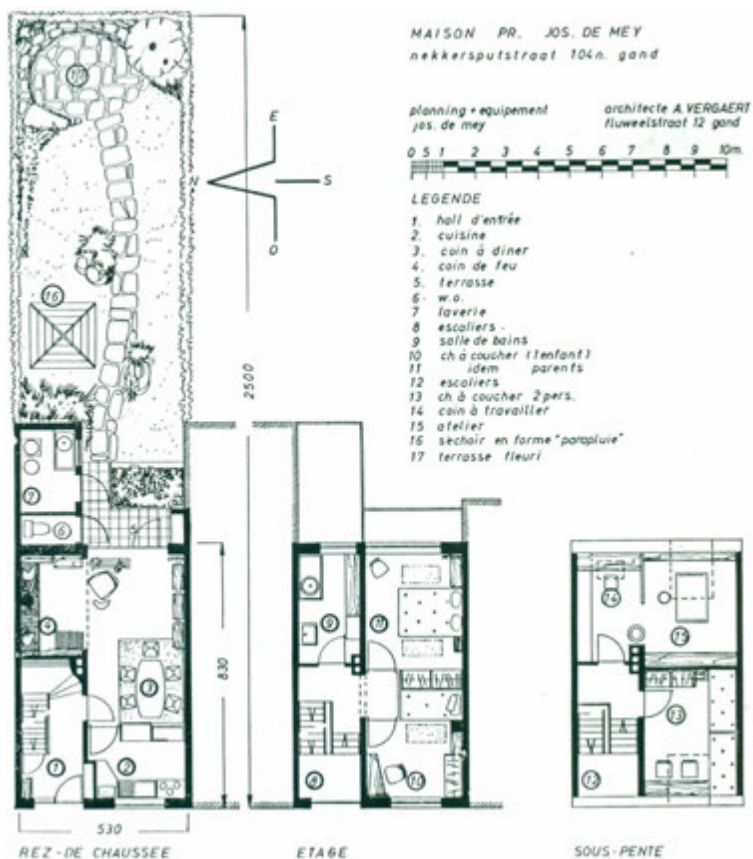


FIG. 7 Woning Jos De Mey in samenwerking met architect Albert Vergaert, Gent, plattegronden [uit: La Maison 1957, nr. 2]

Een interessant voorbeeld kan men vinden in de stad van Eysselinck: het Museum voor Schone Kunsten (MSK) in Gent, ontworpen door de stadarchitect Charles Van Rysselberghe, de broer van de schilder Théo.¹⁹ Het gebouw uit 1900 werd door hem ook uitgebreid in 1912 in verband met de grote internationale expositie in 1913. Hij maakt gebruik van ronde zuilen en het geheel bezit een klassiek symmetrisch grondplan, voldoende redenen om gerangschikte te worden onder 'classicistisch'. De vernieuwing ligt in het subtiel transformeren van het klassiek museumplan naar iets nieuws zonder te kiezen voor een radicale breuk. Om zoveel mogelijk schilderijen te kunnen ophangen introduceerde Van Rysselberghe een inventieve oplossing. De zalen zijn met elkaar verbonden op de hoeken en niet in het midden zoals bij de meeste musea. In de eerste fase gaat het om een verbinding van drie zalen, in de tweede fase zelfs om twee knooppunten tussen vier zalen. In de klassieke musea gaat het om vrij identieke ruimtes, terwijl Van Rysselberghe een veelheid aan ruimtes introduceert.



FIG. 8 Woning Gardeline, Isidoor Devosstraat, Sint-Amansberg (Gent), 1968-69, Architect BARO / Eric Balliu & Johan Baele [Foto: Archief BARO, Jul Vandevelde]

Internationaal befaamde architecten die het MSK ontdekten, zagen direct het vernieuwende in het planconcept. Hans Hollein hernam deze ruimteverbinding in zijn museum Abteilberg in Mönchengladbach, dat in 1982 in gebruik werd genomen. In 1987 bezocht Álvaro Siza Vieira het MSK en was gefascineerd door de halfcirkelvormige ruimtes, een oplossing die hem inspireerde bij het ontwerp van de architectuurschool in Porto.²⁰

In 1990 kon ik de Engelse architect James Stirling het MSK tonen. Hij stond toen op het hoogtepunt van zijn loopbaan en genoot internationale waardering voor het nieuw museumgebouw in Stuttgart. Stirling was onder de indruk en vroeg mij waarom dit gebouw zo weinig is gekend. Zijn verbazing werd groter toe ik hem vertelde dat voor velen dit gebouw als ‘tweederangs’ wordt aanzien omdat het geen art nouveau kenmerken bezit. Met enige heftigheid benadrukte hij de vernieuwende aspecten zoals de hoekoplossingen en de wijze waarop Van Rysseberghe daglicht introduceerde in de eerste hemicyclus. Vernieuwing is niet uitsluitend een aangelegenheid van een vormtaal, het concipiëren van de ruimte en planconcept is even belangrijk.

Notes

- 1 Iwan Strauven & Maurice Culot, *De gebroeders Bourgeois. Architectuur en plastique pure*, Brussel 2005, 83.
- 2 Benoit Mihail, 'Michel Polak (1885-1948)', in Anne Van Loo (ed.), *Repertorium van de architectuur in België van 1830 tot heden*, Antwerpen 2003, 203; Maurice Culot, 1910-2010. *100 Ans d'architecture à Bruxelles / 100 jaar architectuur in Brussel*, Brussel 2011, 96-107.
- 3 *Maisons Modernes Ouvrières*, F. Salmain & Fils, Brussel [1933] (Librairie Spéciale des Arts du Bâtiment). Bevat geen tekst, alleen losse bladen (planches) met telkens de gevel en de plattegronden.
- 4 Marc Dubois, 'Aansluiting bij de Europese avant-garde: studiereizen van de Vlaamse architect Gaston Eysselinck in Nederland, 1927 & 1929', *Eigenbouwer* 3 (december 2014), 18-29.
- 5 Marc Dubois, *Gaston Eysselinck 1907-1953*, in de voetsporen van *Le Corbusier / Gaston Eysselinck 1907-1953*, in the footprints of *Le Corbusier*, Gent 2019.
- 6 Anne Verdonck & Marc Dubois, 'De woning Peeters in Deurne (1932-34) van Gaston Eysselinck', M&L, *Monumenten en Landschappen* 26 (2007) 5, 4-21; Yves De Bont, *Huis Peeters / The Peeters' House van / by Gaston Eysselinck 1932-1933*, Deurne 2017.
- 7 Franz Glüch, *Aldolf Loos*, Les Éditions G. Crès et Cie, Parijs 1931 (Collection 'Les Artistes Nouveaux').
- 8 Marjan Boot et al., *La casalinga riflessiva – La cucina rationale come mito domestico negli anni '20 e '30*, Rome 1983.
- 9 Arthur Rüegg, 'La contribution de De Koninck à "L'Habitation Nouvelle" / De Koninck's Contribution to the "New dwelling"', in Louis Herman De Koninck: *Architecte des années modernes – Architect of modern times*, Brussel 1989, 186-215.
- 10 [A.] Davy, 'Les Cuisines', *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* 4 (mei 1933), 49-75. In hetzelfde nummer (82-87) verscheen een tekst van Paulette Bernège over de ordening van de rationele keuken.
- 11 Dossier V 23 C 8 37. De V verwijst naar de opdrachtgever, 23 is het volgnummer van zijn dossiers / 8 en 37 maand en jaar van de opdracht
- 12 Marc Dubois, 'De rijwoning: een woningtype met een rijk verleden en een toekomst', *Vlaanderen* 259 (januari-februari 1996) (=Themanummer: *Rijwoning in Vlaanderen*), 8-32. *Woning De Wispelaere (1952-1953)* in Oostende is de laatste in de reeks met de keuken aan de straatzijde.
- 13 Francis Strauven, *Renaat Braem, architect*, Brussel 1983; Jo Braeken (ed.), *Renaat Braem 1910-2001, architect*, Brussel 2010.
- 14 Maurice Delétang, 'La petite maison familiale', *La Maison* nr. 7, oktober 1945, 219; dit is een publicatie zonder plattegronden.
- 15 [Anon.], 'Maison Familiale à Gand en collaboration A. Vergaert arch. et Jos. De Mey, architecte d'intérieurs', *La Maison* nr. 2, 1957, 48-49. Adres: Nekkerputstraat; de woning is ingrijpend verbouwd.
- 16 Geert Conaert, *Vilvoorde Staalkaart van moderne architectuur – Roger De Winter en Lucien Engels*, Leuven 2010; *Woning Marissens (1951)*, *Woning Vandervondelen (1952)*, *Woning Van Binst (1958)*. In de andere rijwoningen uit de jaren vijftig is reeds een garage aanwezig.
- 17 Geert Bekaert & Francis Strauven, *Bouwen in België 1945-1970*, Brussel 1971, 258-259.
- 18 Marc Dubois, 'De rijwoning: een woningtype met een rijk verleden en een toekomst', in *Vlaanderen*, Themanummer: *Rijwoning in Vlaanderen*, 259, januari-februari 1996, 8-32
- 19 Robert Hoozee & Kristien Daem, *Het gebouw van Charles Van Rysselberghe: Museum voor Schone Kunsten Gent / The building by Charles Van Rysselberghe: Museum of Fine Arts Ghent*, Gent 2007.
- 20 Marc Dubois, 'Een gebouw van Europese klasse / A building of European class', in *Hommage Robert Hoozee*, Gent 2014, 52-55, 213-214.

Beter, ruimer, mooier, gelukkiger Modelwoningen tijdens het interbellum in twee Haagse arbeiderswijken

Theo van Doesburg – de voorman van het avant-garde tijdschrift *De Stijl* die zijn hand nooit omdraaide voor boude uitspraken – verwachtte in 1926 ‘dat wij in de naaste toekomst alle meubels kunnen ontberen en [...] de vloer als enig en universeel “meubel” zullen benutten.’ Hij constateerde: ‘De woning zoveel mogelijk als één grote ruimte op te vatten en als zodanig voor verschillend gebruik en in overeenstemming met de moderne levenswijzen in te delen, is in bijna alle landen aan de orde gekomen,’ en refereerde in zijn artikel onder meer aan de utopische ‘woonmachine’ van Le Corbusier. Maar met minder nam hij vooralsnog ook wel genoegen, want hij prees Bruno Taut en diens *Die neue Wohnung: Die Frau als Schöpferin* (1924) om aan te geven dat niet alleen functionaristen als Le Corbusier dit ‘verjapaniseren’ van het interieur nastreefden.¹ [1] Het hoefde van Van Doesburg niet meteen al te voldoen aan de hoogste standaard, met kleine stapjes zou het doel ook wel worden bereikt. Eerder had hij al hoopvol geschreven dat een bewoner ‘in een modern geschilderd interieur vanzelf de behoefte zal gaan gevoelen aan frische blanke of geschilderde meubelen.’² Die uitspraak van destijds klonk inmiddels nogal braaf en heel wat minder extreem dan de ‘vloer’ als zitmeubel.

Modelwoningen en meubeltonstellingen werden, ook in Nederland, in de jaren twintig steeds vaker gebruikt om via zachte drang bewoners mee te krijgen in de moderniteit.³ Zo was midden 1927 in de Haagse arbeiderswijk Spoorwijk de tentoonstelling *Woninginrichting* te zien. Daar was een slaapkamer door de Haagse interieurarchitect Cor Alons in geel en zwart ontworpen – zelfs de gordijnen waren zwart – waarover een lokaal dagblad monkelde: ‘er zullen maar weinig arbeiders zijn, die daarvan niet zullen schrikken.’⁴ Maar niet alleen arbeiders werden verondersteld moeite met een dergelijke inrichting te hebben. Ook in middenstandsmilieus was er weerstand te overwinnen: schrijver P.J. Risseeuw, die in 1928 zijn huis in de 19de-eeuwse Haagse Lombokstraat – ‘dat, van buiten

hoe degelijk ouderwetsch ook, van binnen “modern” is gemeubileerd’ – door Alons liet inrichten, schreef: ‘Het was een sprong voor me, om met alle overlading in eigen huis af te rekenen. [...] We hebben wel gevoeld, dat ’t anders kon, maar zoo finaal bréken met al dat bekende, dat geijkte interieur-procedé [...] nee – wij waren voorzichtig!’⁵

Woningbouwprojecten

Om de woningnood te bestrijden, werden na de Eerste Wereldoorlog in veel Europese steden initiatieven tot omvangrijke woningbouwprojecten genomen. Daarbij werden niet alleen traditionalistische, maar ook vernieuwingsgezinde architecten ingeschakeld. In Nederland bouwde J.J.P. Oud, die in 1918 in dienst van de Gemeentelijke Woningdienst in Rotterdam kwam, bijvoorbeeld niet alleen gestapelde woningen in gesloten blokken zoals in Spangen (1918–20), maar tekende hij ook voor de laagbouw en het stedenbouwkundige concept van uitbreidingswijken als het Witte Dorp (1922), en in Den Haag ontwierp gemeentearchitect Willem Greve jr. wijken als Duindorp, Molenwijk en Spoorwijk met woningen voor de laagst betaalden; ‘minimum-woningen’ noemde de directeur van de Dienst Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting die.⁶

Een zeker idealisme speelde een rol bij veel van die nationale en internationale woningbouwprojecten: men streefde naar een harmonische samenwerking tussen de verschillende kunstdisciplines – dus ook architectuur en woninginrichting – die idealiter moest leiden tot een ‘nieuwe mens’. Binnen het functionalisme dat uit dat streven naar een ‘nieuwe mens’ voortvloeide, vormde het huishouden een speerpunt, aangezien ook op dat niveau technologische ontwikkelingen en Tayloriaanse rationalisatie geacht werden de komst van die nieuwe mens te bespoedigen.⁷ [2]

J.J.P. Oud, die in 1927 deelnam aan de iconische tentoonstelling *Die Wohnung* in Stuttgart, riep dat jaar de Nederlandse huisvrouwen op hun Duitse evenknieën te volgen die zich niet wensten zich te onderwerpen aan het conservatisme van de architecten en zelf een programma van eisen hadden opgesteld dat voortaan in nieuwbouwprojecten zou moeten worden gehonoreerd. ‘Het zou goed zijn als ook de Hollandsche vrouwen de hoofden bijeen staken om tot dergelijke “voorwaarden” te komen. Legt men ze daarna zijnen architect als bindende contractsbepaling op, zoo zal de nieuwe architectuur daarmede nog wel niet bereikt, maar toch een stap nader gebracht zijn,’ schreef Oud deugdzaam.⁸

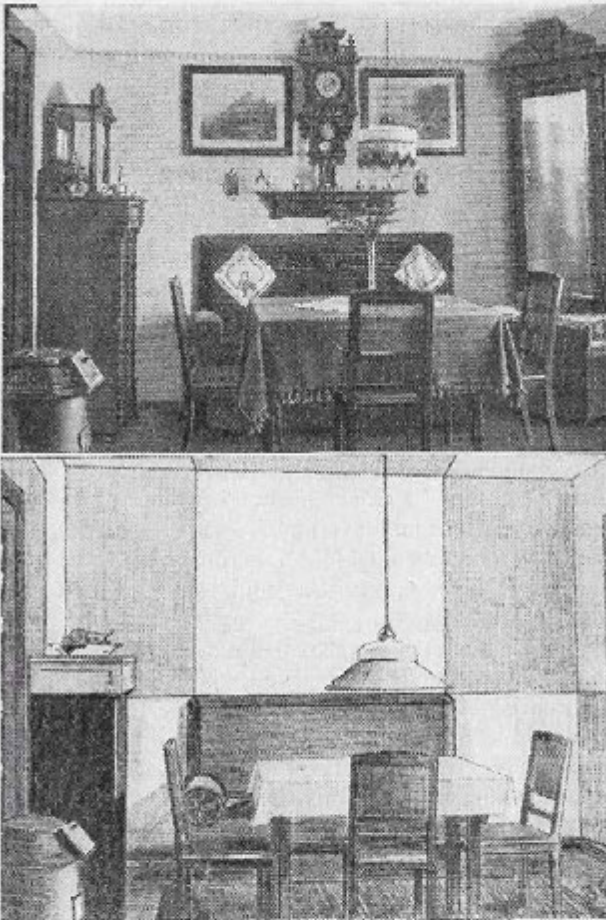


Abb. 43. Umgestaltung eines Arbeiterwohnzimmers.

Alle Möbel beibehalten, Korrektur der Stühle durch Schwarzleinenbezug, Spiegelglas am Kleiderschrank im Schlafzimmer angebracht, Regulator durch Taschenrechner überflüssig, Wände mit klarer Farbenaufteilung (dunkle Ecken hell), Sofa mit Leinenbezug, oberer Vertikoteil hell gestrichen, Lampe niedriger mit Papierschirm

57

FIG. 1 'Umgestaltung eines Arbeiterwohnzimmers', waarbij de meeste meubels behouden bleven, de bank opnieuw bekleed werd, de lamp vervangen en de wanden een kleur kregen [uit: Taut, Die neue Wohnung, 57]

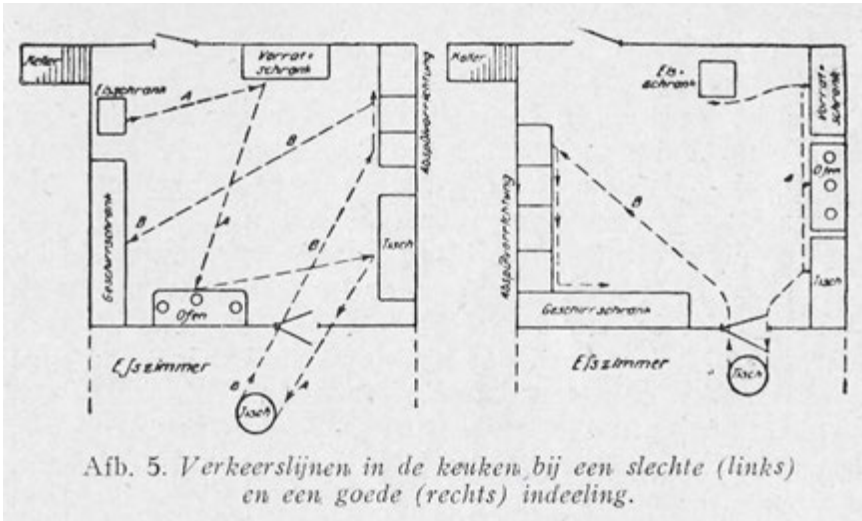


FIG. 2 Schema van de verkeerslijnen in de keuken bij een foutieve (links) en correcte (rechts) inrichting, afgebeeld in Jan Wils' bespreking van de herdruk van Tauts *Die neue Wohnung*. Taut ontleende dit schema aan *The New Housekeeping* van de Amerikaanse Christine Frederick, dat in 1928 onder de titel *De denkende huisvrouw* in het Nederlands was vertaald [uit: *Binnenhuis 10* (1928) 11 (24 mei), 156]



FIG. 3 Eetkamer met doorgeefluik naar de keuken in een van de huizen die Mart Stam bouwde in de Weissenhofsiedlung te Frankfurt, 1927

In steden als Stuttgart, Frankfurt en Karlsruhe werden woonwijken gebouwd met een voorbeeldfunctie – ter lering begeleid door een tentoonstelling.⁹ De Deutsche Werkbund, die de tentoonstelling in Stuttgart organiseerde, rolde het aangepaste concept zelfs uit over Duitsprekende landen als Oostenrijk, Tsjechoslowakije en Zwitserland.¹⁰ Architecten als Oud, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Bauhaus-directeur Walter Gropius, Frankfurter stadsarchitect Ernst May en anderen hadden niet alleen ideeën over de indeling van de door hen gebouwde woningen, maar ook uitgesproken opvattingen over het interieur. Ze wezen in hun ogen kneuterige ideeën over huiselijkheid af en streefden naar interieurs die strookten met de nieuwe architectonische opvattingen.¹¹ Nederland pakte het bescheidener, maar niet met minder ambitie aan. De door onder meer *De Stijl*, Bauhaus en Le Corbusier ontwikkelde modernistische concepten sijnelden wel degelijk in verdunde vorm door. Het idealisme bij deze woningbouwprojecten moet echter ook weer niet overdreven worden. Gerrit Rietveld – net als Oud medewerker van *De Stijl* – schreef nogal cynisch eind januari 1920 over de met zijn meubels ingerichte modelwoning in Spangen: ‘Maar laten wij toch niet zeggen, dat we werken om het volk te bevredigen, want bij het volk is er geen behoefte naar.’¹²

Minimum eisen, minimaal oppervlak

Die Wohnung werd op 23 juli 1927 geopend en trok meer dan een half miljoen bezoekers. Ze werd begeleid door een woningbouwproject dat onder de naam Weissenhofsiedlung bekendheid verwierf. De organiserende Deutsche Werkbund streefde naar een samenwerking van toegepaste kunst en architectuur met de industrie.¹³

Ter illustratie van de bedoelingen van de Werkbund werd naar ontwerp van zeventien architecten van diverse pluimage – onder wie zowel Oud als Stam – een wijk experimentele modelwoningen gebouwd, die de diverse mogelijkheden van een nieuwe manier van bouwen lieten zien.¹⁴ Ze weerspiegelden de idealen van het nieuwe bouwen: licht, lucht, ruimte, gezondheid, efficiency. ‘Experimenteeren voor wat betreft alle verbeteringen van huishoudelijken en constructieven aard is geoorloofd, [...] maar voorop staat dwingend de eisch van bruikbaarheid,’ formuleerde Oud.¹⁵ De inrichting van de huizen in de Weissenhofsiedlung schoot soms te ver door in haar moderniteit. Over het interieur in de huizen van Stam kermde Pali Meller, de bouwopzichter van Oud: ‘Dann Stam!!!! Das Gott erbarm. Wie ein junges Mädchen vom Lande die um 6h 10 vom Dorfe kam und um 7 h schon mondän sein wollte! Sein Wohnraum ist jetzt scheusslich. Bevor er möbliert war bluffte der Raum uns alle. Er war schön.’¹⁶ [3]

In deze periode werd ook elders in Duitsland nagedacht over de ideale woning, met de nadruk op sociale woningbouw. In Frankfurt werd in 1925-30 een ambitieus programma met arbeiderswoningen gerealiseerd door een groep architecten onder leiding van Ernst May.¹⁷ Die groep formuleerde richtlijnen met minimumeisen. In het blad *Das Neue Frankfurt* zou Stam in februari 1929 zijn artikel 'Das Maß, das richtige Maß, das Minimum-Maß' publiceren, waarin hij betoogde dat de moderne architectuur voor een menselijke maatvoering moest kiezen en de asociale 'Übermaß' moest bestrijden, die 'zeugt von Gewissenlosigkeit, von unsozialer Lebenshaltung besonders in einer Zeit, in der von vielen tausenden der arbeitenden Bevölkerung das Minimum an Wohn - und Lebensansprüchen unbefriedigt bleibt.'¹⁸ Ook werd in oktober 1929 in Frankfurt door het Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) – waarin een groot aantal functionalistische architecten (onder wie Stam) zich had verenigd – een bijeenkomst gewijd aan *Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum*. De inrichting van die woningen kwam daarbij eveneens aan de orde.¹⁹ CIAM-secretaris Sigfried Giedion wijdde er de omineuze publicatie *Befreites Wohnen* (1929) aan.

Dat 'Existenzminimum' was een veel, maar grotendeels over de rug van de doelgroep besproken onderwerp. Niet altijd tot genoegen van de toekomstige bewoners. Een spotversje in die tijd luidde: 'Du kannst mich mal in Dammerstock besuchen / Doch ganz allein, mein Schatz, es fehlt am Platz / Dort lernen selbst die frömmsten Menschen fluchen / Dreht man sich einmal um, fällt man gleich um!'²⁰ Dat sloeg op de in 1929 onder leiding van Gropius gebouwde Dammerstocksiedlung in Karlsruhe, waarvoor oorspronkelijk ook Oud een uitnodiging om mee te werken had ontvangen. Afhankelijk van het aantal kamers was de oppervlakte van de huizen in Dammerstock 45, 57 of 70 m². De bekende Berlijnse architectuurcriticus Adolf Behne schold de huizen uit voor een 'genauen Wohndiät', waarbij hij doelde op het in zijn ogen geringe oppervlakte van de woningen.

Twee Haagse arbeiderswijken

In Nederland was voor de Eerste Wereldoorlog 19% van de woningen een éénkamerwoning; 31% had 4 of meer vertrekken. De helft van het woningbestand telde dus slechts 2 of 3 kamers. Nog in 1936 zag Stam het feit dat in arbeidersgezinnen veel kinderen werden geboren als reëel probleem voor woninggrootte en -indeling.²¹

Na de oorlog werd er ter leniging van de woningnood miljoenen gestoken in de bouw van aanvankelijk volledig gesubsidieerde arbeiderswoningen. Zowel Duindorp als Spoorwijk was het resultaat van deze inhaalslag.²² Beide wijken

maakten deel uit van een in 1907-8 door H.P. Berlage ontwikkeld, maar pas in 1914 door de Provincie goedgekeurd uitbreidingsplan, dat vanaf 1918 in gewijzigde vorm en gebiedsgewijs ten uitvoer werd gebracht.²³ Zowel Duindorp als Spoorwijk lag enigszins geïsoleerd: Duindorp ligt in een hoek gevormd door de kustlijn en het in zee uitmondende Verversingskanaal, en werd pas in 1923 door een brug verbonden met het aan de andere kant van het kanaal gelegen vissersdorp Scheveningen; het in het zuidoosten van de stad gelegen Spoorwijk is van het centrum gescheiden door de spoorlijn Rotterdam-Amsterdam.

De huizen in Duindorp waren bedoeld ter vervanging van Scheveningse krotwoningen. De wijk (oorspronkelijk bekend als Afvoerkanaal-West) – waar in 1916-17 het eerste grote Haagse woningbouwproject werd gerealiseerd door Greve en Geert Albers – had iets weg van een tuindorp, want, al miste het een landelijk karakter, er was relatief veel groen en er heerste een grote sociale cohesie in de wijk die bevolkt werd door louter Scheveningers. Dat zie je terug in de plattegrond en de huizen. Duindorp I kende drie binnenhoven die via poortgebouwen met ronde doorgangen betreden konden worden, elk met een lage binnenring en een hoge buitenring, met daartussen balkons en privétuinen. De daardoor verkregen beslotenheid werd geacht de gezamenlijkheidszin te bevorderen. In de jaren 1920-27 werden Duindorp II, III en IV gebouwd met voornamelijk zogenoemde ‘woningen van lage huurwaarde’ in een traditioneel stratenpatroon met aaneengesloten bouwblokken. Deze huizen zweemden al enigszins naar de stijlkenmerken van de in Den Haag vigerende baksteenbouw die bekend staat als Nieuwe Haagse School. Er kwamen eengezinswoningen met zes kamers, boven- en benedenwoningen met respectievelijk drie en vier kamers, en etagewoningen van twee verdiepingen met op de begane grond en elke verdieping een woning met vier kamers.²⁴ Die huizen waren zeer gewild. De huren lagen tussen f 4,75 en f 6 per week. [4]

Het omvangrijkere Spoorwijk werd, eveneens tussen 1920 en 1930, gebouwd aan de zuidkant van het Laakkwartier, dat pas vanaf 1928 ontwikkeld zou worden. Hier lagen de huren tussen f 5 en f 6,55. Spoorwijk kende dicht op elkaar geplaatste laagbouwoningen met een schuine kap: boven- en benedenwoningen en eengezinswoningen. De huizen zijn voor het grootste deel ontworpen door Greve, ditmaal bijgestaan door Antoon Pet. Vergeleken met de huizen in het Duitse Dammerstock waarover enkele jaren later zo veel te doen zou zijn, waren die in Spoorwijk ruimer: 58 m² voor een bovenwoning met vier kamers, 75,5 m² voor een benedenwoning met evenveel kamers, en 93 m² voor een eengezinswoning met zes kamers.²⁵

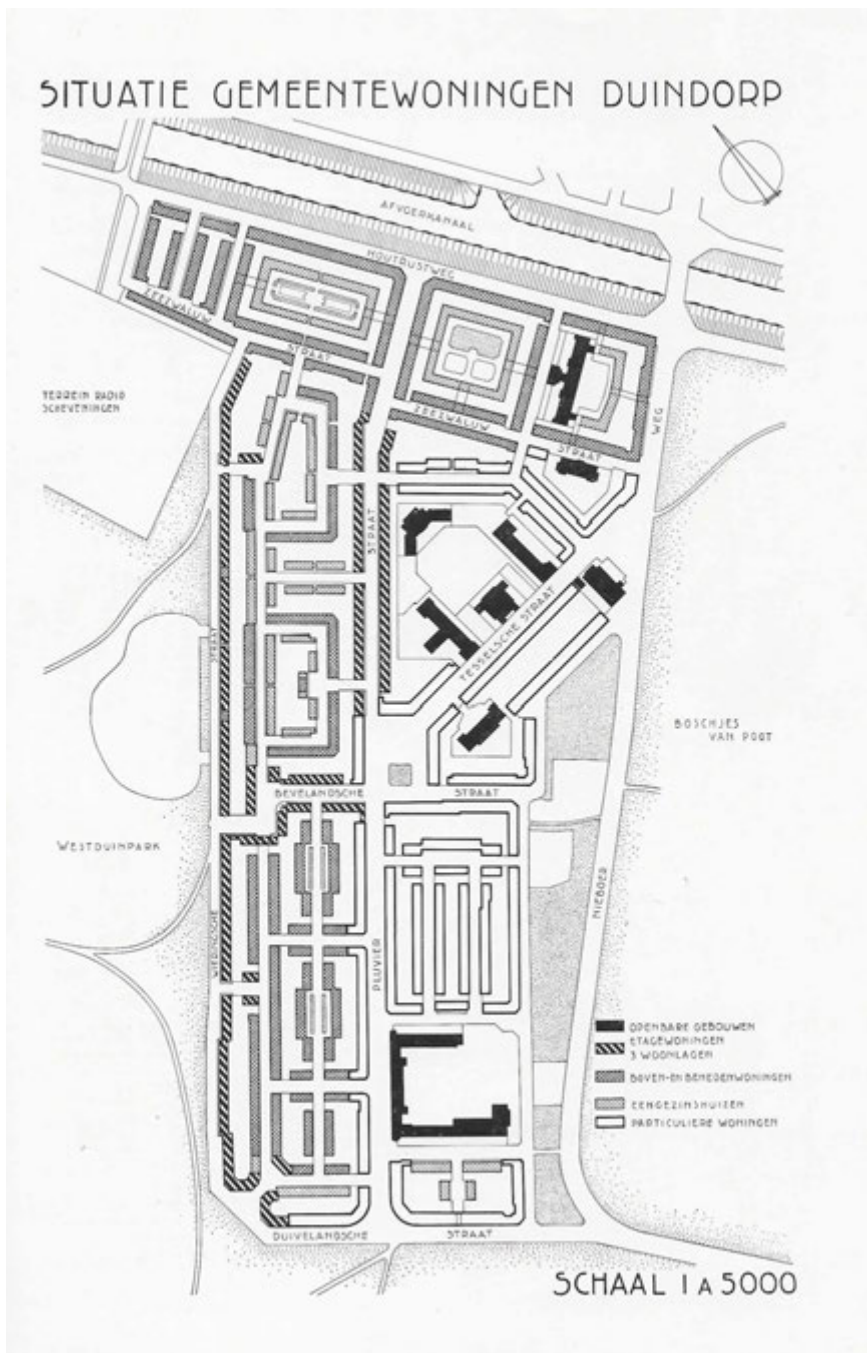


FIG. 4 Plattegrond van de gemeentewoningen in Duindorp [uit: Bakker Schut, *De volkshuisvesting te 's-Gravenhage*, 57]

Hoewel Greve begin jaren twintig in de Vogelwijk in Den Haag modern aandoende betonwoningen had gebouwd, waren aan de huizen in Duindorp en Spoorwijk modernistische opvattingen voorbij gegaan. De bakstenen huizen lieten een onopvallende architectuur zien die zich wat vormgeving betreft aanpaste aan de door Berlages rationalistische beginselen bepaalde conventies. Wel wees P. Bakker Schut, de directeur van de Dienst Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting in Den Haag, in een bespreking van de midden 1920 in Den Haag gehouden *Nationale Hygiëne Tentoonstelling* op de toenemende aandacht voor toetredend zonlicht, gemeenschappelijke groenvoorzieningen, goed geventileerde slaapkamers, een aparte keuken, en aansluiting op riolering, water- en gasleiding, elektriciteitsnet en closets met waterspoeling ('ook voor arbeiderswoningen overal waar deze aansluitingen mogelijk zijn').²⁶ Bakker zal daarbij ongetwijfeld ook het oog hebben gehad op de woningen die Albers en Greve hadden gebouwd in Duindorp.

Goed van vorm: modelwoningen in Duindorp, 1924

In 1924 werden zowel in Spoorwijk als in Duindorp in enkele woningen meubels tentoongesteld als voorbeeld voor de bewoners hoe hun huizen op een moderne manier in te richten. Uitgangspunt was het beter benutten van de ruimte, vaak door plaatsing van meubels langs de wand waardoor meer bewegingsvrijheid verkregen werd, veel kastruimte, gebruik van opklapbedden enzovoorts. Die opvoedkundige pogingen ervoeren sommigen als te opdringerig. Rietveld had bijvoorbeeld in 1920 geschreven over de modelwoning in Spangen die met zijn meubels was ingericht, dat hij bang was dat ze 'geen weldaad voor de menschheid' waren, en daarom: 'Laat het vooral niemand opgedrongen worden.'²⁷ En Van Doesburg klaagde in zijn artikelenreeks 'De beelding van het interieur': 'In onzen tijd heeft zich het bewuste streven naar eenheid en stijl in architectuur en intérieur, meubels, gebruiksvoorwerpen, enz., zoo buitengewoon en internationaal ontwikkeld, dat de vrees voor een overschatting van het materiele leven [...] niet ongegrond is.'²⁸ Die overschatting was echter precies wat een aantal goedbedoelende publicisten in deze periode juist wél liet zien. Jan Wils, die als architect moet worden gesitueerd tussen *De Stijl* en de Nieuwe Haagse School, publiceerde begin jaren 1920 een tweedelig werk over woningbouw, waarvan het tweede gewijd was aan woninginrichting. Het boekje van Wils paste in een reeks publicaties van uitgevers als De Arbeiderspers, Brusse, Kosmos en Wereldbibliotheek – niet voor niets, op Kosmos na, uitgeverijen met een sociaaldemocratische signatuur – waarin aan de hand van afbeeldingen van interieurs adviezen over woninginrichting werd gegeven. Een tafel, stoel of kast mocht volgens Wils 'geen toevallig aanwezig stuk zijn' maar moest 'in een nauwen samenhang staan met al het verder aanwezige': 'Een meubel moet het

gevoel van op die plaats onontbeerlijk te zijn om de architectonische werking van het interieur te verhoogen, opwekken.²⁹

In Duindorp was vanaf 11 oktober 1924 ter gelegenheid van de oplevering van het tweede gedeelte van de wijk door de Dienst Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting gedurende enkele weken in de huizen Wieringschestraat 266, 268, 270 en 274 een tentoonstelling ingericht om bewoners te tonen 'hoe de woningen het best en voordeelgst smaakvol kunnen worden ingericht'.³⁰ De tentoonstelling was een reprise van de tentoonstelling die eerder dat jaar in Spoorwijk op Hildebrandplein 3 t/m 6 te zien was geweest.

In Wieringschestraat 270 werd met behulp van foto's en dergelijke aandacht besteed aan andere wijken. Nummer 268, een bovenwoning, was door inspectrices van Centraal Woningbeheer ingericht met 'eenvoudige meubelen, welke algemeen in den handel verkrijgbaar zijn'. Stichting Centraal Woningbeheer beheerde sinds 1921 de gemeentewoningen om een onpartijdige woningtoewijzing te garanderen. Verhuurd werd alleen aan degenen 'van wie op goede gronden een behoorlijke bewoning en een geregelde huurbetaling mogen worden verwacht'.³¹ De bedoeling van de modelwoning was dat bewoners verder keken dan de 'producten van goedkope meubelmagazijnen, de traditioneele gepolitoerde stoelen met "gebeeldhouwde" leuning en grillig belijnde tafel voor de mooie kamer en al die andere, echt burgerlijke prullerie meer'. De tentoonstelling moest hen laten zien dat 'iets om goed van vorm te wezen niet bepaald duur hoeft te zijn en dat door met een juist gebruik van op zichzelf weinig kostbaar materiaal reeds iets aardigs en min of meer karakteristieks bereikt kan worden.' Een vermeldenswaardige bijzonderheid was kennelijk dat er in een slaapkamer 'een hoogst eenvoudige, maar zeer doelmatige waschtafel' was geplaatst, 'welke eigenlijk in geen der woningen zou mogen ontbreken'. De getoonde meubels werden geacht binnen het bereik van de toekomstige bewoners te liggen. De inrichting van de woonkamer kwam op circa f 325, die van de slaapkamer (inclusief beddengoed) op f 190 en die van de keuken op f 100. Een gemiddeld weekloon lag tussen f 30 en f 40, dus dat moeten forse prijzen geweest zijn.³²

Binnenhuisarchitect J.C. Lecointre, die eerder bij Berlage en de Haagse meubelfabriek H. Pander en Zonen had gewerkt en sinds 1918 zelfstandig was gevestigd, had in Spoorwijk Hildebrandplein 5 en 6, twee bovenwoningen, mogen inrichten.³³ Nu, in de Wieringschestraat in Duindorp, had hij benedenwoning nr. 266 ingericht. Hij had die opdracht ongetwijfeld bemachtigd omdat hij het jaar ervoor, op verzoek van de vereniging Kunst aan Allen en op instigatie van Bakker Schut, in de gloednieuwe Braamstraat in de Heesterbuurt in een van de eerste drie gereedgekomen benedenwoningen ('voor de kleinen middenstand') een 'proeve van het eenvoudig en met smaak ingerichte Hollandsch binnenhuis' had laten zien.³⁴



FIG. 5 Interieur modelwoning J.C. Lecointre, Hanenburglaan, Den Haag [uit: De Rijk, *De Haagse Stijl*, 131]

Eind 1923 had Lecointre bovendien op eigen initiatief in de niet al te ver van Duindorp liggende Hanenburglaan naast zijn eigen woonhuis, op nr. 234, een modelwoning ingericht.³⁵ [5] Critici prezen de ruimtebesparende indeling en zagen ‘flinke, praktische meubelen, neigend naar het zware dat tegenwoordig in

den smaak – der meubelmakers – valt, zeer geschikt voor de tegenwoordige wat kleine kamers met lage verdiepingen, mooi, rustig bekleed en een enkel maal slechts, sober, met een andere houtsoort versierd'. Waarderend heette het: 'wat men echter nooit vindt in dit werk: dat is de moedwil, de moderniteit à tout prix, de gezochtheid, het artistiekerige en modieuze.' Het kan verkeren: bij een tentoonstelling van zijn meubels een jaar eerder bij de Rotterdamsche Kunstkring was hem juist een zwak soort modernisme aangewreven, dat 'het zoekt in een soort "Kubisme" dat de meubels een nogal kitscherig karakter geeft.'³⁶

Ook in Duindorp was Lecointre's uitgangspunt de bescheiden ruimte zo optimaal mogelijk te benutten. Zijn interieurontwerp was eenvoudig, maar had als 'eerste deugd, dat het zeer soliede en als tweede dat het goed van vorm is'. De in oranje, zwart en lichtgrijs gelakte meubels en de contrasterende stoffering moesten in combinatie met een gele wand voor sfeer zorgen.³⁷ Op grond van een overgeleverde foto van Lecointre's modelwoning aan de Hanenburglaan bestaat het vermoeden dat hij een vaste indeling propageerde, die hij waarschijnlijk ook in Spoorwijk en Duindorp toepaste. Van Duindorp is bekend hoe hij de woonkamer inrichtte: een hoekbuffet, de tafel in een van de hoeken, een rustbank, een klein rooktafeltje, twee leunstoelen, twee gewone stoelen, en een tegen de wand getimmerde bank met aan weerszijden een kastje en een lamp. Lecointre's inrichting werd ervaren als 'warm' en 'aantrekkelijk', maar eveneens als 'luxueus en dus ook kostbaarder en daarom ook minder in 't bereik van de gemiddelde arbeidersbeurzen'. Bij de tentoonstelling in Spoorwijk eerder dat jaar was de 'frisse kleur' in de woonkamer en de 'met zorg en overleg gekozen' inrichting van de kleine keuken geprezen.³⁸ De in het Laakkwartier gevestigde Boes' Meubelfabriek stond in de startblokken om Lecointre's meubels in serie vervaardigen. Of dat ooit gebeurd is, is de vraag. Dergelijke serieproductie, die een paar jaar eerder al eens door zijn iets oudere Haagse collega Corn. van der Sluys was geprobeerd, bleek niet rendabel, niet alleen vanwege de geringe financiële draagkracht van de doelgroep, maar ook door een gebrek aan belangstelling bij het publiek.³⁹ Op nr. 274 exposeerde Lecointre aardewerken gebruiksvoorwerpen: serviezen, pullen, wandversiering en dergelijke.

Spoorwijk, 1927: opnieuw voorbeeldinterieurs

Hoeveel bewoners van Duindorp en Spoorwijk zich in 1924 door deze tentoonstellingen hadden laten verleiden de gepropageerde meubels aan te schaffen, is onbekend, maar drie jaar later kwam er een herkansing, niet voor Lecointre, maar voor die bewoners.



FIG. 6 Beetsstraat, Den Haag [Gemeentearchief Den Haag]

Het socialistische dagblad *Het Volk* berichtte op 2 maart 1927 dat, ondanks het modernere woningtype in die wijk, Spoorwijk vanwege de excentrische ligging minder gewild was dan de verouderde huizen in de dichterbij het centrum gelegen Schilderswijk. Er was weliswaar een tramverbinding met het centrum, maar de leegstand in Spoorwijk bedroeg per december 1926 ruim 200 woningen. [6-8] Dat was waarschijnlijk de reden dat er van 25 juni-10 juli 1927 in de Beetsstraat 158 en 223, en Hasebroekstraat 127 de in het begin genoemde tentoonstelling werd gehouden. Deze tentoonstelling werd georganiseerd door het in 1924 opgerichte Instituut voor Arbeidersontwikkeling (IVAO), dat een zware voorbereidingscommissie instelde, waarin W.F. Gouwe (directeur van het Instituut voor Sier- en Nijverheidskunst) en N.P. de Koo (secretaris van de Nederlandsche Vereeniging van Ambachts- en Nijverheidskunst) vermoedelijk de inhoudelijke expertise leverden.⁴⁰ De IVAO maakte deel uit van de sociaaldemocratische zuil. Daarom is het opmerkelijk dat het de verantwoordelijkheid voor de inrichting toevertrouwde aan de uitgesproken protestants-christelijke Cor Alons. 'Wij willen al het praktische van onzen tijd, dat beslommingen verlicht en dus vrijheid winnen doet. Kunstenaars, verlangend naar dezen geest in alle woningen, zoeken naar de verhoudingen, naar de vormen en kleur, waaruit dit alles tot ons zal spreken; elk op eigen wijze zoeken zij, maar toch eenstemmig in die jonge gedachte,' was in het voorwoord van de catalogus te lezen. De organisatoren maakten zich er niet met een jantje-van-leiden af, want

het was de bedoeling dat de tentoonstelling verdieping kreeg door lezingen van onder anderen Gouwe en de Haagse architect Jan Buijs.⁴¹ Het plan was dat de lezingen zouden worden gehouden in de school in de Beetsstraat 88 die in 1923 was gebouwd door Co Brandes, zodat de belangstellenden alleen al door dit gebouw in aanraking zouden komen met de voor de wijk a-typische gematigd-modernistische architectuur van de Nieuwe Haagse School met veel ritmiek, horizontale lijnen en expressief gebruik van baksteen. Over de bezoekersaantallen van lezingen als deze is niets bekend, maar Gouwe klaagde over de soms lege zalen met één toehoorder bij zijn andere lezingen: ‘een luisterend hoofd, drijvend op een zee van stoeleuning, helemaal achter in de ruimte.’⁴²



FIG. 7 Plattegrond type beneden- en bovenwoning Spoorwijk [uit: Bakker Schut, *De volkshuisvesting te 's-Gravenhage*, 64]



FIG. 8 Interieur gemeentewoning in Spoorwijk [uit: Bakker Schut, *De volkshuisvesting te 's-Gravenhage*, 81]

Net als Lecointre was Alons opgeleid bij Pander. Vervolgens was hij medewerker van de Arnhemse idealistische meubelfabriek Labor Omnia Vincit (L.O.V.) geworden.⁴³ In 1921 had hij zich zelfstandig gevestigd en weer drie jaar later startte hij met zijn voormalige L.O.V.-collega Frits Spanjaard een bureau voor binnenhuisarchitectuur aan de Laan van Eik en Duinen in Den Haag. Zij richtten dat in als modelwoning. Spanjaard liet in de achterkamer zwarte en grijze meubels uit zijn L.O.V.-tijd zien, Alons richtte de voorkamer in met gele vloermatten en strakke donker gebeitste meubels afgezet met gelakt geel.⁴⁴ De eerder geciteerde Risseeuw verzekerde echter: 'Cor Alons dringt u geen kleuren op: hij geeft alleen maar doeltreffende leiding aan uw smaak en verlangen.'⁴⁵

Er werden in Spoorwijk zeven kamers ingericht.⁴⁶ Alons' eigen meubelontwerpen speelden een ondergeschikte rol: het al genoemde geel-zwarte slaapkamerameublement van hem werd door de Haagse firma Toegepaste Kunst op de tweede etage van Hasebroekstraat 127 getoond. In een kort tevoren gepubliceerd artikel had Alons de inrichting van een door hem elders ingerichte eenvoudige kamer beschreven: pargrijs behang met een oranje fries, meubelen van lichtbruin gebeitst eikenhout met een paarse bekleding, warmgrijs vloerkleed met bruine rand.⁴⁷ [9] Je mag aannemen dat zijn slaapkamer in Spoorwijk soortgelijke ontwerpbeslissingen liet zien. Hendrik Wouda had samen met de firma Pander de woonkamer op de eerste etage van Hasebroekstraat 127 ingericht. De keuken op deze etage was door het Gemeentelijk Electrisch Bedrijf geïnstalleerd; tijdens de tentoonstelling vonden er demonstraties plaats.



FIG. 9 Een, blijkens het bijschrift, 'eenvoudig interieur' van Cor Alons [uit: *De Jonge Vrouw*, januari 1927, 96]

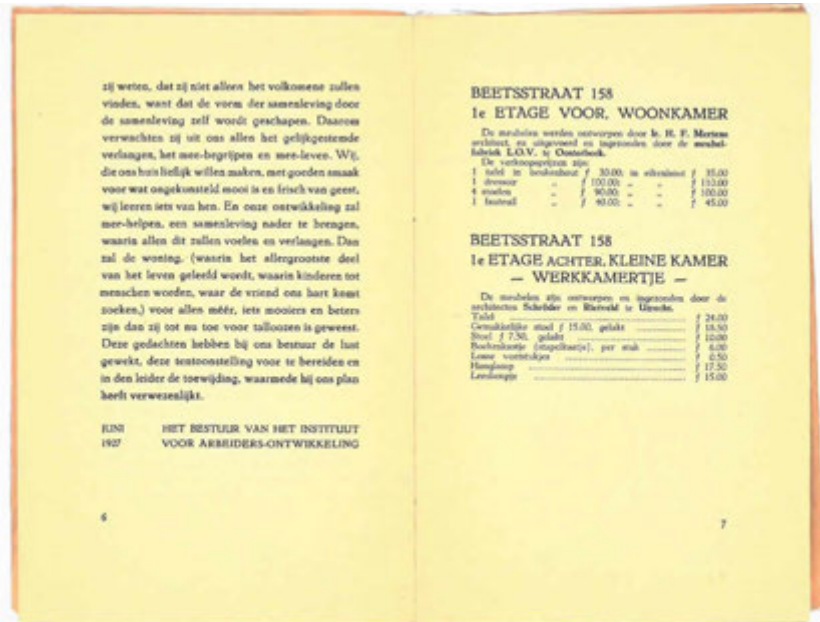


FIG. 10 Twee pagina's uit de catalogus *Tentoonstelling Woninginrichting* [Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, Rijswijk]

De meubels in de woonkamer aan de voorzijde van de eerste etage van Beetsstraat 158 waren ontworpen door H.F. Mertens en uitgevoerd door L.O.V., waarbij hij vanaf 1911 als ontwerper werkzaam was, ook nog nadat hij zich in 1923 zelfstandig had gevestigd. Op deze etage was het werkkamertje achter het terrein van Rietveld en zijn partner Truus Schröder-Schrader. [10] Deelname van deze Stijl-medewerker verbaast misschien, maar Rietveld maakte zich bij zijn meubelontwerpen steeds meer los van de rigide Stijl-principes. In de periode 1922-27 had hij echter nauwelijks nieuwe meubels ontworpen, maar varieerde op bestaande modellen waarbij hij meer aandacht aan zitcomfort besteedde. Juist in 1927 had hij zijn zogenaamde beugelstoel ontworpen.⁴⁸ In Spoorwijk liet hij onder meer een tafel zien, en voorts twee stoelen – die beide zowel gelakt als ongelakt konden worden geleverd – en een stapelbaar boekenkastje, losse voetstukjes, een hanglamp en een leeslampje. De stoelen betroffen waarschijnlijk Rietvelds beugelstoel, de tafel mogelijk zijn ‘militaire tafel’.⁴⁹ [11] Een paar jaar later zou Schröder verklaren: ‘Als het iemand gelukt is een interieur zóó te maken, dat hij daarin niet passief wordt, niet wegdoezelt, maar geprikkeld wordt tot activiteit, dan is hij, meen ik, op een beteren weg dan door een z.g. artistiek interieur te willen bereiken of een, zoals men het noemt, warm, gezellig, vroolijk, feestelijk enz. interieur’,⁵⁰ dat herinnert aan het aan Rietveld toegeschreven adagium ‘zitten is een werkwoord’ over zijn befaamde rood/blauwe stoel. De keuken op de eerste etage van Beetsstraat 158 was ingericht door Magazijn De Bijenkorf, dat ook verantwoordelijk was voor de stoffering van het hele perceel.



FIG. 11 Gerrit Rietveld, beugelstoel met armleggers, 1927 [Centraal Museum, Utrecht]

De voorslaapkamer op de tweede etage van Beetsstraat 158 was ingericht met meubels die waren ontworpen door de Amsterdamse binnenhuisarchitect J.C. Jansen en uitgevoerd door de Centrale Coöperatie voor Woninginrichting.

In Beetsstraat 223 was de voorkamer op de eerste etage door de bij Pander opgeleide, maar sinds 1923 zelfstandig gevestigde J. Brunott ingericht. Over hem gaat het verhaal dat hij na de oplevering van zijn interieurs ging controleren of de bewoners de meubels niet hadden verplaatst.⁵¹ De zitkamer aan de achterzijde van deze woning was door Metz & Co met meubels van W. Penaat ingericht. Op alle drie de adressen was het merendeel van de verlichting door Gispens geleverd.



FIG. 12 Afbeelding van een modelinrichting van de eerste etage van Hasebroekstraat 127 [uit: *Haagsche Courant* 27 juni 1927]



FIG. 13 Interieurontwerp van Henri-Robert von der Mühl [uit: *Binnenhuis* 10 (1928) 21 (11 oktober), 280]

De voor arbeiderswoningen bedachte oplossingen op de dan nog komende tentoonstelling *Die Wohnung* konden Alons in juni vanzelfsprekend nog niet bekend zijn geweest, en al helemaal niet de resultaten van het weer twee jaar later te houden CIAM-congres over het 'Existenzminimum', maar aan de beschrijvingen te oordelen, waren de Haagse oplossingen daarvan een voorafschaduwning, want ze weken er niet zo heel veel van af. In een nabespreking in het deftige *Het Vaderland* werd vermeld dat er 2.200 bezoekers waren geweest, die vol verbazing hadden geconstateerd 'dat daar drie van hun eigen huizen, gewoon in de rij staande van de hunne, met precies dezelfde afmetingen en voor precies hetzelfde geld gemeubeld, er zoo heel veel beter, ruimer, mooier, gelukkiger uitzagen, dan wat zij tot dusver kenden.'⁵² In weekblad *De Groene Amsterdammer* schreef Jan D. Voskuil over het interieur van Rietveld/Schröder: 'Zelfs een schrale beurs kan nog toereikend zijn, om zich door deze architecten te laten installeren.'⁵³ In het algemeen klaagde Voskuil echter over de hoge prijzen. Er was desondanks wel degelijk concrete belangstelling: volgens *Het Vaderland* was één compleet ameublement verkocht en 'vele losse onderdeelen'. 'De arbeidende klasse geraakt meer en meer over de gedachte heen, die afschrikt voor een moderne opvatting in woninginrichting. De nieuwe ideeën over binnenhuis-architectuur zijn de arbeiders niet vreemd gebleven,' jubelde de *Haagsche Courant* dan ook.⁵⁴ [12]



FIG. 14 Interieur van Van Doesburgs ex-vrouw Lena Milius in de Klimopstraat 18, Den Haag, 1924. De meubels zijn van Jan Wils. Aan de muur hangt Van Doesburgs *Compositie IV (stilleven)* (1916) [uit: Arnold H. Jansen, *Het industriële uitgevoerde meubel*, Rotterdam 1925, 33]

Alons en zijn vakbroeders leken dus met enig succes de uitgangspunten van het modernisme voor arbeiders aanvaardbaar te hebben gemaakt. Net zoals de Nieuwe Haagse School een middenpositie bekleedde tussen de functionalistische architectuur van De Stijl-beweging en de zware, versierde baksteenarchitectuur van de Amsterdamse School, kende Den Haag ook een dergelijke variant in de interieurkunst.⁵⁵ In de huizen van Greve c.s. in Duindorp en Spoorwijk zag je die typisch Haagse architectuur niet terug, maar de in vergelijking met de vaak weelderige Amsterdamse School-interieurs sobere Haagse interieurstijl appelleerde kennelijk aan een nieuw soort bewoner.

Blijvend adviesbureau

In 1921-22 had Van Doesburg voor het interieur van een blok middenstandswoningen in Drachten tamelijk extreme kleurontwerpen gemaakt. Hij was daarvoor in de plaatselijke krant gekapitteld omdat het om huurwoningen ging, waarin de 'huurders nu maar moeten zien hoe ze 't met hun inboedel redden tegenover de kakelbontheid der vertrekken'.⁵⁶ Van Doesburg zag wel degelijk de discrepantie tussen ideaal en praktijk, en besepte dat zijn kleurontwerpen consequenties hadden voor de inrichting. Hij schreef, voor zijn doen bescheiden en realistisch, aan de architect: 'Ik heb natuurlijk ook over *ligging* kleur en verhouding der tapijten over meubels en kleur der gordijnen erg gedacht, maar in den regel houden de bewoners zich daar toch niet aan. Zoover zijn we nog niet.'⁵⁷ In 1928 zou hij in zijn 'De beelding van het interieur' onder meer enkele interieurs van de jonge Zwitserse architect Henri-Robert von der Mühl afbeelden als voorbeelden van een 'decoratieve toepassing van den moderne grondvorm in meubels' respectievelijk als 'voorbeeld van reeds meer gestyleerde overgangs-interieurs'. [13] Van Doesburg had hem leren kennen toen hij in 1926 een tentoonstelling over De Stijl-architectuur inrichtte in Nancy, en had hem zelfs beloofd zijn werk af te drukken in *De Stijl*.⁵⁸ Dat gebeurde niet daar, maar wel in *Binnenhuis*. Wat van ver komt, is lekker en mogelijk was de in Parijs wonende Van Doesburg slecht van de Nederlandse situatie op de hoogte, maar hij had met even veel recht interieurontwerpen van tot de Haagse Stijl gerekende ontwerpers kunnen afbeelden. Ook al had zijn ex-vrouw Jan Wils haar woning laten inrichten met diens meubels, voor een dialoog met de Haagse meubelontwerpers achtte Van Doesburg zich waarschijnlijk te verheven. [14]

Volgens *Het Vaderland* hadden de bewoners van Spoorwijk na afloop van de in 1927 gehouden tentoonstelling aan Centraal Woningbeheer gevraagd of er niet een blijvend adviesbureau in de wijk gevestigd kon worden. Dat getuigt van ontvankelijkheid en leergierigheid. En zelfs de voorspelling dat de 'ééne ultra-moderne kamer' niet gewaardeerd zou worden – je mag aannemen dat het hier

ging om de kamer van Rietveld/Schröder – was niet bewaarheid, want ‘zie, heel veel voelden zich zeer tot dat vertrek aangetrokken.’⁵⁹ Misschien waren de bewoners – in ieder geval die in Spoorwijk – dan toch volgamer dan Van Doesburg aannam.

Noten

Met dank aan Hans Janssen, Otakar Mačel en Marcel Teunissen.

- 1 Théo van Doesburg, ‘Architectuurvernieuwingen in het buitenland. Frankrijk, Duitsland, Oostenrijk, Tsjechoslowakije etc. [4]’, *Het Bouwbedrijf* 3 (1926) 7 (juli), 266-268, geciteerd naar Theo van Doesburg, *De Stijl en de Europese architectuur. De architectuurodstellen in Het Bouwbedrijf 1924-1931* (ed. Cees Boekraad), Nijmegen 1986, 91.
- 2 Brief Theo van Doesburg aan C.R. de Boer, 6 november 1921 [*De kleur lost de architectonische ruimte op. De briefwisseling tussen Theo van Doesburg en architect C.R. de Boer, 1920-1929* (ed. Sjoerd van Faassen/Herman van Bergeijk), Haarlem 2019, 137].
- 3 Peter Fuhring & Rudolphine Eggink, *Binnenhuisarchitectuur in Nederland 1900-1981*, Den Haag 1981, 25-37; Monique Teunissen & Albert Veldhuizen, ‘Kubische vormen en kleurrijke accenten. Ruimtekunst van de Haagse School’, in Ellinoor Bergvelt, Frans van Burkom & Karin Gaillard (ed.), *Van neorenaissance tot post-modernisme. Honderdvijfentwintig jaar Nederlandse interieurs 1870-1995*, Rotterdam 1996, 201-205. *Het Vaderland* 15 juli 1924.
- 4 P.J. Risseeuw, ‘Binnenhuiskunst. Een vraaggesprek met den binnenhuisarchitect Cor Alons [1]’, *Op den Uitkijk* 5 (1928-29) 14 (13 april 1929), 469; Idem, ‘Bij het werk van Cor Alons’, *De Delver* 5 (1931-32) 5 (januari 1932), 67. De ene bezoeker signaleerde in Risseeuws interieur meubels van lichtgekleurd hout, op de vloer biezen matten en de tafel in het mathematische midden van de kamer, een andere ‘Rietveld meubels. Middenkleur blond hout met zwarthouten biezen, rechthoekigheden’ [Hans Werkman, “Klem je vast aan de mensen”. Over P.J. Risseeuw, honderd jaar na zijn geboorte’, *Liter* 16 (2001), 55, noot 3].
- 5 P. Bakker Schut, ‘Minimum-woningen te ‘s-Gravenhage’, *Het Bouwbedrijf* 2 (1925) 11 (november), 389-390. Zie voor een vergelijking van de volkswoningbouw in Rotterdam, Amsterdam en Den Haag: Jan Molema, ‘Van Spangen tot Spaarndammerbuurt. Verschillen in volkswoningbouw’, *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum* 95 (2003), 178-214.
- 6 Zie Cita Hartveld, *Moderne zakelijkheid. Efficiency in wonen en werken in Nederland 1918-1940*, Amsterdam 1994, 159-204.
- 7 J.J.P. Oud, ‘Huisvrouwen en architecten’, *Internationale Revue* i10 1 (1927) 2 (februari), 44-46.
- 8 Zie bijvoorbeeld Michael Peterek, *Wohnung. Siedlung. Stadt. Paradigmen der Moderne 1910-1950*, Berlin 2000; Matthias Schirren (ed.), *Bauen und Wohnen. Die Geschichte der Werkbundsiedlungen*, Berlin 2016.
- 9 Bern Nicolai, ‘Differenz ‘Werkbundausstelungen im Ausland’, in Schirren, *Bauen und Wohnen*, 41-55.
- 10 Hilde Heynen, ‘Modernity and domesticity. Tensions and contradictions’, in Hilde Heynen & Baydar Gülsüm (ed.), *Negotiating domesticity. Spatial productions and gender in modern architecture*, London 2005, 4, 15.
- 11 Brief Gerrit Rietveld aan J.J.P. Oud, 23 januari 1920, geciteerd in Marijke Küper, ‘Gerrit Rietveld’, in Carel Blotkamp et al., *De beginjaren van De Stijl, 1917-1922*, Utrecht 1982, 265.
- 12 Joan Campbell, *The German Werkbund. The Politics of Reform in the Applied Arts*, Princeton 1978.
- 13 Karin Kirsch, *The Weissenhofsiedlung. Experimental Housing Built for the Deutscher Werkbund, Stuttgart 1927*, New York 1989.
- 14 J.J.P. Oud, ‘Internationale architectuur. Werkbuntentoonstelling “Die Wohnung” Juli-September 1927, Stuttgart’, *Internationale Revue* i10 1 (1927) 6 (juni), 204.
- 15 Karin Kirsch (ed.), *Briefe zur Weissenhofsiedlung*, Stuttgart 1997, 202. Stam bouwde er drie huizen, waarvan hij er twee zelf inrichtte; de derde werd door Marcel Breuer ingericht [Kirsch, *The Weissenhofsiedlung*, 168-175].
- 16 Wolfgang Voigt, Dorothea Deschermeier & Peter Cachola Schmal (ed.), *New Human, New Housing. Architecture of the New Frankfurt 1925-1933*, Frankfurt am Main 2019.

- 18 Geciteerd naar 'We vragen de kunstenaars kind te zijn van zijn eigen tijd'. Teksten van Mart Stam (ed.
Herman van Bergeijk & Otakar Mačel), Nijmegen 1999, 68.
- 19 Peter Schmitt, 'Was braucht der Mensch? Zur Einrichtung der "Gebrauchswohnung"', in *Neues Bauen
der 20er Jahre*. Gropius, Haesler, Schwitters und die Dammerstocksiedlung in Karlsruhe 1929, Karlsruhe
(Badischen Landesmuseum) 1997, 139-157.
- 20 *Neues Bauen der 20er Jahre*, 193.
- 21 Mart Stam, 'Het vraagstuk der arbeiderswoning in verband met de steeds veranderende grootte der
gezinnen', in F. Ottenhof (ed.), *Goedkoope arbeiderswoningen*, Rotterdam 1936, 21.
- 22 P.A. van der Drift, 'Ontstaan en ontwikkeling van de financieele paragrafen van de woningwet', in
L. van der Wal et al., *Beter wonen. Gedenkboek, gewijd aan het werk der woningbouwverenigingen in
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1939. Vijf en twintig jaar overheidsbemoeiing met de volkshuisvesting*, Alphen aan den Rijn 1939. Zie voor
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- 23 Cees Boekraad & Joos Aerts, 'Berlage en de lotgevallen van de "schone stad". Den Haag in de jaren 1900-
1934', in Victor Freijser (ed.), *Het veranderend stadsbeeld van Den Haag. Plannen en processen in de Haagse
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- 24 Zie voor plattegronden: Bakker Schut, *De volkshuisvesting te 's-Gravenhage*, 62, 67, 68.
- 25 Zie voor plattegronden: Bakker Schut, *De volkshuisvesting te 's-Gravenhage*, 62, 64.
- 26 P. Bakker Schut, 'De afdeling volkshuisvesting op de hygiëne-tentoonstelling 1920', *Tijdschrift voor
Volkshuisvesting* 1 (1920) 8 (15 september), 195.
- 27 Brief Gerrit Rietveld aan J.J.P. Oud, 4 mei 1920, geciteerd in Küper, 'Gerrit Rietveld', 273.
- 28 Théo van Doesburg, 'De beelding van het interieur [I]', *Binnenhuis* 10 (1928) 21 (11 oktober), 279, 280.
- 29 Jan Wils, *Het woonhuis. II, Indeeling en inrichting*, Amsterdam 1923, 2, 36, 65.
- 30 De beschrijving van de tentoonstelling in de Wieringschestraat is ontleend aan de besprekingen in
Haagsche Courant, *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* en *Het Vaderland*, alle van 11 oktober 1924.
- 31 Bakker Schut, *De volkshuisvesting te 's-Gravenhage*, 84-85, 87.
- 32 <https://www.historisch.cbs.nl/detail.php?id=117382485>.
- 33 *Haagsche Courant* 14 en 16 juli 1924, *Het Vaderland* 15 juli 1924. Zie voor Lecointre: Timo de Rijk, *De
Haagse Stijl. Art deco in Nederland*, Rotterdam 2004, 43, 127, 131-132.
- 34 *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* 25 februari 1923. De huurprijzen van de huizen in de Braamstraat
varieerden van f 35 tot f 45 per maand.
- 35 Zie over deze modelwoning aan de Hanenburglaan: Cornelis Veth in *De Telegraaf* van 4 oktober 1923 en
Just Havelaar in *Het Vaderland* van 6 oktober 1923.
- 36 *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad* 24 januari 1923.
- 37 Teunissen/Veldhuizen, 'Kubische vormen en kleurrijke accenten', 200.
- 38 *Het Vaderland* 15 juli 1924.
- 39 Petra Clarijs, *Een eeuw Nederlandse woning*, Amsterdam 1941, 188-189. Van der Sluys zou echter wel
degelijk tweede helft jaren twintig van 'een van der grootste ondernemingen van ons land' opdracht
ontvangen om meubilair te ontwerpen voor een groot aantal arbeiderswoningen [v.d. E. [Eerenbeemt?],
'Moderne meubelinrichting. VII, Corn. van der Sluys', *Binnenhuis* 10 (1928) 4 (16 februari), 56].
- 40 Jan Molema & Suzy Leemans, *Jan Albarda en De Groep van Delft. Moderniteit in een behoudende omgeving*,
Heijningen 2010, 26-29; Fuhring/Eggink, *Binnenhuisarchitectuur in Nederland 1900-1981*, 27-28. De
beschrijving van de tentoonstelling in de Beetsstraat en Hasebroekstraat is ontleend aan de begeleidende
catalogus *Tentoonstelling Woninginrichting, Spoorwijk, Den Haag*, aangevuld met aankondigingen en
besprekingen in *Haagsche Courant* 14 en 27 juni 1927, en *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* 29 juni 1927.
- 41 *Haagsche Courant* 28 juni 1927. Molema/Leemans, *Jan Albarda*, 28.
- 42 Paul Hefting, *Willem Frederik Gouwe (1877-1956)*, Amsterdam 2014, 35.
- 43 Zie Margje van den Burgh, Cor Alons. *Binnenhuisarchitect en industrieel ontwerper 1892/1967*, Rotterdam
1987; voor L.O.V.: Karin Gaillard, *Labor Omnia Vincit, een idealistische meubelfabriek 1910-1935*, Arnhem
(Gemeentemuseum) 1991, 47-48, 55.
- 44 Margje van den Burgh, *Frits Spanjaard. Binnenhuisarchitect 1889/1978*, Rotterdam 1990, 15; Teunissen/
Veldhuizen, 'Kubische vormen en kleurrijke accenten', 196.
- 45 Risseeuw, 'Bij het werk van Cor Alons', 69.
- 46 Van Molema/Leemans, *Jan Albarda*, 27 gaat de onjuiste suggestie uit dat het eind 1927 verschenen boekje
Nieuwe Nederlandsche ruimtekunst van Jan Lauweriks een soort catalogus van de tentoonstelling was.

Hoewel er inderdaad – naast vele andere – afbeeldingen in voorkomen van interieurs van Alons, Mertens, Penaat en het duo Rietveld/Schröder is geen daarvan te identificeren als een van de realisaties in Spoorwijk.

- 47 Cor Alons, 'Binnenhuiskunst', *De Jonge Vrouw* 9 (1926-27) 4 (januari 1927), 96-97.
- 48 Marijke Kuper, 'Gerrit Rietveld', in Carel Blotkamp (ed.), *De vervolggaren van De Stijl 1922-1932*, Amsterdam 1996, 197, 199, 201 en 237-240; Wolf Tegethoff, 'Rietvelds woonconcepten: van manifest naar huiselijke privacy', in Rob Dettingmeyer, Marie-Thérèse van Thoor & Ida van Zijl (ed.), *Rietvelds universum*, Rotterdam 2010, 66.
- 49 Marijke Küper & Ida van Zijl, Gerrit Th. Rietveld 1888-1964. *Het volledige werk*, Utrecht 1992, nr. 119. Zie nr. 106 voor het boekenkastje, nr. 63 voor de hanglamp en nr. 101 voor het leeslampje.
- 50 Truus Schröder-Schräder, 'Een inleidend woord tot binnen-architectuur', *De Werkende Vrouw* 1 (1930) 3, 94.
- 51 De Rijk, *De Haagse Stijl*, 134.
- 52 *Het Vaderland* 12 juli 1927.
- 53 *De Groene Amsterdammer* 16 juli 1927.
- 54 *Haagsche Courant* 27 juni 1927.
- 55 Marcel Teunissen & Victor Freijser, *Schoone eenheid. Stedenbouw en architectuur van de Nieuwe Haagse School*, Den Haag 2008; De Rijk, *De Haagse Stijl. Art deco in Nederland*.
- 56 H. Martin, 'De Middenstandswoningen', *Dragtster Courant* 11 oktober 1921.
- 57 Brief Theo van Doesburg aan C.R. de Boer, 3 september 1921 [De kleur lost de architectonische ruimte op, 112].
- 58 Catherine Coley, 'Organiser une exposition d'architecture moderne: L'expérience d'André Lurçat à Nancy', in Catherine Coley & Danièle Pauly (ed.), *Quand l'architecture internationale s'exposait 1922-1932*, Lyon 2010, 25.
- 59 *Het Vaderland* 12 juli 1927.

J.J.P. Oud und die Freie Akademie der Künste in Hamburg

Am 27. November 1953 beschloss die Freie Akademie der Künste in Hamburg einstimmig die Aufnahme von Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud als korrespondierendes Mitglied. Diese Entscheidung war keinesfalls selbstverständlich und lässt uns fragen, warum man neben den anderen Architekten in der Akademie, meist lokalen Größen, gerade ihn vorgeschlagen hat und auch, warum er die Wahl in die erst 1950 gegründete kleinste und unbedeutendste Akademie Deutschlands angenommen und sich dann regelmäßig bis zu seinem Lebensende mit Texten und Abbildungen seiner aktuellen Projekten in den Jahrbüchern der Akademie zu Wort gemeldet hat.

Die Hamburger Freie Akademie ist schwer vergleichbar mit den traditionsreichen Akademien in Berlin oder München, deren Geschichte sich trotz ihrer Neugründungen nach Kriegsende jeweils auf absolutistische Vorläufer zurückführen lässt und für deren Unterhalt und Aktivitäten die jeweiligen Regionalstaaten zuständig sind.¹ Sie heißt nicht 'Hamburger Akademie der Künste', sondern 'Freie Akademie der Künste in Hamburg' und trägt das Adjektiv 'frei' nicht nur aus ideellen Gründen, sondern auch deshalb, weil es sich bei ihr um keine staatliche Institution, sondern um einen aus privater Initiative entstandenen, eingetragenen Verein handelt, der sich die Förderung der Künste, insbesondere in der Hansestadt selbst, zum Ziel gesetzt hat und sich die Finanzierung seiner Aktivitäten – zumindest anfänglich- jeweils 'frei' erbetteln musste.

Die Idee zu ihrer Gründung war in privaten Zirkeln der Stadt aufgekommen, die sich in Hamburg wie in vielen anderen deutschen Städten in der politisch und wirtschaftlich unbestimmten, dafür aber kulturell sehr bewegten unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit spontan gebildet hatten. Für die Gründung einer Akademie in Hamburg hatte sich insbesondere der Freundes- und Diskussionskreis um den niederländischen Schriftsteller und Übersetzer Rolf Italiaander eingesetzt, dem sich nach seiner Rückkehr aus Dänemark auch der exzentrische Schriftsteller und Orgelbauer Hans Henny Jahnn zugesellt hatte, der spätere erste Präsidenten dieser Akademie. Weitere Unterstützung fand die Idee beim Baukreis, einer Künstler-

Vereinigung, die bis 1951 drei kleine Kunstschulen in Hamburg, Hilden und St. Peter-Ording betrieb. Ihn hatten die Architekten Otto Heinrich Strohmeyer und Gustav Burmester initiiert. Der Multikünstler und Oberbaurat Strohmeyer wurde Mitbegründer, Burmester dagegen erst ab 1965 Mitglied der Akademie. Vor allem aber fand der Plan Zustimmung bei einigen der neu berufenen Kunstprofessoren der Landeskunstschule, die erst unter ihrem Direktor, dem Maler Friedrich Ahlers-Hestermann, und ab 1950 unter dessen Nachfolger, dem Architekten Gustav Hassenpflug, eine vom Bauhaus inspirierte Ausbildungsstätte aufbauen wollten.

Jahnn war nach den Kriegsjahren, die er zurückgezogen als Landwirt auf der dänischen Insel Bornholm verbracht hatte, 1948 nach Hamburg zurückgekehrt und erhoffte sich einen staatlichen Ehrensold für seine literarischen und sonstigen Aktivitäten, die vom Orgelbau bis zu Hormonforschungen reichten. Seine bereits in den zwanziger Jahren geschriebenen, teils hochgelobten, teils als verstörend empfundenen, anarchisch archaischen Theaterstücke und Romane wurden nach dem Kriege in Hamburg mehrfach wieder aufgeführt und neu verlegt.² Er war in den zwanziger Jahren mit dem Aufbau einer Künstlerkolonie Ugrino in der Tradition der Bauhütten gescheitert, hatte in der von Fritz Schumachers erbauten, der Schulreform verpflichteten Hamburger Lichtwarkschule eine Orgel gebaut und bis 1933 die Unterstützung des Altonaer Oberbürgermeister Max Brauer genossen, der mit seiner und der Hilfe weiterer Künstlerpersönlichkeiten der im Schatten Hamburgs stehenden und als arm und proletarisch geltenden Stadt eine stärkere kulturelle Ausstrahlung verleihen wollte. Brauer war 1946 aus seinem Exil in den Vereinigten Staaten zurückgekehrt und für die Sozialdemokratische Partei zum ersten Nachkriegs-Bürgermeister von Groß-Hamburg gewählt worden, in das Altona 1937 eingegliedert worden war. Nur war seine alte Zuneigung zu Jahnn, wohl aus privaten Gründen, inzwischen erloschen und in eine gründliche Abneigung umgeschlagen, was sich für Pläne, mit staatlicher Unterstützung eine Akademie unter Jahnn's Ägide aufzubauen, als sehr hinderlich erweisen sollte. Aber zum Glück für die Akademiebefürworter hatte Max Brauer 1948 den früheren Altonaer Stadtbaumeister Gustav Oelsner als neuen Leiter des Hamburger Wiederaufbauamtes aus dem türkischen Exil zurückholen lassen und dieser sympathisierte mit den Plänen einer Akademiegründung. Er erhoffte sich davon eine ideelle Unterstützung seiner Wiederaufbaupläne, die gerade Gefahr liefen, auf wirtschaftliche und technische Fragen beschränkt zu werden und jede baukulturelle Perspektive zu verlieren. Wegen seiner Nähe zum Bürgermeister konnte er nicht offiziell als Mitbegründer der Freien Akademie der Künste in Hamburg auftreten, als diese schließlich am 18. Mai 1950 ins Hamburger Vereinsregister eingetragen wurde. Aber er wurde direkt danach als ordentliches Mitglied kooptiert und erhielt als der Nestor der Hamburger Architektenschaft in der Akademie ein besonderes Gewicht.



FIG. 1 Portraitzeichnung von Paul Citroen

Der zentrale Protagonist der Akademiegründung war Rolf Italiaander. Es war keine Frage, dass er Jahn als Gründungspräsident den Vortritt lassen musste, denn er selbst war als Schriftsteller weit weniger bekannt als dieser, wenn auch als Persönlichkeit ähnlich exzentrisch. Zudem warf seine Vorgeschichte einige Fragen auf, die erst Ende der sechziger Jahre offen diskutiert wurden und 1968 zu seinem Rückzug aus der Akademie führten. Italiaander hatte das seltene Kunststück fertig gebracht hat, trotz seines sephardischen Namens und seiner niederländischen Staatsangehörigkeit die Nazizeit in Deutschland relativ unbeschadet zu überstehen. Er hatte seinen Weg als Journalist und Schriftsteller nach dem Studium in seiner Geburtsstadt Leipzig als Assistent des Filmkritikers und Drehbauchautor Willy Haas begonnen und diesem 1933 geholfen in die Tschechoslowakei zu emigrieren. Haas ging später nach Indien, von wo er 1948 als Literaturkritiker für *Die Welt* und andere Zeitschriften

des Axel Springer Verlages nach Hamburg kam. Vor 1933 hatte Italiaander mit Haas' Unterstützung begonnen, Kritiken und eigene Texte zu veröffentlichen, unter anderem einige Gedichte in den *Sozialistischen Monatsheften*. In der Nazizeit knüpfte er an seine Erfolge als preisgekrönter Segelflieger der Weimarer Zeit an und schrieb über Fliegergrößen wie Manfred von Richthofen, Ernst Udet, Italo Balbo, Hanna Reitsch und andere – es heißt, auch über Hermann Göring, was aber in dem Schriftenverzeichnis nicht belegt ist, das 1977 mit seiner Beteiligung zusammen gestellt worden war.³ Weiterhin schrieb er in diesen Jahren Jugendbücher, meist über Segelfliegerei, erste Theaterstücke und veröffentlichte eine Reihe von Übersetzungen aus dem Niederländischen und dem Französischen. Nach dem Krieg folgten dann in größerer Zahl Berichte zu seinen Reisen in alle Welt, vor allem nach Afrika. Er kam 1946 aus Berlin nach Hamburg, wo er für die britische Besatzungsmacht wie zuvor dort für die sowjetische in dem zu diesem Zeitpunkt noch als Garnisonstheater beschlagnahmten Deutschen Schauspielhaus Unterhaltungsrevuen und ähnliches inszenierte. 1950 wurde in Helmut Gmelins privatem Theater im Zimmer an der Alsterchaussee sein 1936 von der Zensur beanstandetes Stück *Spiel mit dem Rekord* aufgeführt. Er berichtete 1949 in *Die Welt* über einen Besuch bei dem wegen seiner Hitler-Sympathien geächteten Knut Hamsun in Norwegen und veröffentlichte mehrfach Arbeiten von und über Frank Thiess, den konservativen Verteidiger der 'inneren Emigration' gegenüber den ins Exil gegangenen 'Vaterlandsverrätern' wie etwa den Mitgliedern der Familie Mann.⁴ Aber er schrieb auch über die niederländische Sozialistin Henriette Roland Holst und mehrfach über Klaus sowie Thomas Mann, der 1959 starb, kurz bevor ihm die Plakette der Akademie überreicht werden konnte, die ihn automatisch zum Mitglied gemacht hätte. Er begann erneut mit Haas zusammenzuarbeiten, nachdem dieser in Hamburg tätig geworden war und erreichte 1956 auch dessen Aufnahme in die Akademie.

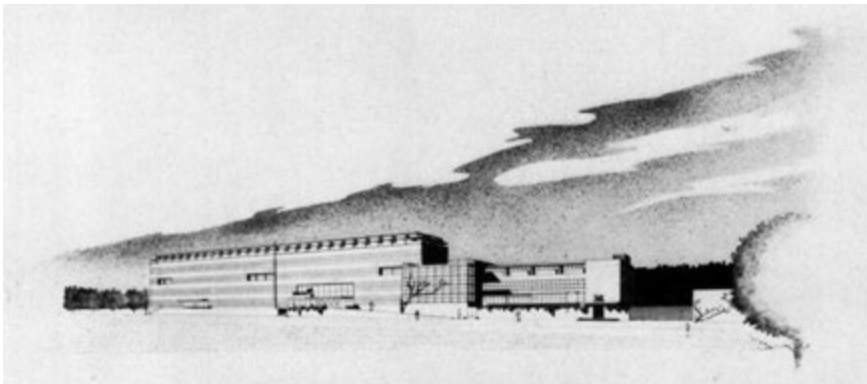


FIG. 2 Entwurf für das Provinciehuis Zuid-Holland.

Italiaander entwickelte offensichtlich das diplomatische Geschick und Organisationstalent, das Jahnn fehlte. Er knüpfte zahllose Kontakte zu Politikern und potentiellen Förderern der Akademie und setzte deren Gründung seit 1948 schrittweise durch. Bis 1968 wird er als ihr 'ständiger Sekretär' agieren und trotz wechselnder Präsidenten die Fäden in der Hand behalten. Er fand in der Hamburger Gesellschaft die notwendigen Förderer für die Vereinsaktivitäten und auch geeignete Mitglieder, um die anfänglichen drei 'Klassen' der Akademie für Literatur, Bildende Kunst und Musik mit namhaften Persönlichkeiten zu füllen. Hans Henny Jahnn und er selbst begründeten die Literaturklasse. Während Jahnn's Produktivität nachließ, schrieb und übersetzte Italiaander intensiv, korrespondierte weltweit mit zahllosen Größen aus Kultur und Politik und unternahm zahlreiche, teils monatelange Reisen nach Afrika, Südost-Asien, Nord- und Südamerika. Er baute schrittweise eine umfangreiche Sammlung ethnischer und naiver Kunst auf, für die er in den siebziger Jahren mit seinem Lebensgefährten Hans Ludwig Spegg das Museum Rade gründete, das sich heute im Schloss Reinbek bei Hamburg befindet. Er unterrichtete seit 1959 mehrfach am niederländisch geprägten Hope College in Holland, Michigan, USA und wird ein sehr aktiver Vorkämpfer für die Rassengleichheit und die Entkriminalisierung von Homosexualität.

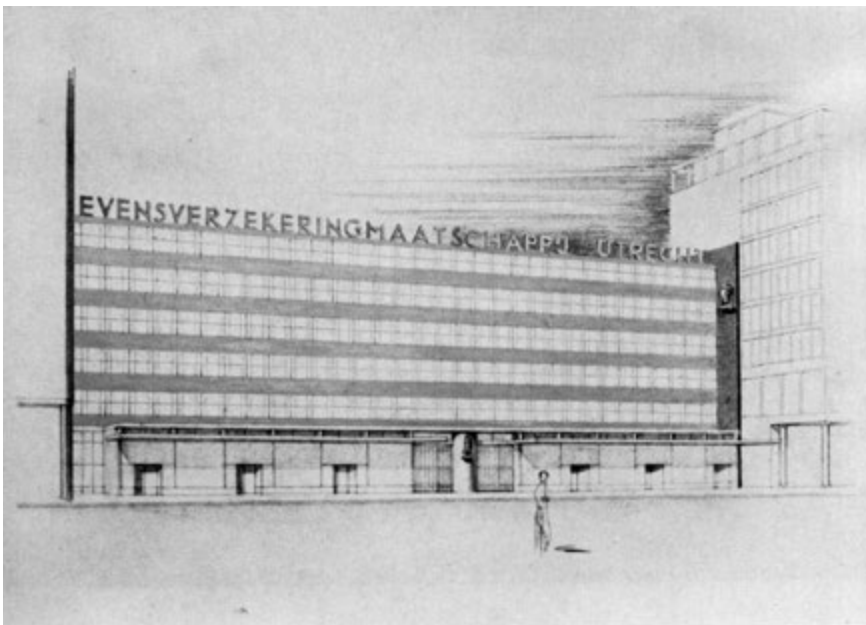


FIG. 3 Levensverzekering Maatschappij Utrecht

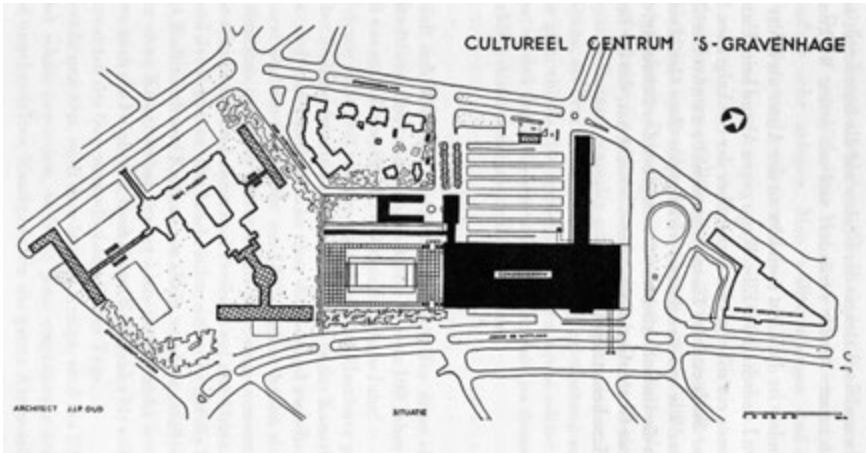


FIG. 4 Das kulturelle Zentrum von Den Haag' (mit Lageplan)

Ein ausgeprägtes Interesse an Architektur lässt sich in Italiaanders Werk nicht erkennen, obwohl er 1958 die deutsche Ausgabe eines Sammelbandes *Rotterdam. Der Neubau einer Stadt* besorgte, den Cornelis van Traa, der Rotterdamer Stadtbaumeister der Wiederaufbauzeit zusammengestellt hatte. Italiaander ergänzte die Sammlung von Artikeln verschiedener Autoren um eine eigene 'Schlussbemerkung des Übersetzers' und ein Nachwort von Werner Hebebrand, der inzwischen sowohl als Oberbaudirektor und Nachfolger von Gustav Oelsner den Hamburger Wiederaufbau leitete als auch 1960 Jahnns Amt als Präsident der Freien Akademie übernommen hatte.⁵ Hebebrand betont die Parallelität und Vergleichbarkeit der Wiederaufbauproblematik in den beiden Hafen- und Handelsstädten, während Italiaander offen seine Schwierigkeiten mit der Fachterminologie der Stadtplaner und Architekten bei der Übersetzung eingesteht. Die Architekten erfahren in van Traas Buch auffällig wenig Aufmerksamkeit und sind bei den meisten abgebildeten Neubauten nicht namentlich als Verfasser erwähnt. Deshalb überrascht es, wenn Italiaander seine Schlussbemerkung mit einem Foto der Eingangsfront der Spaarbank te Rotterdam abschließt, die Oud schon 1942 entworfen, aber erst 1957 fertiggestellt hatte, und ihn auch als Autor benennt. Dieser Bau wird im Text nicht erwähnt und gehörte, ähnlich der zwischen 1937 und 1942 errichteten Shell-Hauptverwaltung in Den Haag, zu jenen Arbeiten der dreißiger und vierziger Jahre, die Oud in dem Jahrzehnt vor seiner Wahl in die Freie Akademie den Ruf eines Renegaten der modernen Bewegung eingebracht hatten. Es bleibt zu fragen, warum Italiaander hier keines der von Oud selbst für die Jahrbücher der Akademie ausgewählten späteren Werke verwendet hat.



FIG. 5 Modellphoto des Kulturzentrum Den Haag

Ich vermutete lange Zeit, Italiaander habe seinen Landsmann Oud aus Sympathie für dessen in diesen Bauten ausgedrückten Kritik an der radikalen Moderne als Akademiemitglied vorgeschlagen, als in deren Kreis der Wunsch aufkam, sich stärker nach außen zu öffnen und auch Nicht-Hamburger als neue Mitglieder zu kooptieren. Diese Vermutung ließ sich indes nach einer genaueren Spurensuche nicht belegen. In dem sehr umfangreichen Archiv mit Italiaanders Sammlungen und Korrespondenzen in Reinbek sind nach Auskunft seines Leiters Bernd Kraske keinerlei schriftliche Kontakte zwischen Italiaander und Oud bewahrt, ebenso wenig in Ouds Archiv in Rotterdam.⁶ Es scheint, dass Italiaander keine früheren Kontakte zu Oud hatte und erst nach dessen Berufung in die Akademie Näheres über ihn erfahren hat. Von Ullrich Schwarz, dem gegenwärtigen, 2020 gewählten Präsidenten der Freien Akademie, erhielt ich dann den klärenden Hinweis, dass im Protokoll der Akademiesitzung vom 27. November 1953 festgehalten ist, dass Oud auf Vorschlag von Gustav Oelsner einstimmig zum korrespondierenden Mitglied gewählt worden sei. Die Frage, ob er oder ein anderes Akademiemitglied es war, der Oud in die Diskussion gebracht hat, bleibt damit offen. In jedem Falle ist es aufgrund von Oelsners Werdegang und seinem Selbstverständnis als Architekt und Stadtplaner plausibel, dass nicht Italiaander sondern er Oud als korrespondierendes Mitglied vorgeschlagen hat.

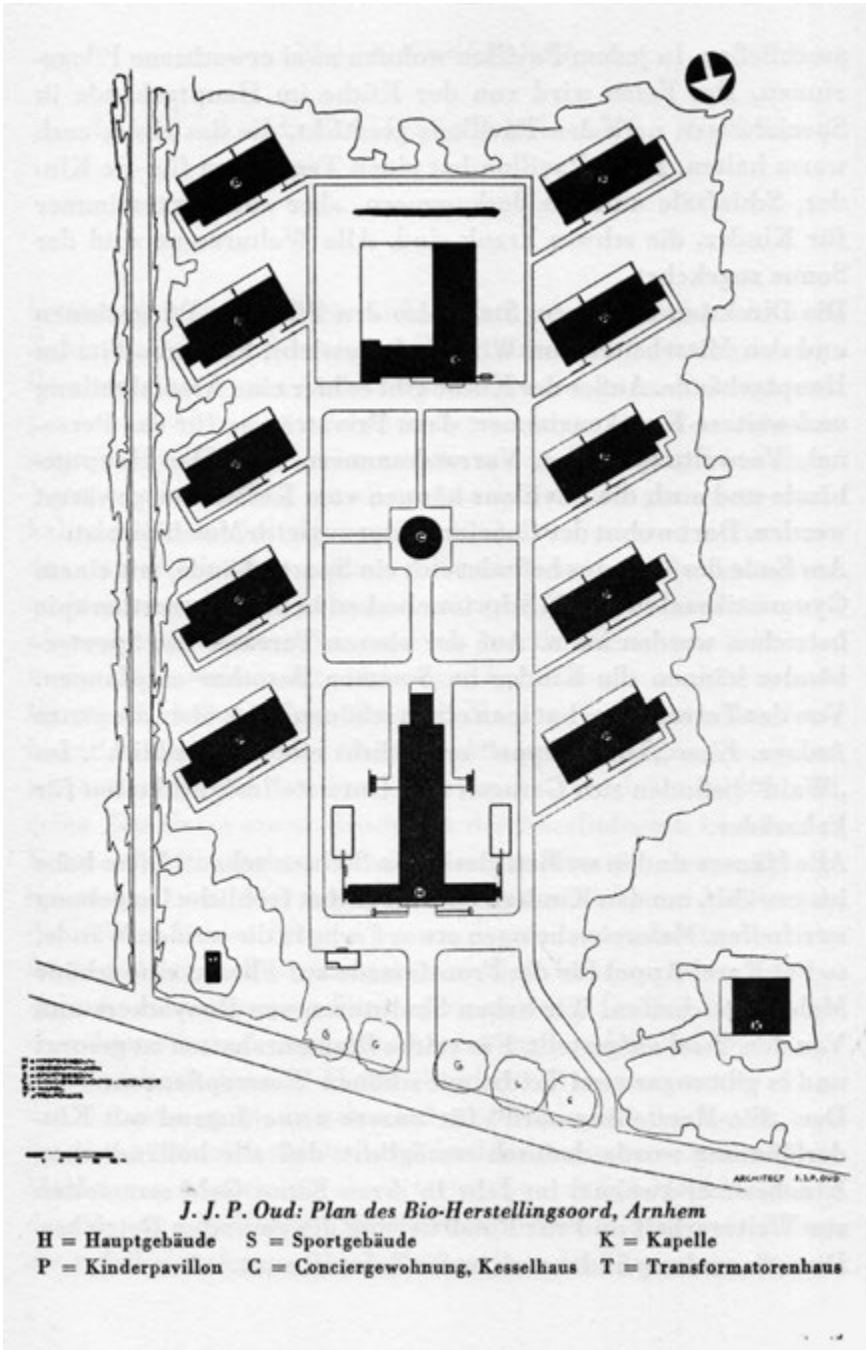


FIG. 6 Lageplan des Bio-Herstellingsoord, Arnhem

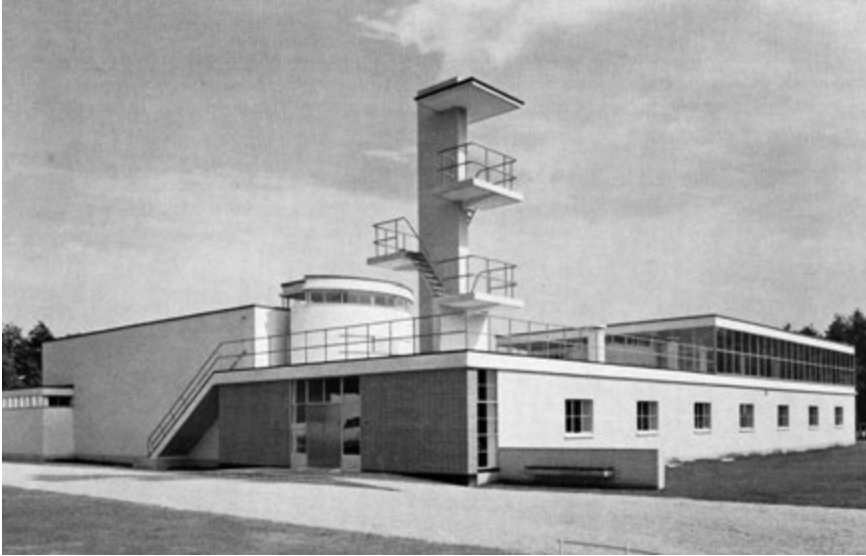


FIG. 7 Sportgebäudes im BIO Herstellingsoord

J.J.P. Oud (1890-1963) war das erste ausländische Mitglied der Akademie, wenn man vom niederländischen Pass Italiaanders absieht. Später folgten wenige weitere, darunter nur zwei Architekten. 1966 wurden Alvar Aalto und 1969 Arne Jacobsen jeweils mit einer Plakette der Akademie geehrt und damit automatisch ebenfalls zu korrespondierenden Mitgliedern. Als Architekt gehörte Oud in der Akademie der Klasse für Bildende Kunst an, die sich wiederum in die drei Unterabteilungen Malerei, Bildhauerei und Baukunst aufgliederte. Daneben gab es die beiden kleineren Klassen für Literatur und für Musik. Erst nach Ouds Tod wurde 1963 die Architektur als eine eigene Klasse eingerichtet und 1974 in Sektion Baukunst umbenannt. In diesem Jahr kam als fünfte Sektion noch eine weitere für die Darstellende Kunst hinzu. Zum Zeitpunkt der Wahl Ouds hatte die Klasse Bildende Kunst 17 Mitgliedern, wovon 6 Architekten waren: Gustav Oelsner (1870-1956), Otto Heinrich Strohmeyer (1895-1967), Werner Hebebrand (1899-1966), Rudolf Lodders (1901-1978), Werner Kallmorgen (1902-1979) und Gustav Hassenpflug (1907-1977).

Alle sechs hatten bemerkenswerte Lebensläufe hinter sich und spielten in der Hamburger Architektur- und Planungsgeschichte der Nachkriegszeit eine wichtige Rolle. Außer dem älteren Oelsner gehörten sie alle der Generation an, die in den zwanziger Jahre ihre Berufstätigkeit begonnen hatten. Nur Oelsner hatte fast dreißig Jahre und Oud etwa zehn Jahre früher als sie begonnen. Bezüglich ihrer Architekturauffassung waren sie keine homogene Gruppe und

repräsentieren auch nicht das volle Spektrum der für die Hamburger Nachkriegs-Moderne wichtigen Architekten. Sie waren eher eine subjektive Auswahl durch Italiaander und Jahn. Fritz Schumacher und Karl Schneider, die überregional bekanntesten Hamburger Architekten, lebten bereits nicht mehr und konnten nicht berufen werden. Architekten und Planer wie Konstanty Gutschow oder Cäsar Pinnau auszuwählen, war wegen ihrer systemnahen Planungstätigkeit in der NS-Zeit inopportun. Gutschow war als 'Architekt des Elbufers für die NS-Planung Hamburgs verantwortlich und hatte bis 1945 zusammen mit Rudolf Wolters den von Albert Speer begründeten Arbeitsstab für den Wiederaufbau bombenzerstörter Städte koordiniert. Pinnau war mit der Innenausstattung der Neuen Reichskanzlei bekannt geworden und hatte eine Reihe von Großbauten für Speers Große Straße in Berlin geplant. Gutschow plante nach dem Kriege die Medizinische Hochschule Hannover und Pinnau Villen für Hamburger Reeder sowie Fabriken und Verwaltungsgebäude für Rudolf-August Oetker. Dagegen war die zeitweilige enge Zusammenarbeit von Lodders und Kallmorgen mit Gutschow kein Hinderungsgrund für eine Mitgliedschaft, ebensowenig wie die Mitarbeit Hebebrands in Speers Arbeitsstab. Er war seit 1952 Hamburger Oberbaudirektor und quasi per Amt Mitglied der Akademie geworden. Es fällt auf, dass andere wichtige Architekten der ersten Nachkriegsjahre fehlten, etwa Friedrich Ostermeyer, der in den zwanziger Jahre moderne Sozialwohnungen in Altona und Hamburg gebaut hatte und maßgeblich an Großprojekten wie dem Generalplan für Hamburg beteiligt war, oder Bernhard Hermkes, dem der spektakuläre Bau der Hochhäuser am Grindelberg für die britische Militärregierung unterstanden hatte. Erst nachdem Ernst May 1956 aus dem kenyanischen Exil als leitender Architekt der gewerkschaftseigenen Baugesellschaft 'Neue Heimat' nach Hamburg gekommen und 1961 in die Akademie berufen worden war, gab es neue Akademiemitglieder aus diesem Kreis, so seinen ehemaligen Frankfurter Mitarbeiter Bernhard Hermkes, den Tessenow-Schüler Godber Nissen und den Oelsner Gegenspieler Werner Jakstein. Ostermeyer oder Ferdinand Streb, der in den dreißiger Jahren bei Le Corbusier in Paris gearbeitet hatte, wurden dagegen nie in die Akademie berufen.

Es besteht kein Zweifel, dass alle sechs Architekten unter den Akademiemitgliedern mit Oud und seinem Werk seit langem bekannt waren und dass sie ihm zum Teil auch mehrfach persönlich begegnet waren. Die eng verflochtene Architekturwelt Deutschland und der Niederlande und die internationalen Aktivitäten Ouds hatten dazu vielfältige Gelegenheiten geboten, in Rotterdam, in Weimar, in Paris, in Hamburg, in Frankfurt, in Stuttgart und anderswo. Jedem deutschen Architekt, der in den zwanziger Jahren mit Fragen des Kleinwohnungsbaus befasst war, waren Ouds Rotterdamer Siedlungen ein Begriff. Sowohl Lodders als auch Hebebrand hatten mit Ernst May an ähnlichen Projekten für das Neue Frankfurt

zusammengearbeitet und dort 1929 den II. CIAM Kongress *Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum* miterlebt. 1930 war Hebebrand mit May zur Planung von Wohnsiedlungen in die Sowjetunion gegangen, ebenso Hassenpflug, der zuvor nach seinem Studium am Dessauer Bauhaus bei Gropius in Berlin gearbeitet hatte. Die meisten Mitglieder von Mays Teams wurden 1933 nach Deutschland zurückgeschickt und May ging ins Exil nach Kenya. Lediglich Hebebrand blieb als Krankenhausspezialist und Stadtplaner bis zu seiner Ausweisung 1938 in der Sowjetunion. Danach war er unter der Oberleitung von Herbert Rimpl für den Wohnungsbau der neugegründeten Stadt der Hermann-Göring-Werke, dem heutigen Salzgitter, verantwortlich. Ladders wurde in den NS-Jahren Hausarchitekt der Borgward-Automobilwerke in Bremen und konnte diese Arbeit als Privatarchitekt in Hamburg ebenso wie den Bau opulenter Reetdach-Villen bruchlos in der Nachkriegszeit fortsetzen.

1953 war Oelsner das einzige Akademiemitglied, das aus dem Exil zurückgekehrt war. Die Übrigen repräsentierten in exemplarischer Weise die selbst deklarierte 'innere Emigration'. Ladders hatte 1947 in der Zeitschrift *Baukunst und Werkform*, Eine Folge von Beiträgen zum Bauen für sich und viele andere Vertreter der deutschen Nachkriegsmoderne das Schlagwort von der 'Zuflucht' der Modernen im Industriebau geprägt.⁷ Mit unterschiedlich intensiver Verstrickung in das NS-System hatten sie alle als 'unabkömmlich' bei der Planung kriegswichtiger Bauten den Militärdienst vermeiden können. Im Industriebau der Rüstungswirtschaft und in den Bauämtern der Luftwaffe oder der Marine hatten sie sich ein funktionalistisch modernes Tätigkeitsfeld fern der offiziellen Baupolitik mit ihren Forderungen nach Monumentalität oder Blut-und-Boden Romantik bewahren können. Die Ästhetik dieser funktionalistischen Industriearchitektur eignete sich nach Kriegsende trotz ihrer anfänglich geringen Popularität hervorragend, um auf ihrer Grundlage eine Architektur des unbelasteten Neuanfangs zu propagieren.

Außerhalb Hamburgs war Oelsner ohne Zweifel der bekannteste der sechs Architekten, obwohl er nie die internationale Bekanntheit Ouds erreicht hatte. Er war schon vor dem ersten Weltkrieg als Stadtplaner in Breslau und in Kattowitz in leitender Funktion tätig, bevor er sich zwischen 1923 und 1933 mit seiner Bau- und Planungstätigkeit in Hamburgs Zwillingstadt Altona überregional einen Namen machte. Ihn hatten die Nazis nach ihrer Machtübernahme 1933 ebenso wie den mit ihm eng befreundeten Oberbaudirektor im benachbarten Hamburg, Fritz Schumacher, aus dem Amt entfernt. Schumacher hatte ihn 1939, kurz vor Kriegsausbruch, noch an die Technische Hochschule Istanbul auf einen Lehrstuhl für Stadtplanung empfehlen können, wodurch Oelsner in letzter Minute den rassistischen Verfolgungen entkommen konnte, die ihm persönlich drohten.⁸

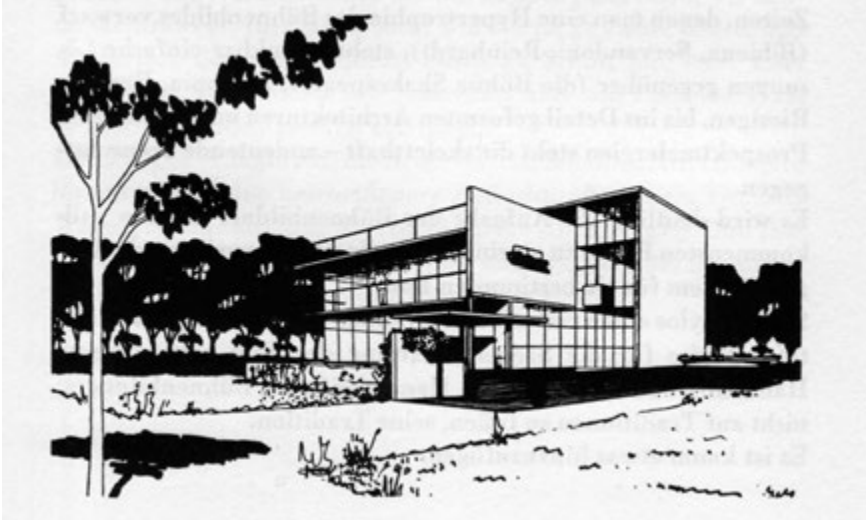


FIG. 8 Entwurf Haus Plate, Voorburg, 1960

Unter den wenigen in der Nazizeit emigrierten Architekten, die nach Deutschland zurückkehrten, war er insofern eine Ausnahme, als er trotz seines Alters erneut eine leitende Funktion in der Stadtplanung übernehmen konnte. In enger Kooperation mit Fritz Schumacher hatte er sich bereits als beigeordneter Baudirektor von Altona maßgeblich an den Verhandlungen zu der Gebietsreform beteiligt, die schließlich 1937 von den Nazis mit dem Groß-Hamburg Gesetz vollzogen worden war. Schumacher hatte noch 1945 in einer programmatischen Rede versucht, den Rahmen für einen verantwortungsvollen Wiederaufbau zu formulieren, aber er war 1947 verstorben und Oelsner bemühte sich, sein Konzept einer sozial und ästhetisch verantwortungsvollen Stadtplanung bei dem jetzt ihm unterstehenden Wiederaufbau Hamburgs durchzusetzen.⁹

Wir wissen nicht genau, wann sich Oelsner und Oud erstmals getroffen haben. Es gab mehrfach Gelegenheit dazu, erstmals, als er 1922 noch von Kattowitz aus eine Reise in die Niederlande unternommen hatte. Wie viele deutsche Architekten der Zeit wollte er sich in diesem während des Krieges neutralen und vom Baustopp verschonten Land ein Bild machen von den Fortschritten in Stadtplanung und Wohnungsbau. 1924, gerade als Stadtbaumeister nach Altona berufen, nahm er ebenso wie sein schon berühmter Rotterdamer Kollege am internationalen Städtebaukongress in Amsterdam teil. Oud hatte deren Teilnehmer anschließend durch Rotterdam geführt, wobei sie sich zumindest begegnet waren. Oelsner selbst erwähnt ein Zusammentreffen mit Oud 'einer der Besten, die Europa in letzter Zeit gehabt hat' bei einer weiteren gemeinsam

mit Bruno Taut unternommenen Reise in die Niederlande 1927/28.¹⁰ Oelsner stand schon seit 1915 in freundschaftlichem Kontakt mit Taut und dieser hatte die niederländische Entwicklung intensiv verfolgt und ihm mit Sicherheit mehrfach darüber berichtet, insbesondere nach seinen zwei Vortragsreisen dorthin im Februar und September 1923. Eine weitere Begegnungsmöglichkeit hatte natürlich auch die Pariser Städtebaukonferenz von 1928 geboten, an der Oud und auch Oelsner teilgenommen haben.

Schon vor Oelsners erster Reise nach Holland hatte Oud Kontakte nach Hamburg. 1920 hatte er Fritz Schumachers im Bau befindliche Hamburger Gartenstadt Langenhorn besucht und sich vermutlich von diesem führen lassen. Auch der umtriebige, allerdings von Oelsner wenig geliebte und in das Amt für Baupflege abgeschobene Altonaer Baurat Werner Jakstein hatte früh Kontakte zu Oud aufgenommen und seit 1923 mit diesem korrespondiert.¹¹ Er hatte 1923, noch vor Oelsners Amtsantritt in Altona, gemeinsam mit dem dänischen Avantgardisten Knud Lønberg-Holm eine Hollandreise unternommen und im gleichen Jahr die von Oud kuratierte Präsentation niederländischer Architektur am Weimarer Bauhaus besucht. Im gleichen Jahr hatte er in einem Aufsatz zur Weltbaukunst Ouds Entwurf der Villa Kallenbach abgebildet und Oud als einen der führenden Vertreter der internationalen Avantgarde neben Frank Lloyd Wright, El Lissitzky, und Walter Gropius gewürdigt.¹² Jakstein war neben seiner Orientierung nach Dänemark und Skandinavien einer der engagiertesten Fürsprecher der jungen Niederländer in Hamburg und Altona. Erst nach Oelsners Tod wurde auch er 1959 Mitglied der Freien Akademie. Er starb kurz darauf und wurde postum von der Akademie 1960 mit einer Gedächtnisausstellung geehrt.¹³ Eine weitere Gelegenheit zu einem persönlichen Zusammentreffen Oelsners mit Oud bot 1926 die von Fritz Block organisierte Ausstellung *Neuzeitlicher Volkswohnungen im In- und Auslande* im Kunsthaus Hamburg, in der mehrere von Ouds Arbeiten gezeigt wurden und während der Oud zwei Vorträge hielt.¹⁴

Ohne Zweifel gab es für die Hamburger und Altonaer Architekten zahlreiche weitere Möglichkeiten etwas über Oud zu erfahren. Dazu waren keine Reisen in die Niederlande nötig, denn dieser war oft in Deutschland, hielt Vorträge, stellte aus, hatte schon 1921 in Berlin die Villa Kallenbach geplant und konnte 1927 Stuttgarter Werkbundaussstellung am Weissenhofsiedlung seine weltweit beachteten Reihenhäuser mit Minimalwohnungen bauen.¹⁵ Zudem gab es die Gelegenheiten, seine Bauten in der Fachpresse zu verfolgen, nicht zuletzt in der seit 1926 von Rolf Spörhase in Hamburg herausgegebenen *Baurundschau*, in der dieser zwar vor allem den lokalen Vorzeige-Modernen Karl Schneider präsentierte, aber auch Oud überproportional viel Aufmerksamkeit widmete.

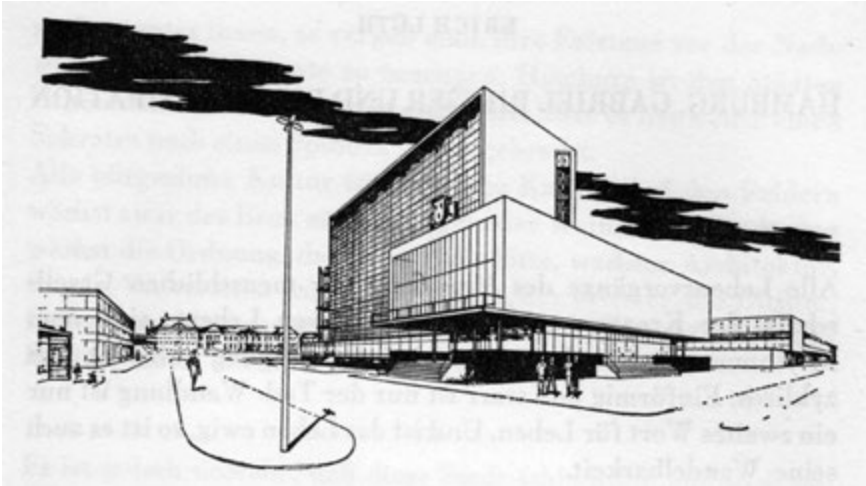


FIG. 9 Entwurf für ein Rathaus in Almelo

Oelsner konnte sich der Zustimmung seiner Architekturkollegen ganz sicher sein, als er Oud 1953 als korrespondierendes Mitglied der Akademie vorschlug. Auf die eine oder andere Weise hatten sie ihn alle vor 1933 kennengelernt oder von ihm Kenntnis genommen. Ohne jeden Zweifel, war ihnen allen aber auch Ouds spätere Distanzierung von seinen Aktivitäten in der De Stijl-Gruppe nicht verborgen geblieben und sie kannten die Empörung früherer Weggenossen gegen seine Hinwendung zu einer repräsentativen und bewusst künstlerisch gestalteten Architektur gegen Ende der 30er Jahre, die in seiner zwischen 1937 und 1942 errichteten Shell-Hauptverwaltung in Den Haag ihren deutlichsten Ausdruck gefunden hatte. Bereits 1930 hatte er Fritz Schumacher gegenüber bei dessen Besuch in Rotterdam angedeutet, wie sehr er ihn und auch Willem Marinus Dudok darum beneide, dass sie beide in ihren Städten, in Hamburg und in Hilversum, neue soziale Monumente in der Form von Schulen, Krankenhäusern und Verwaltungsbauten errichten konnten, während es ihm nicht gelang, sich von seinem Ruf als Meister karger funktionaler Kleinwohnungsbauten frei zu machen, von seinen 'Wohn-Fords' wie Sigfried Giedion einmal gesagt hatte.¹⁶

Oud hat die Einladung in die Hamburger Akademie ohne Zweifel gern angenommen und dabei vermutlich große Erwartungen an den geistigen Austausch mit den Akademiemitgliedern der verschiedenen Sektionen gehabt. In seinem ersten, wohl programmatisch verstandenen Beitrag zu dem 1954 erschienenen Akademie-Jahrbuch *Die Spur des Menschen* fordert er eine mit den Künsten verbundene Architektur als ein neues Neues Bauen, das nicht nur die materiellen, sondern auch die emotionalen Bedürfnisse des modernen Lebens erfüllen sollte: 'Die neue Form kommt zwar unseren eigentlichen Sorgen entgegen, sie entrückt uns

aber noch nicht dieser Sorgen. Dies allein vermag nur die Kunst: die Architektur. Bauen an sich ist noch nicht Architektur.' Er fährt fort: 'Der Mensch fand nicht nur Ruhe in einem bequemen Sessel, sondern auch in einer schönen Form. Er fand in der Architektur vibrierende Massenwirkung, wohlabgewogene Proportionen, faszinierende Farben, inhaltsreiche Bildereien [sic] usw. Ein Bau kann also eine Akkumulation von Emotionen sein, die uns durch Übertragung in eine seelische Begeisterung versetzen können. [...] Welch eine Bewunderung hege ich noch immer für Tessenow, der das kleinste Haus zu einem Kunstwerk von großem Wert zu machen wusste!¹⁷ In der Hoffnung dadurch besser verstanden zu werden, ergänzte er seinen Artikel im Bildteil des Jahrbuches ohne nähere Erläuterung mit zwei Perspektiven zu seinem jüngsten Entwurf für die Verwaltungszentrale der Provinz Süd-Holland.

Zu dem zwei Jahre später erschienenen Jahrbuch *Kontrapunkte* lieferte er einen Artikel, in dem er das Fehlen einer mit der Kunst-, Literatur- und Theaterkritik vergleichbaren Architekturkritik beklagt. Dies führt er darauf zurück, dass die Architektur schon seit geraumer Zeit nicht mehr zu den Künsten gezählt werde und sie sich auch selbst immer seltener dazurechne. Die Kritiker hielten sich von der Architektur fern, weil sie zu wenig geschult seien, deren vielfältige künstlerische Qualitäten überhaupt zu erkennen. Ein Bauwerk könne durch das Zusammenwirken seiner Elemente, seine Stellung in der Stadt oder in der Landschaft, seine Massen- und Raumwirkung beeindrucken. 'Aber obendrein kann uns ein Bauwerk still machen durch die Empfindlichkeit und die Unerschütterlichkeit, womit alle Details innen wie außen abgestimmt und zu einem charaktvollen Ganzen zusammengeschmolzen sind. Einem Ganzen, das getragen wird durch einen überzeugten Geist, mit dem wir eins werden, wenn wir das Bauwerk nachbegreifen und innerlich bejahen- und das ist doch, nicht wahr?- das Ziel jeglicher Kunst.'¹⁸

1957 äußerte sich Oud ein weiteres und letztes Mal im Jahrbuch *Das Einhorn* in einer kurzen Darstellung seines eigenen Werdegangs zu seiner Kunst- und Architekturauffassung. Die später noch folgenden Beiträge sind sämtlich Beschreibungen aktueller Projekte, wobei er keine vergleichbar grundsätzlichen Fragen behandelt. In den ersten drei Artikeln bekennt er sich nicht nur zu einer über das Sachliche hinausgreifenden künstlerischen Architektur, sondern geht auch explizit auf seine eigene Wandlung vom überzeugten Vorkämpfer der Sachlichkeit in seiner *De Stijl*-Zeit zu einem nachdenklichen Sucher einer innerlichen und emotional befriedigenden Architektur ein, die zum Ende der dreißiger Jahre den Eklat um das Shell-Verwaltungsgebäude ausgelöst hatte. 'Es war mir deutlich geworden, daß ich [...] zwar Objekte stark utilitärer Art im Geiste der Zeit formen konnte, daß bei der Einfachheit der Formgebung mein baukünstlerisches Arsenal

jedoch nicht ausreichte, um Unterschiede in die Tiefe gehender Art auszudrücken. Wir sind ja mitten in der Gefahr, daß unsere Umgebung eintönig und langweilig auszusehen beginnt, falls wir zu sehr auf das Nur-Sachliche hinarbeiten.' Er fährt fort: 'Das Bauen als unterscheidendes Symbol ist nötig, um die Eintönigkeit der Großstadt zu beheben. [...] Wir brauchen nach soviel Sachlichkeit jetzt die neue psychologische Schönheit, das neue Drama in der Architektur, um in der Reihe der Kulturen in Zukunft einen nennenswerten Platz einnehmen zu können.'¹⁹

Hatte Oud 1953 tatsächlich gehofft, dass es in dieser neugegründeten Akademie in Hamburg, die ihn zu ihrem Mitglied gemacht hatte, einen intensiven Ideenaustausch über eine kommende Baukunst und über das Zusammenwirken aller Künste an diesem Ziel geben würde, so muss er die folgenden Jahre als grobe Enttäuschung erfahren haben. Es gab kaum Gelegenheit zu regelmäßigen Treffen der Mitglieder insgesamt, zu Ideenaustausch und Diskussion über die Grenzen der getrennt organisierten Sektionen hinweg. Statt aufeinander zuzugehen, sonderten sich die Disziplinen voneinander ab. Die Bildung einer eigenen Sektion Baukunst war so gesehen, kein Fortschritt und vergleichbar mit dem Scheitern von Hassenpflugs Absicht, aus der Hamburger Landeskunstschule eine integrative Kunsthochschule à la Bauhaus zu machen. Bereits 1961 wurden auch dort einzelne Fachbereiche mit sehr unterschiedlichen Ausbildungszielen eingerichtet. Immerhin gab es während der Akademiepräsidentschaft von Godber Nissen von 1972-80 noch einen späten Versuch, in regelmäßigen 'Werkstattgesprächen' fachspezifische und auch übergreifende Themen zu diskutieren. Oud konnte davon nicht mehr profitieren. Er war bereits im April 1963 verstorben.

Mir ist nicht bekannt, ob Oud während des Jahrzehntes seiner Akademiemitgliedschaft jemals an den Sitzungen, den seltenen Vorträgen und den noch selteneren Ehrungen verstorbener Mitglieder oder Verleihungen von Ehrenplaketten teilgenommen hat. Das wäre sicherlich anders verlaufen, wenn er in Hamburg oder überhaupt in der Bundesrepublik, die gerade einen Bauboom ohne gleichen erlebte, Bauaufträge erhalten hätte. Seinem jüngeren Landsmann Jaap Bakema (1914-1981) war dies zur gleichen Zeit mehrfach gelungen. Er war zur Berliner Interbau von 1957 eingeladen worden, ein Wohnhochhaus zu bauen, und schnell zu einem gefragten Architekten und Stadtplaner geworden. Unter anderem hatte er 1961 in Hamburg mit seinem ersten Preis im Wettbewerb für die Wohnsiedlung Steilshoop starke Beachtung gefunden. Er wurde dennoch kein Mitglied der Hamburger Akademie, aber er wurde 1965 als Nachfolger von Hebebrand auf dessen Städtebauprofessur an die Hamburger Hochschule für bildende Künste berufen. Er war jünger als Oud und vertrat in den Augen einflussreicher Fachkollegen, darunter in Hamburg zweifellos auch Hebebrand und May, eine pragmatische Architekturauffassung, die sich von Ouds Verständnis

von Baukunst und seiner Suche nach einem 'poetischem Funktionalismus' deutlich unterschied. Hebebrand hätte seinem Akademiekollegen durchaus Aufträge in Hamburg verschaffen können, aber er hatte daran offenbar kein Interesse. In seinem Nachruf auf Oud im Akademie-Jahrbuch von 1963 klingt eine 10 Jahre zuvor noch nicht geäußerte Distanz an, die hierfür der Grund sein könnte: 'Oud bemühte sich "eine Kunstform zu finden" (!), wie er schrieb, und fuhr fort: "Einen Versuch dazu verkörpert das Shell-Gebäude, das ich 1938-1942 in Den Haag baute." Dies Gebäude in klassizistischen Formen, im Alter von 57 Jahren konzipiert, wurde von seinen Schülern van den Brook [sic] und Bakema mit Recht heftig angegriffen. Er selbst glaubte später, diese Krise überwunden zu haben und probierte seitdem, ein Gleichgewicht herzustellen, wobei die Sachlichkeit der Formgebung und größere Vielgestaltigkeit zur Synthese kommen sollten. Hat er diese Krise wirklich überwunden? Man hat den Stein auf ihn geworfen, so wie man ihn auf Saarinen's Londoner Botschaft, auf manche späte Werke von Gropius warf!'²⁰

Auch wenn Hebebrand am Ende seines Nachrufs betont, diesen 'liebenswerten Menschen', wie selbstverständlich die anderen Akademiekollegen auch, geliebt zu haben und sich nicht selbst zum Steinwerfen bekennt, bleibt zu fragen, warum er und auch Hassenpflug, der sicherlich ähnlicher Meinung war wie er, sich 1953 nicht gegen Oelsners Vorschlag gestellt hatten und Oud mitgewählt hatten. Hatte sich das Klima in der Sektion Freie Kunst nach Oelsners Tod und nach Mays Berufung so stark verändert? Immerhin erklären seine Worte doch teilweise das Schweigen zu Ouds Artikeln in den Jahrbüchern der Akademie. Die Jahrbücher selbst waren zwar nicht als Diskussionsforum angelegt, aber die Fachpresse hätte genügend Möglichkeiten zu kritischen oder zustimmenden Stellungnahmen geboten, auch den Akademiemitgliedern. Insgesamt sind die von Italiaander redigierten und graphisch von Helmut Heinsohn gestalteten Jahrbücher das wichtigste Lebenszeichen der Akademie überhaupt. Sie waren hauptsächlich durch den Hamburger Unternehmer und CDU Politiker Blumenfeld finanziert und in höherer Auflage in Umlauf gebracht worden. Bis 1968 erschienen insgesamt 17 Bände in dieser anspruchsvollen Form. Auch wenn die Beiträge selten kritischen Ansprüchen genügen, so liefern sie doch ein eindrucksvolles Bild einer Hamburger Kulturszene der 50er und 60er Jahre in der keine fruchtbare Debatte aufkommen konnte, weil die einzelnen Kunstdisziplinen sich zunehmend voneinander abkapselten und so das auf Austausch und Wechselbeziehung ausgerichtete Akademiemodell ad absurdum führten. Ouds Bereitschaft mit seinen Beiträgen in den Jahrbücher zu einem solchen Diskurs beizutragen waren von vornherein vergeblich und unwirksam.

Ohne Zweifel hätte Ouds Gesamtwerk nach seinem Tod eine Würdigung durch eine Gedächtnisausstellung in der Akademie verdient, wie sie etwa Oelsner und

Jakstein erfahren haben. Aber dies wurde nicht einmal vorgeschlagen. Eine solche Gesamtschau – J.J.P. Oud: *Bauten 1906-1963* – fand 1965 nicht in Hamburg, sondern in München in der Neuen Sammlung statt und die unwillige Hamburger Akademie konnte im Anhang ihres Jahrbuches darüber berichten, allerdings nicht mit einer eigenen Ausstellungsbesprechung, sondern lediglich mit einem längeren Zitat des Kurators Wend Fischer aus dem Münchener Katalog.²¹

Texte und Bauten von J.J.P. Oud in den Jahrbüchern der Freien Akademie in Hamburg

- Jahrbuch 1954 *Die Spur des Menschen*, 94-96 'Neue Formen oder neue Architektur', Im unpaginierten Bildteil: Entwurf für das Provinciehuis Zuid-Holland [2]
- Jahrbuch 1955 *Umwege*, Im unpaginierten Bildteil: Entwurf für ein Kontorgebäude in Rotterdam (Levensverzekering Maatschappij Utrecht) [3]
- Jahrbuch 1956 *Kontrapunkte*, 57-61 'Die Architekten und die Kritiker'
- Jahrbuch 1957 *Das Einhorn*, 188-192 J.J.P. Oud, 'Von ihm selber' (dazu Portraitzeichnung von Paul Citroen) [1]
- Jahrbuch 1959 *Fundamente*, 108-109 'Das kulturelle Zentrum von Den Haag' (mit Lageplan), 142 *Werke der letzten Jahre*, Im unpaginierten Bildteil: Modellphoto des Kulturzentrum Den Haag [4-5]
- Jahrbuch 1960 *Kontraste*, 110-112 'Bauen für Kinder' (mit Lageplan des Bio-Herstellingsoord, Arnhem) Im unpaginierten Bildteil: Abb. des Sportgebäudes im BIO Herstellingsoord [6-7]
- Jahrbuch 1961 *Traditionen*, 94-96 'Tradition in einem Einfamilienhaus' (i.e. Entwurf Haus Plate, Voorburg, 1960), (mit Perspektive und 4 Grundrissen)
- Jahrbuch 1962 *Rhythmen*, 182-183 Entwurf für ein Rathaus in Almelo (1961-62) (dazu zwei Perspektiven)
- Jahrbuch 1963 *Antworten*, 19 [8-9]-21 Werner Hebebrand, 'Dem Gedächtnis von Jacobus Jan Pieter Oud' (nach 48 Portraitphoto Oud 'anlässlich seines Todes am 5. April 1963')
- Jahrbuch 1965 *Spiralen*, 430 Oud-Ausstellung in München *Bauten 1906-1963*,
- Jahrbuch 1967 *Profile*, 46-49 J.J.P. Oud, 'Selbstdarstellung' (Nachdruck aus Jahrbuch *Das Einhorn*, 1957)

Noten

Mein Dank für sachdienliche Hinweise geht an: Olaf Bartels, Hans Bunge, Monika Isler, Ulrich Schwarz und Adrian Täckmann.

- 1 Vgl. Ulrich Baron, *40 Jahre Freie Akademie der Künste in Hamburg*, Hamburg 1990.
- 2 Siehe: Festschrift *Hanns Henny Jahnn*, Hamburg 1954; Rolf Italiaander, *Hans Henny Jahnn. Das Buch der Freunde*, im Auftrag der Freien Akademie der Künste zum ersten Todestag des Dichters (29. November 1960) zusammengestellt; *Zeitgenosse Hans Henny Jahnn. Ist der Mensch zu retten?*, Dokumentation der Hamburger Hans-Henny-Jahnn-Wochen, veranstaltet von der Freien Akademie der Künste mit Unterstützung der Kulturbehörde der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg anlässlich des 90. Geburtstages und 25-jährigen Todestages Hans Henny Jahns (1985).
- 3 Regina Kirchhof, *Rolf Italiaander*, Hamburg 1977.
- 4 Frank Thiess, 'Rolf Italiaander', *Das Einhorn, Jahrbuch der Freien Akademie der Künste in Hamburg* (1957), 77-82.
- 5 Siehe: Lothar Juckel (ed.), *Werner Hebebrand. Zur Neuen Stadt*, Berlin 1969.
- 6 Dieses komplette Fehlen von Korrespondenzen überrascht dennoch, denn Italiaander hat Texte von Oud für die Jahrbücher der Akademie übersetzt. Zudem zitiert Hebebrand in seinem Nachruf auf Oud aus einem Brief von dessen Ehefrau Annie Oud-Dinnaux an Italiaander [Werner Hebebrand, 'Dem Gedächtnis von Jacobus Jan Pieter Oud', *Antworten, Jahrbuch der Freien Akademie der Künste in Hamburg* (1963), 21].
- 7 Rudolf Lodders, 'Zuflucht im Industriebau', *Baukunst und Werkform* 1 (1947) 1.
- 8 Siehe: Erich Lüth (ed.), *Gustav Oelsner. Portrait eines Baumeisters*, Hamburg 1960; Christoph Timm, *Gustav Oelsner und das Neue Altona*, Hamburg 1984; Burcu Dogramaci, *Gustav Oelsner. Stadtplaner und Architekt der Moderne*, Hamburg 2008.
- 9 Fritz Schumacher, *Zum Wiederaufbau Hamburgs. Rede im Hamburger Rathaus am 10. Oktober 1945*, Hamburg 1945.
- 10 Gustav Oelsner, 'Begegnungen mit Berufsgenossen', in Lüth, *Gustav Oelsner*, 21.
- 11 Siehe: Eva von Engelberg-Dočkal, 'Moderne und Heimatschutz-Oelsners Wohnbauten unter dem Einfluss Hollands und der lokalen Bautradition', in Dogramaci, *Gustav Oelsner*, 56, Anm. 23.
- 12 Werner Jakstein, 'Weltbaukunst', *Deutsche Überseezeitung* 12. August 1923.
- 13 Werner Kallmorgen, 'Rede zur Eröffnung der Jakstein-Ausstellung', *Antworten, Jahrbuch der Freien Akademie der Künste in Hamburg* (1963), 291-294.
- 14 Siehe: Engelberg-Dočkal, 'Moderne und Heimatschutz-Oelsners Wohnbauten unter dem Einfluss Hollands und der lokalen Bautradition', 57, Anm. 34 u. 35.
- 15 Ausführliche Projektbeschreibungen bei Eva von Engelberg-Dočkal, *J.J.P. Oud. Zwischen De Stijl und klassischer Tradition. Arbeiten von 1916-1931*, Berlin 2006, 424-432 Wettbewerb Wohnhaus Kallenbach 1921; 495-504, Reihenhäuser in der Weißenhofsiedlung Stuttgart 1927.
- 16 Fritz Schumacher, *Rundblicke*, Stuttgart und Berlin 1936, 171 f.
- 17 J.J.P. Oud, 'Neue Form oder neue Architektur?' *Die Spur des Menschen, Jahrbuch der Freien Akademie der Künste Hamburg* (1954), 94-96.
- 18 J.J.P. Oud, 'Die Architekten und die Kritiker', *Kontrapunkte, Jahrbuch der Freien Akademie der Künste Hamburg* (1956), 57-61.
- 19 J.J.P. Oud, 'Von ihm selber', *Das Einhorn, Jahrbuch der Freien Akademie der Künste Hamburg* (1957), 57-61.
- 20 Werner Hebebrand, 'Dem Gedächtnis von Jacobus Jan Pieter Oud', *Antworten, Jahrbuch der Freien Akademie der Künste in Hamburg* (1963), 21. Hebebrand zitiert aus Ouds 'Von ihm selber' in *Das Einhorn*.
- 21 'J.J.P.Oud', *Spiralen, Jahrbuch der Freien Akademie der Künste in Hamburg* (1965), 430.

The old guard modernists in Western Europe and post-war urban visions: Cornelis van Eesteren as jury member of the ‘Hauptstad Berlin’ competition 1957-58

Urban visions drawn on paper, assessed in competitions, and circulated through journals and books can have a huge impact on city planning. They can be as influential – perhaps even more influential – as realized plans that, after all, have to withstand the realities of funding, land use planning or everyday use. Prizes awarded for competition entries and the publicity that comes with them can influence urban planning practices for decades to come. It was therefore a decision of far-reaching consequences when leading modernists were chosen as members of the jury for the Hauptstadt Berlin competition 1957-58 – a competition set up to plan for a future city center of a reunited Berlin as the capital of Germany. Among the selected jurors were Dutch urbanist Cornelis van Eesteren and the Finn Alvar Aalto, his friend from the Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM). The selection of the jury was a conscious choice aimed at continuing and updating pre-war modernist discussions.

Planning for Berlin after the World War II

After Germany’s defeat in World War II, the city center of the old imperial capital Berlin was largely destroyed. For many German and foreign planners this destruction signalled an opportunity to rethink the former capital’s urban form without much concern for the historic urban layout or the few remaining buildings. They were eager to provide their ideas in the context of a major event such as a city planning competition for the design of the Berlin center.

But, the competition had to respond to the political context of the time. The former capital was under the political and planning control of the governments of two parallel states, the German Federal Republic (GFR) in the West, which also controlled the Western part of Berlin under the control and influence of the United States, the United Kingdom and France, and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the East, which chose Berlin East as its capital and aligned with the Soviet Union. The government of the GDR, which controlled the historic center of Berlin, had started rebuilding activities, using them to make a political statement. Notably the so-called Stalinallee, the major boulevard with multi-functional housing in neo-classical style leading from the center of Berlin East to the outskirts of the city in the direction of Moscow, made a clear statement about the political affiliation of the GDR.

The GFR lacked control of the key historical areas of the city other than the former parliament building, the Reichstag. To make a point on its claim on the rebuilding of the center of Berlin, and to take a stand against the Stalinallee, the governments of the GFR and West Berlin were limited to paper architecture. As the relation between East and West declined and a realistic chance of reunification disappeared, they opted to make a major political statement through paper urbanism. Starting in 1954, they organized an international building exhibition, the *Interbau*, and opened a competition for the capital of Berlin: 'Hauptstadt Berlin'. This competition had several, sometimes opposing tasks to fulfill. Political reasons – the West German government's continued believe and fight for a united capital – were important. In addition to the competition's advertising function, the competition also sought to address concrete urban planning tasks: city planners had to keep sufficient land free for future government functions and infrastructures.

The Hauptstadt Berlin competition: Preparation and selection of the jury

The governments of the GFR and West Berlin intended the Hauptstadt Berlin competition as proof that a capital of a unified democratic Germany would be capable of hosting both national and cosmopolitan functions. The inclusion of the territory of the historic center of Berlin, under GDR administration, in the competition area represented a political affront to the East German government and was met with strong criticism. Nonetheless, this situation provided room for the making of an architectural and urban statement to be circulated on paper, and a conscious attempt to innovate based on the ideas of 1920s modernists.

It was in this highly charged context that jury members were selected. A Preparatory Committee established in 1955 brought together ten experts, some drawn from the national and Berlin administrations. Others were leading German architects of

the reconstruction period. This group steered the competition towards moderate modernist planning, typical of German post-war reconstruction. The most notable of the invited members had long-standing expertise in modernist planning and a history of work with relevant networks.

Otto Bartning had been active in the planning of the modernist Siemensstadt since the 1920s. He had been an urban planning advisor to Berlin since 1955 and head of the Bund Deutscher Architekten, the association of architects in the GFR. His hope for the competition was to obtain projects that would still be valid in 2000, clearly an indication of his desire for future-oriented projects.¹ Werner Hebebrand, head of urbanism in Hamburg (Oberbaudirektor) from 1952-64, worked with Ernst May in the 1920s in Frankfurt and was closely connected with several CIAM members. Hebebrand opposed urban planning based on monumentality and axes and called for the sort of land reform that had been carried out in Rotterdam. Rudolf Hillebrecht was a key player in the German reconstruction. He had stayed in Germany during the war and continued to work under the Nazis. As head of urban planning in Hannover he organized the exhibition Constructa 1951 that indicated directions for postwar urban planning in Germany. In the jury he played a connecting role between planners who had left Germany and those who had stayed. Among the latter was Hans Stephan, who participated in the Preparatory Committee as urban planning director in Berlin (Senatsbaudirektor) and who had held important positions during the Nazi period.

This group developed the practical foundation for the competition. They decided to invite some prominent foreign modernists whom they knew and who knew each other from the pre-war period to join the jury in addition to key members of the Preparatory Committee. They invited several long-standing members of the old CIAM avantgarde with strong roots in Western Europe. These were planners who were aware of the city-planning reality of Berlin – partly on the basis of experience from the 1920s. All spoke German, so communication on the jury did not involve language barriers. The resulting selection of jury members set the stage for the competition outcome, aimed at providing solutions to planning problems specific to Berlin and developing new ideas for future cities.

West European modernists as jury members

The Hauptstadt Berlin competition was planned as an international event, in a way that was in keeping with pre-war modernism. The names of the famous jury members were expected to be enough to attract as many participants as possible. The most famous invitee was Walter Gropius, who had been an American citizen

since 1944, and who was one of the architects involved in the *Interbau* exhibition. As the most prominent emigrated representative of German architecture in the 1920s, Gropius was known to all those involved. His contacts with Bartning and Hebebrand came from the Bauhaus era and the common CIAM work. The nomination of Gropius as a judge was a great incentive for foreigners to participate.

Ultimately, Gropius did not take part in the jury – officially due to illness. From his correspondence with Le Corbusier it appears that there were ‘difficulties with Berlin’ – probably in the context of the *Interbau* exhibition – which prevented him from participating.² As a replacement for Gropius, Herbert Jensen, a representative of an unbroken planning continuity from the Nazi era to the 1950s,³ was appointed to the jury. Thus, the German planners of the postwar reconstruction were most numerous.

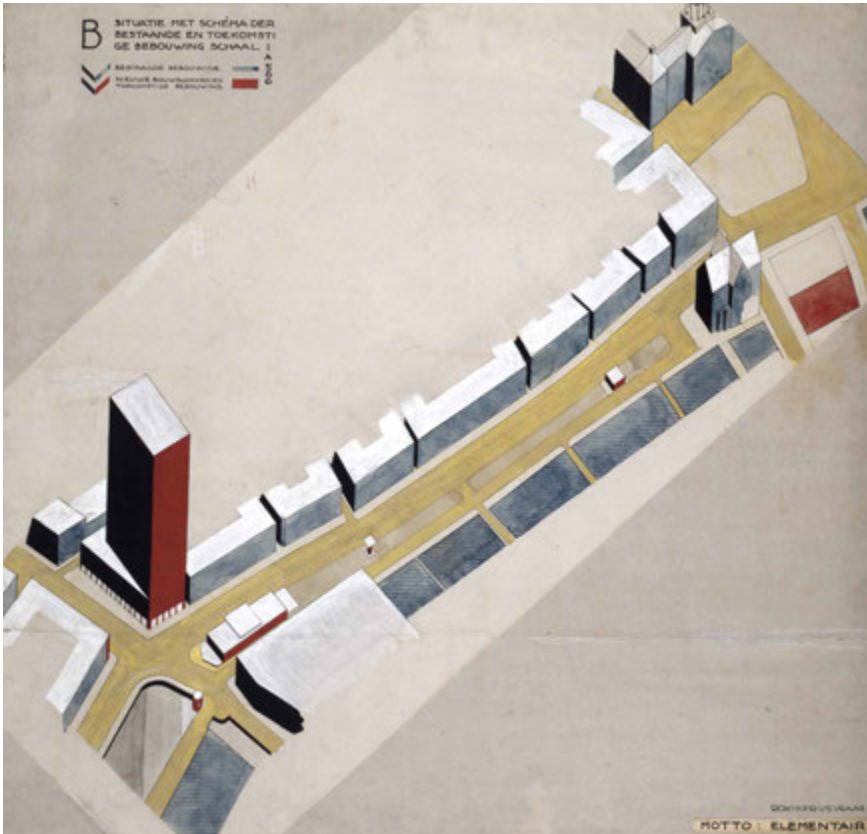


FIG. 1 Cornelis van Eesteren, Competition Entry Unter den Linden, Berlin, 1925 [Het Nieuwe Instituut]

They also invited Cornelis van Eesteren, the past president of CIAM, whose contacts in Berlin went back to the 1920s. In 1925, van Eesteren had won the first prize in the competition for the redesign of Unter den Linden. [1] As head of the Urban Planning Department in Amsterdam, van Eesteren was familiar with concrete urban planning issues as well as with large-scale visionary projects. [2] Furthermore, they invited Alvar Aalto, who had been part of the international architectural avant-garde in the 1920s and had been a member of CIAM since its founding in 1928. Aalto was also involved in the construction of a building at the *Interbau* exhibition.

Pierre Vago was the youngest of the foreign invited judges. His role was important for the intended political and urban-based impact of the competition. He brought in a strong theoretical aspect of architecture through his activities as editor-in-chief of the French architectural magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*. As long-time Secretary General of the International Union of Architects (UIA), Vago was informed about the conditions for holding competitions, a knowledge key to the holding of *Hauptstadt Berlin 1957-58* competition. Vago was the only one among the foreign jury members who did not belong to the 'old guard' of the CIAM and was the most critical of the general consensus among the other judges. His opinions also differed from those of his peers, as his conception of the capital was influenced by Paris city planning culture and studies at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* under Auguste Perret.

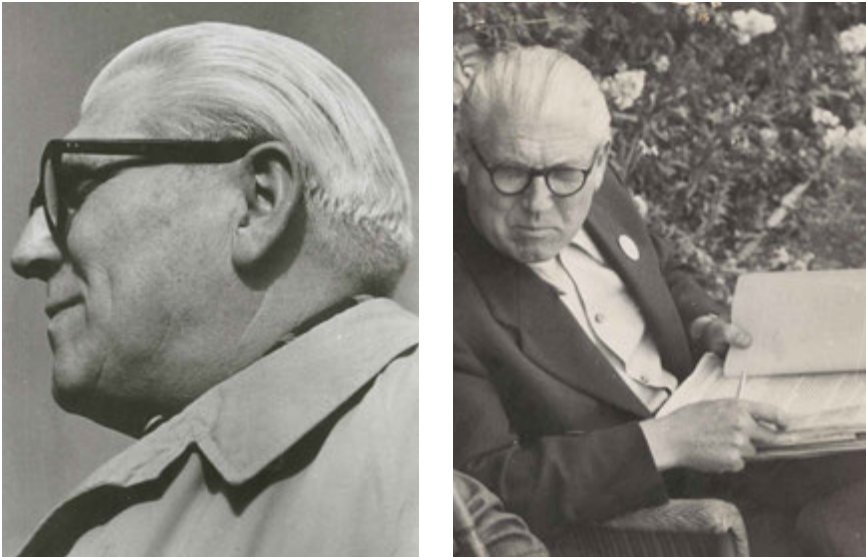


FIG. 2 Photos of Cornelis van Eesteren [Het Nieuwe Instituut]

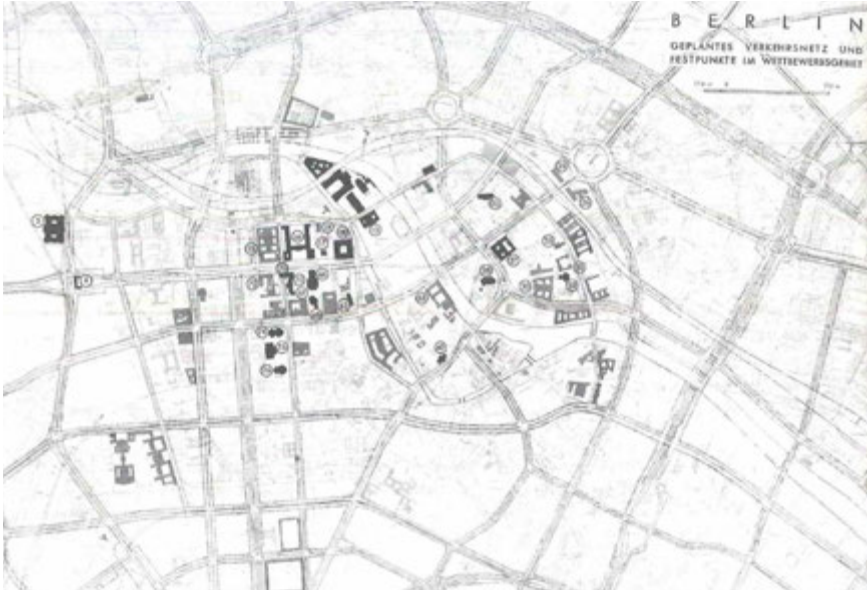


FIG. 3 The Preparatory Committee's traffic plan served was included in the material provided to participants in the Capital Berlin competition 1957-58 [Berlin. Planungsgrundlagen für den städtebaulichen Ideenwettbewerb 'Hauptstadt Berlin', Bonn/Berlin 1957]

Discussion of East European judges

The Preparatory Committee proposed the participation and the invitation of Eastern European architects.⁴ Many modernists had found a home in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. At the beginning of 1957, Hans Hopp, the president of the Bund Deutscher Architekten der DDR, the association of East German architects, suggested that the competition documents should be coordinated between the East and West administrations before they were issued. He also said that a representative of the GDR would be appointed to the jury.⁵

The Preparatory Committee's lead, Bartning, ultimately rejected this proposal, stating that the competition was open to all European architects and that the preparations formed an appropriate foundation for the planning of a future German capital. He replied to Hopp on May 15, 1957 that the competition had been announced in agreement with the UIA and that the documents had already been printed.⁶ A conversation between Hillebrecht and the East Berlin chief architect Hermann Henselmann, who had expressed positive views on the West Berlin *Interbau* exhibition and the invitation of Western architects to the competition for the residential area Fennpfuhl in the GDR's part of Berlin, could no longer prevent

the break with East Berlin. As Henselmann foresaw, the GDR authorities and the Soviet occupying forces protested against the Hauptstadt Berlin competition,⁷ stating that it was a call for an intervention in the allied jurisdictions.

The Bund Deutscher Architekten der DDR tried to block the Hauptstadt Berlin competition via the UIA. Here the selection of the jury members paid off. Pierre Vago, as indicated above secretary-general of the UIA and jury member in the Hauptstadt Berlin 1957-58 competition, informed the Bund Deutscher Architekten in the GFR on request that the competition was technically sound and could not be closed for political reasons.⁸ Ultimately, the Bund Deutscher Architekten in the GDR was left only with the choice to prohibit the competition for its members and ask other friendly associations to do the same: A demand that Romania and the USSR stay away followed. Other Eastern Bloc countries similarly hindered the submission of competition documents.⁹

The competition Hauptstadt Berlin

After almost ten years of preparation, the competition Hauptstadt Berlin was advertised on 30 March 1957 [3–4]. As was to be expected, the most violent reaction to the official competition came from the GDR. The bidding process of the capital city's competition was rated as a manoeuvre to divert attention from the Federal Republic's accession to the newly established European communities.¹⁰ East Berlin would go on to host its own competition for the center of Berlin. In addition, the result of the all-German competition Fennpfuhl in Berlin-Lichtenberg was revised, in which a West German architect (Ernst May) had recently won the first prize.¹¹ Despite the primarily critical attitude of politicians, interest among planners was great: 392 architects requested the competition documents, consisting of memorandum, planning documents, and statement. Ultimately, 151 projects, including two full-scale variants, were submitted by the deadline of 1 February 1958.

On the 10th of June, 1958, the jury met for the first time. Governing Mayor Willy Brandt and Hermann Wandersleb, representing the Federal Ministry of Housing, opened the meeting. Otto Bartning, Cornelis van Eesteren and Rudolf Hillebrecht alternated as chair in a daily rotation. After the round of assessments, 52 works were unanimously excluded. On the afternoon of the second day, the jury went on a joint tour of the competition area to clarify local issues. On the third and fourth day of the meeting, a further 73 works were dropped. Among them were projects by well-known architects who participated in CIAM, such as Mart Stam, the Dutch architect and planner; Arthur Korn, who worked in Berlin before emigrating to London in 1937, and Ernst May, head of urban planning in Frankfurt in the 1920s.



FIG. 4 Master plan for Berlin as a unified city in 1957 [Berlin. Planungsgrundlagen für den städtebaulichen Ideenwettbewerb 'Hauptstadt Berlin', Bonn/Berlin 1957]

After the first round of assessment of the entries, the judges were able to subdivide the work into two groups. One group – comprised mostly of the German participants – had tried to develop realistic and detailed proposals within the existing laws and technology, while the other group, including French, English and Italian designers, was putting forth proposals for the design of an ideal city center, one that was not necessarily Berlin.¹² These different conceptions were already encouraged by the competition documents. In view of the political situation, it was clear that an implementation of plans could not be expected in the near future, even though the current problems of Berlin's urban planning demanded long-term guidance. As a result, most participants used the opportunity to make generic statements for the future.

The judges' expectations of the competition were also split. The Berlin members of the jury were particularly interested in local problems and their solution, whereas the foreigners were more interested in the general urban planning discussion. After lengthy discussions, the judges agreed that in addition to proposals for the unique situation of the center of Berlin, suggestions, intellectual thoughts or insights should also be obtained that could stimulate urban development, in a variety of ways, including spiritually.¹³ The jury made a conscious decision to give prizes to a broad range of proposals, from very realistic ones, to those engaged in rethinking the future.¹⁴



FIG. 5 Hauptstadt Berlin 1957-58. A variant of the competition entry by Hans Scharoun. Second 2nd prize [*Bauwelt* 29 (1958), 35]

The first prizes should not be awarded for an ‘idea as such’,¹⁵ the jury thought, but rather for loving attention to the typical situation in Berlin. Nineteen works remained in the narrower election and were once again examined and commented on in writing.¹⁶ The jury acknowledged the particular history of Berlin, the landscape and its historic scale. They considered the traditional functional structure of the city and the few historic buildings worth preserving. Overall, they opted to preserve the typical horizontal silhouette of the city, rather than award projects that included skyscrapers. They appreciated a reorganization of the city through the separation of the different types of traffic, with the goal of giving freedom to the pedestrian. The jury rejected proposals for exaggerated transport projects, such as huge cloverleaf crossings or highways, which brought unacceptable architectural and urban planning solutions or architectural structures that disrespected the traditional scale, such as from Peter Friedrich and Elly Lehning, who proposed a linear development along a highway with giant buildings for economic functions, or by the group Bacchetti, Castiglioni und Sianesi, who envisioned a 750-meter high skyscraper. They wanted to give the car adequate space and make it possible to experience the city from the car.

The majority of the jury rejected axes and symmetries. Pierre Vago commented that the rejection of any ‘monumental effect’ was a reflection of German history, and that a later evaluation of the competition could lead to another verdict. Some of the prize-winning small-scale, ‘new-romantic, somewhat provincial’

designs appeared to him to be inappropriate for a capital and a cosmopolitan city.¹⁷ In general, instead of powerful accents, the jury looked for organic forms of organization. These criteria characterize what was becoming a typical German dispute over the design of city centers in general. It is therefore not surprising that the first five prizes went to Germans, the majority of Berlin architects. The jury opted to give additional praise to projects with forward-looking ideas, especially new traffic solutions and attempts to develop a symbolic city base.

It was probably due to Bartning's skills that the first prize was accepted with only one dissenting vote and the second prizes were unanimously approved by the 17 judges, who awarded a first prize, two 2nd and three 3rd prizes, and gave additional recognition to four more projects. The presence of the foreign planners of the old CIAM guard was certainly not the only decision-making force, but their influence was evident. They facilitated the rise of a new generation, at least that is how it seemed on the occasion of the publication of the prize winners on 18 June 1958, as a large number of young architects were among the prize winners.



FIG. 6 Hauptstadt Berlin 1957-58 Competition entry by Alison and Peter Smithson with Peter Sigmund. Third 3rd prize [Berlin. *Ergebnis des Internationalen städtebaulichen Ideenwettbewerbs: Hauptstadt Berlin*, Stuttgart 1960]

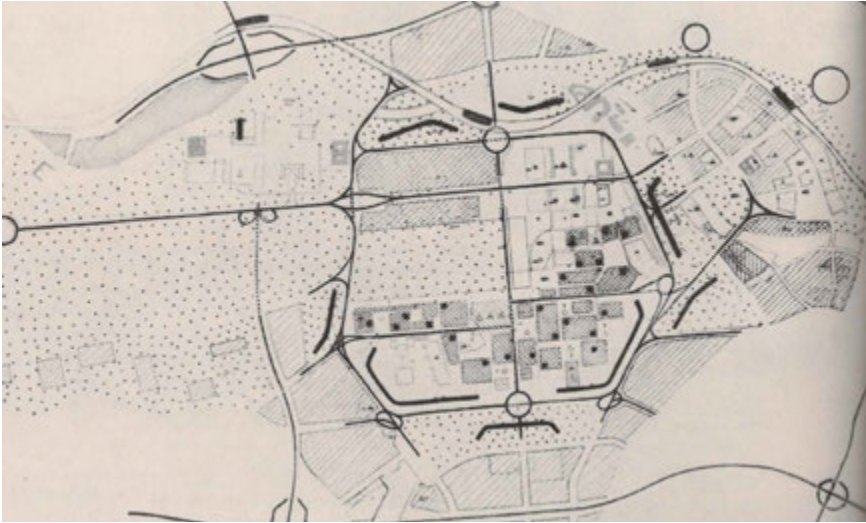


FIG. 7 Hauptstadt Berlin 1957-58 Competition entry by the office of van den Broek en Bakema [Erläuterungsbericht, Archives Broek en Bakema]

The result showed a colorful mixture of developments. The first prize was awarded to the working group Friedrich Spengelin, Fritz Eggeling and Gerd Pempelfort, from Hamburg / Hanover. The first 2nd prize went to Egon Hartmann, who had been active in Berlin for a long time, together with Walter Nickerl. A second 2nd prize went to Hans Scharoun, who had worked with Wils Ebert. [5] Similar to the planning of Van Eesteren in 1925, he proposed row buildings along the 'Linden'. The first and second 3rd prizes went to young Berlin architects (Gerhard F. Kern/ Rainer G. Rümmler/Hans J. Schröter and Bodo Fleischer/Hermann Kreidt). Alison and Peter Smithson received the third 3rd prize. [6] Among the purchases and works in the narrowest selection were many foreign projects, including a design by Le Corbusier and a group of young architects around Marion Tournon-Branly.

Even though the competition had no real built effects, the designs of both the realistic and the more abstract entries served as models and a basis of discussion for urban planning in Europe. As a result, the award winners received important assignments in which they were able to implement the ideas they presented, or gain professorships through which they conveyed their views to students. The city-planning concepts presented in the competition were disseminated and were trend-setting in their historical significance. In assessing the entries for the Hauptstadt Berlin competition, Van Eesteren and his colleagues paved the way for post-war urban planning from pre-war colleagues, notably Hans Scharoun and Le Corbusier, and rising stars of the postwar period, such as Jaap Bakema and Peter and Alison Smithson. [7]

Notes

- 1 15 September 1956, Zusammenfassung der Besprechung vom 7. und 8 September 1956 [Berlinische
2 Galerie: Wettbewerbsakten der Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungswesen (SBW) 275-1].
3 Letter Le Corbusier to Sigfried Giedion, 19 February 1958, 12 (10) [Paris, Fondation Le
4 Corbusier].
5 Herbert Jensen, *Umbau der Stadt Kiel. Betrachtungen zur Durchführung eines Wohnungsbauprogramms
6 der Stadt Kiel und seinen städtebaulichen Folgeerscheinungen nach dem Kriege*, Kiel 1941.
7 Vermerk über die Besprechungen am 5. und 6. Oktober 1956 im Hause des Senators für Bau- und
8 Wohnungswesen, Betr.: Wettbewerb Hauptstadt Berlin [SBW 275 gen I, S. 7].
9 Herrn Senator Schwedler. Betr.: Wettbewerb Hauptstadt Berlin 26 Januar 1957 [SBW 275 gen II].
10 Letter Otto Bartning to Hans Hopp, 15 February 1957 [SBW 275 gen II] Berlinische Galerie:
11 Wettbewerbsakten der Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungswesen.
12 Vermerk Betr.: Wettbewerb Hauptstadt Berlin, 9 März 1957 [SBW 275 gen II].
13 On the discussion with the Bund Deutscher Architekten in the GDR see: Korrespondenz SBW 275 gen II.
14 See: Korrespondenz SBW 275-12
15 'Bonn will Berliner bluffen', ADN-Interview mit dem Stellvertreter des Oberbürgermeisters Waldemar
16 Schmidt, Auszug aus *Neues Deutschland* 31 March 1957.
17 'Ost-Berlin baut sozialistisches Zentrum', *Die Welt* 21 October 1957.
18 Grundsätzliche Bemerkungen zum Wettbewerb Hauptstadt Berlin, Senatsbaudirektor Dipl.-Ing Hans
19 Stephan, Berlin S. 1-4 [SBW 27,5-10-13].
20 Grundsätzliche Bemerkungen, S. 4 [SBW 275-10-13].
21 Pierre Vago, Wettbewerb Berlin, S. 1-7 [SBW 275 gen 111].
22 Grundsätzliche Bemerkungen, S. 4 [SBW 275-10-13].
23 See: Stadtplanung, Berlin (West Berlin). Senator für Bau- und Wohnungswesen. Abteilung Landes- und.
24 Berlin. *Ergebnis des Internationalen Städtebaulichen Ideenwettbewerbs: Hauptstadt Berlin, Stuttgart 1960*.
25 Pierre Vago, Wettbewerb Berlin, S. 1-7 [SBW 275 gen 111].

Voor Herman van Bergeijk

Het afscheid van Herman van Bergeijk zal de Technische Universiteit Delft geen vooruitgang brengen.

De architectuur vandaag mag dan wel heel wat stoutmoedig vuurwerk van ongeleide projectielen laten zien, maar daar kunnen architectuurstudenten die zich nu eenmaal op de toekomst zullen moeten richten toch niet veel mee. Vandaag moeten we het vooral hebben over veranderingen en juist het verleden kan laten zien hoe en onder invloed van welke omstandigheden men er steeds weer toe kwam om dingen anders te gaan zien om vervolgens tot nieuwe ruimtevormen te komen. En het moet dan dus vooral gaan over de achtergronden die aanleiding waren voor verandering.

Toen ik zelf nog op de Oude Delft 39 in de collegebanken zat, bestond architectuurgeschiedenis hoofdzakelijk uit een eindeloze stroom van stijlen met jaartallen en plaatjes. Heel indrukwekkend maar niet erg inspirerend allemaal.

Beste Herman,

Ik heb nooit bij jou in de collegezaal gezeten, maar ken je als inspirerende gesprekspartner en natuurlijk als degene die mijn notitieboekjes die ik nu bijna 50 jaar lang mee draag uit de privésfeer haalde met een publicatie die misschien voor vele anderen een aansporing vormde om zich eveneens te dwingen om te noteren wat in je opkomt en wat je belangrijk genoeg vindt, wie weet waartoe, zoals ik van Le Corbusier afkeek. Misschien wist deze publicatie verder ook duidelijk te maken dat je tekenen als een taal kunt zien, een middel om de wereld te ontdekken; een vorm van handmatig denken.

Mag ik aannemen dat je nu tenminste wel verder gaat met het in kaart brengen van de achtergronden van wat de rijke Nederlandse architectuur in de twintigste eeuw heeft voortgebracht en dus welke overwegingen daartoe geleid hebben? Het is nu al een indrukwekkende boekenlijst en ik moet bekennen dat ik lang niet alles ervan gelezen heb, maar er zijn toch nog heel wat anderen wiens werk ook bijdroeg aan de veelkleurigheid van onze architectuur in de twintigste eeuw en wiens verhaal nog ligt te wachten op onze aandacht.

Zo zie ik uit naar eindelijk eens een serieus verhaal over Bakema (en vergeet daarbij Van den Broek niet), maar ook De Klerk, J.F. Staal, Wijdeveld, Brinkman & Van der Vlugt en vele anderen. Naast jouw Kropholler zijn er immers nog legio figuren die zeker het gezicht van onze omgeving hebben bepaald en die het verdienen dat van hen een coherent beeld wordt samengesteld dat recht doet aan hun bijdrage aan de cultuur. Wat wilden ze zeggen en wat bezielde hen?

Je kunt dat niet overlaten aan mensen die beschrijven vanuit hun speciale affectie met een bepaalde architect. Dat levert uitsluitend gekleurde beelden op. Liefde maakt immers blind. Ik doel natuurlijk op mijn reactie op de subtitel bij Duiker: 'van warm naar koud', die een suggestie van entropie wekt die op mij overkomt als de ontakeling van wat ik voor mij toch wel een liefde kan noemen.

Die bakstenen waar de Nederlanders zo gek op zijn mogen dan misschien wel de warmte van de aarde uitstralen, maar ze blijven zwaarwichtig en waren voor mij bovendien verbonden met alles wat je wilde ontstijgen; een jeugd in onzekerheid en de constante existentiële angst in de oorlog.

Mijn blik werd mede gevormd door de polemiek die werd gevoerd in de twee toen leidende architectuurtijdschriften *De 8* en *de Opbouw* en *Bouwkundig Weekblad*. Eerstgenoemde was wit en propageerde de moderniteit, terwijl het geelachtige *Bouwkundig Weekblad* het bolwerk van de meer traditie verslaafden vertegenwoordigde. Geen nieuw gebouw werd toen gespaard door het ene kamp en verdedigd door het andere. Daarbij ging het niet zachtzinnig toe. Zo werd je uitgedaagd tot een keuze.

Deze dialectiek die vandaag geheel en al ontbreekt wist te overtuigen en vormde de aanzet tot een eigen verhaal.

De witte gedematerialiseerde en quasi-gewichtloze architectuur van de moderniteit zag ik als een bericht van een lichtende toekomst uitstijgend over alle zwaarmoedigheid. Dat zo witheid ook warmte kan uitstralen hoort bij dat verhaal. Dat ik er nu na zoveel jaren genuanceerder naar ben gaan kijken is weer een ander verhaal.

Ik denkt dat als het gaat om het blootleggen van de overwegingen uit het verleden dat eerder vraagt om een kijk zoals jij die geeft, met de gepaste nuchterheid van een wetenschapper zonder zich te laten verleiden door interpretaties van fans die het niet kunnen laten om dingen op te poetsen. Jij richt je vooral op wat de auteur er zelf over kwijt wilde. Al kun je er nooit zo zeker van zijn dat ook niet zijn wens vader van zijn gedachten was. Maar dichterbij zul je moeilijk kunnen komen.

Ik zie ernaar uit om met je verder te praten over Kropholler, Duiker en ook Van Doesburg, maar ook over Hernán Ruiz de jonge en de Giralda in Sevilla.

Overigens zal ik onze Lazio-trip met de villa Lante en villa Farnese en hoe liefdevol je ons toen hebt begeleid niet gauw vergeten.

Ook niet vergeet ik dat ik je nog een schets schuldig ben.

The 2017 reconstruction of Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren's 1923 model of Maison d'Artiste

Few architectural models in Western architectural history have appealed to the imagination as powerfully as Maison d'Artiste by Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren. The model was made for the exhibition *Les Architectes du Groupe 'de Styl'*, which ran from 15 October to 15 November 1923 in Léonce Rosenberg's Galerie L'Effort Moderne in Paris. [1] The model could be seen once more elsewhere in Paris,¹ after which it was put into storage under poor conditions. When, in mid-March 1925, Van Doesburg went to see it, so the story goes, the model had deteriorated to the point where it could no longer be exhibited. In the end, a mere fourteen copies of seven photographs survived. [2-15] These apparently were and still are fascinating, because since 1955, Maison d'Artiste has been realised in a variety of ways on the basis of those photographs and the surviving design drawings, and has developed into one of the most important architectonic achievements of the twentieth century.² In 1982, the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag (now, Kunstmuseum The Hague) acquired one of the many replicas, this one made by Tjarda Mees. In 2016, I developed a growing interest in making a new model, an *authentic* reconstruction, conforming as closely as possible to what the photographs showed. With support from the Van Eesteren–Fluck & Van Lohuizen Stichting (Van Eesteren–Fluck & Van Lohuizen Foundation), Nico Bodewes, an excellent Amsterdam saxophone restorer and copper and brass expert, Marijke Smit, an acute artist and cabinetmaker, and I were able to start work on the project. In February 2017, or earlier, in fact, in November 2016, we began to make preparations. In June 2017, we were finished. [15-18] What took Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren a week, took us four months and more. In the present contribution, I want to report on this reconstruction and consider our reasons for carrying out the reconstruction as we did.



FIG. 1 View of the first room of the exhibition 'Les Architectes du Groupe "De Styl"' at Galerie L'Effort Moderne, Paris, 15 oktober-15 november 1923 [Het Nieuwe Instituut, Van Eesteren Archive]

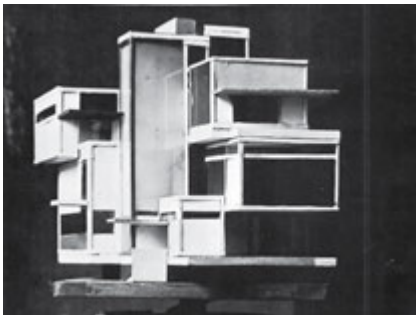


FIG. 2 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, photo of scale model entrance side, low angle, contrasting print version [Het Nieuwe Instituut, Van Eesteren Archive]



FIG. 3 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, photo of scale model entrance side, low angle, soft print version [Het Nieuwe Instituut, Van Eesteren Archive.]

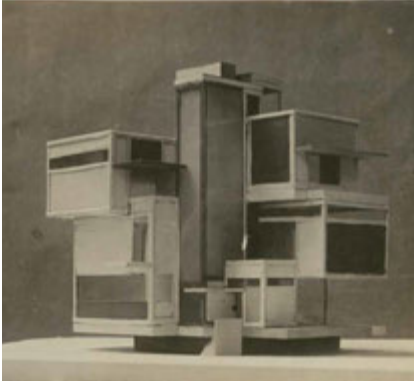


FIG. 4 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, photo of scale model entrance side, eye level angle, photographed on a table [Het Nieuwe Instituut, Van Eesteren Archive]

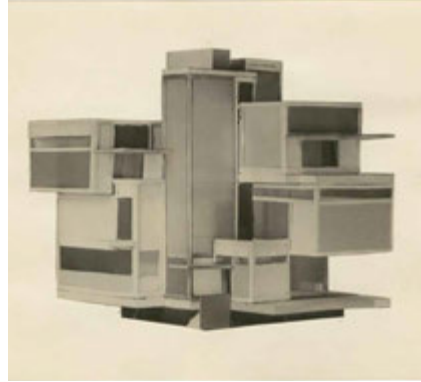


FIG. 5 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, photo of scale model entrance side, eye level angle, masked by painting the background and the table on which the model has been positioned white [Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, Van Eesteren Archive]

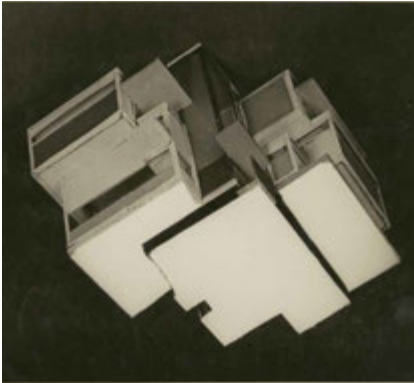


FIG. 6 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, photo of scale model, bottom side [Het Nieuwe Instituut, Van Eesteren Archive]

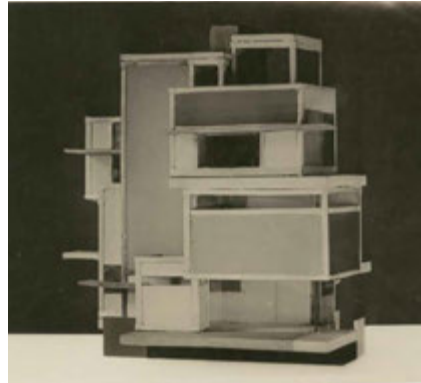


FIG. 7 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, photo of scale model (soft print version) studio side, masked on the lower side [Het Nieuwe Instituut, Van Eesteren Archive]



FIG. 8 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, manipulated photo of scale model entrance side, eye level, masked on the lower side [Het Nieuwe Instituut, Van Eesteren Archive]

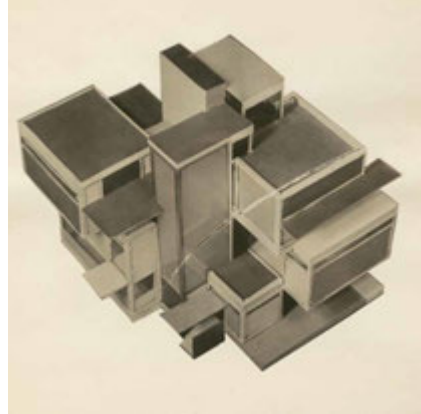


FIG. 9 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, manipulated photo of scale model, bird eye, entrance side, background masked [Het Nieuwe Instituut, Van Eesteren Archive]

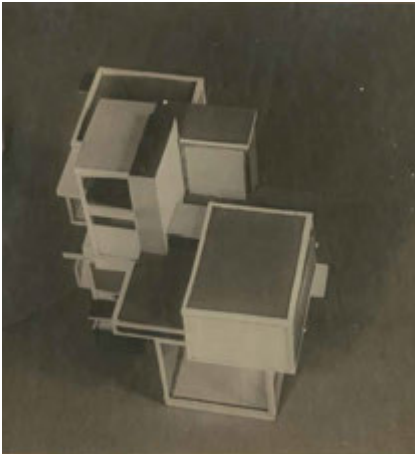


FIG. 10 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, photo of scale model, bird eye, rear of the maquette [Het Nieuwe Instituut, Van Eesteren Archive]

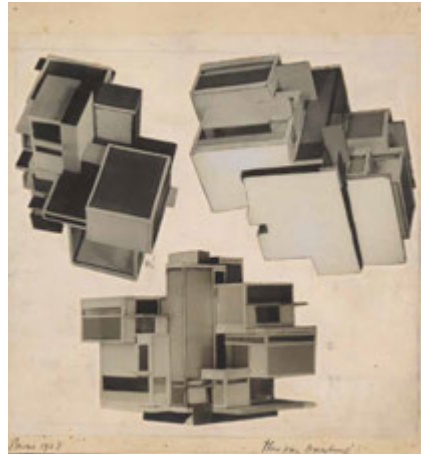


FIG. 11 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, manipulated photo of the scale model with a grouping of figures 2, 5 and 9, masked with white paint [RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, Theo and Nelly van Doesburg Archive]

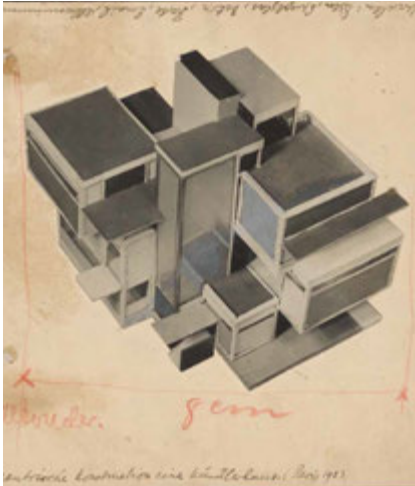


FIG. 12 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, partly manipulated photo of scale model with notes [RKD - Netherlands Institute for Art History, Theo and Nelly van Doesburg Archive]



FIG. 13 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, manipulated photo of scale model, eye level, partly masked along the bottom [RKD - Netherlands Institute for Art History, Theo and Nelly van Doesburg Archive]

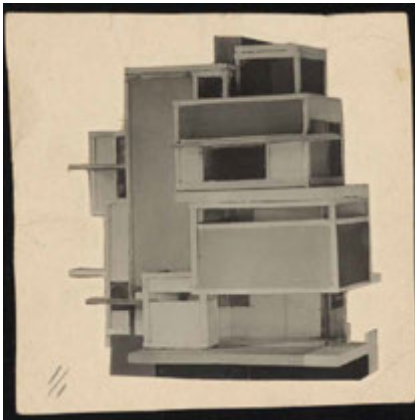


FIG. 14 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, manipulated photo of scale model, eye level, made freestanding by masking the background with white paint [RKD - Netherlands Institute for Art History, Theo and Nelly van Doesburg Archive]



FIG. 15 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison d'artiste, 1923, photo of scale model (constrastful), eye level, like figure 7, but made freestanding [RKD - Netherlands Institute for Art History, Theo and Nelly van Doesburg Archive]



FIG. 16 Nico Bodewes and Marijke Smit determining the proportions and proportions of the various parts of the scale model, at that moment still made of plywood. Photo Wim Janssen [Archive Nico Bodewes Amsterdam]

Naming

What are we looking at, I wondered, when I looked at the photographs? What kind of structure was that? Even in his own description, Van Doesburg is not completely clear. On one occasion, in the margin of one of the photographs, he calls the object *Exzentrische Konstruktion eine [sic] Künstlerhaus* [12]. In doing so, he is considering above all the structure, in which everything is grouped eccentrically around a central axis. And I think I am meant to understand this to be the house of an artist. On another occasion, he refers to a ‘Model for a private residence’, about a *Künstlerhaus mit Atelier*, or, simply, on the list of objects exhibited at Galerie Rosenberg, to *Maison d’Artiste*. Let us, then, stick to that. Because he also talked about a *Mod. vrije* (‘Zwevende’) *constructie* (a Mod. free (‘floating’) structure), but this was later, in a controversy with Le Corbusier, who also strove to neutralise gravity in architecture. As Van Doesburg demonstrated by means of illustrations, Le Corbusier was considerably less successful in this regard than he was.³ And *Maison d’Artiste* was there to prove it [11].

In a letter, Van Doesburg also called it a ‘model of an ideal home in full colour’⁴ On that basis, it is often assumed it was intended for him and Nelly, not necessarily in Paris, because Van Doesburg only chose to remain in that city in early 1924. There was, after all, a music studio, in addition to an artist’s studio. And the couple had no



FIG. 17 Nico Bodewes, 17 April, 2017. Photo Marijke Smit [Archive Nico Bodewes Amsterdam]



FIG. 18 Marijke Smit, 11 May, 2017. Photo Nico Bodewes

fixed address, in Paris or elsewhere. It is also assumed that Van Doesburg would be able to live there with Nelly.⁵ It is even assumed that the lack of funds was the only reason not to proceed with executing the project.⁶ Problems already began, then, with naming the design, because Van Doesburg confused fact and fiction, intention, imagination, reality and illusion with each other. It was his trademark. From the beginning, Maison d'Artiste was a phenomenon lost somewhere between fact and fiction. Even more so, when the original object was lost and only photographs survived. It enhanced the mythic status of the thing. And with it, the fascination.

'Onvoltooid icoon', or 'Unfinished icon' in English, is the subtitle of a volume of articles on Maison d'Artiste collected by Dolf Broekhuizen in 2017, and that is perhaps the best encapsulation of all that can be said about the project. It is not saying much, but at the same time, it is saying a lot. On the one hand, there is the question of the realisation, the feasibility – 'buildability', a Delft professor called it when he made a 1:5 model with his students in 1999⁷ – which is professed in all conceivable and inconceivable forms. The mind boggles. Again and again, there are confident, or unexpressed, presuppositions, angles from which the object has been approached. One of them is that the project remained mired in the design phase (while from a technical point of view, it could not possibly have been built). A realisable plan was never achieved. It was a plan for something that could one day be realised. But it was also hardly more than a suggestion, an idea on architecture, for which the ultimate realisation was not even a consideration. On the other hand, there is the opinion that the object is an expression of theory. Maison d'Artiste was nothing more than a concept, a proposal, an impression of a future way of living. It was a demonstration model, visualising the collaboration between the artist and architect, showing what De Stijl was capable of, and displaying a dynamic idea of space, in which time played a central role in experiencing space. The photographs of Maison d'Artiste have always been interpreted someplace between these extremes, of possible realisation and theoretical explication.⁸

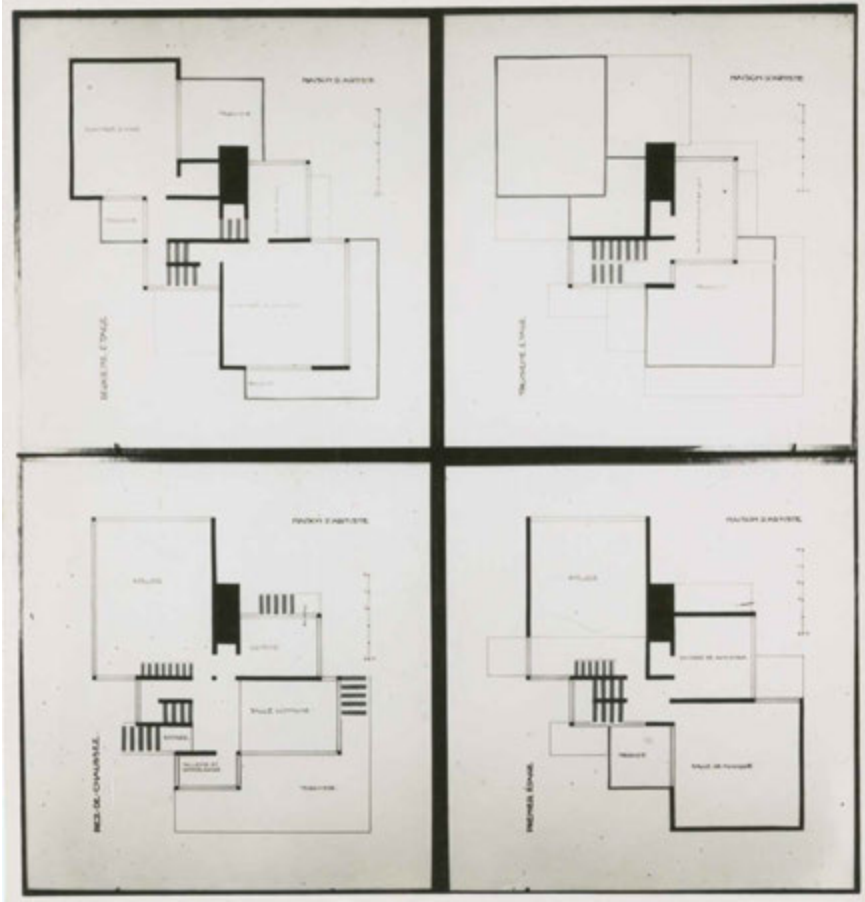


FIG. 19 Cornelis van Eesteren (and Theo van Doesburg), Floor plans Maison d'artiste, 1923 (1924?) [Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, Van Eesteren Archive]

Does this, however, do justice to what the photographs show? I can well understand they set all kinds of things in motion. They are endlessly fascinating. But do these photographs show a 'possible realisation' or a 'theoretical explanation'? In my opinion, they do not. In my opinion, they show what something originally looked like. The term 'original', however, immediately raises thorny and complicated problems no one can work with, because, what is an 'original design'? Does it include the floor plans? [19] Concerning these, I do not know if they were drawn by Van Eesteren or by Van Doesburg, before the model was produced, while the model was being made, or after?⁹ And were all of the contra-constructions also part of the exhibition? [20] The drawings Van Doesburg (and probably Van Eesteren) made during the same period give an impression of the distribution of colours over the various planes of Maison d'Artiste and – especially, it would seem – over



FIG. 20 Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren, *Contraconstruction of Maison d'artiste*, 1923, pencil, gouache (?) en crayon on card [Het Nieuwe Instituut]

those of one of the other models shown at the exhibition, the model for *Maison Particulière*. What were the 'original' intentions of the makers? Concerning this matter, both Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren and also, in their wake, a multitude of researchers have subsequently made diverse pronouncements. Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren, however, made most of their pronouncements at a time when things had turned quite sour and they had already begun to reproach each other on the matter of authorship. So the question is, can much 'originality' be attributed to it? It is worth mentioning Manfred Bock, who published sketches by Van Doesburg in 2001 that do not appear in the oeuvre catalogue and look suspiciously like a case of someone thinking in a visually constructive way about how a dream (the model) could become reality (in an architectonic construction).¹⁰



FIG. 21 Gerrit Rietveld, Shop front of the Goud en Zilversmidcompagnie on the Kalverstraat in Amsterdam, 1921 [RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, Theo and Nelly van Doesburg Archive]

Material

I would like to suggest forgetting everything and returning as much as possible to the photographs, and looking for the information that can directly contribute to an answer to the question, what are we actually looking at? The Paris correspondent of the newspaper *Het Vaderland*, W.F.A. Röell, describes the model as ‘floating stacks of coloured blocks’.¹¹ When the exhibition at *L’Effort Moderne* could be seen a few months later at the exhibition *Architecture et Arts qui s’y Rattachent* at the *École Spéciale d’Architecture* in Paris, he refers to a house of glass and cardboard.¹² Now, this is information I can work with. Much more than with Van Doesburg’s statements. One time, he writes in the margin of a photograph that the designers are thinking about ‘Iron, Reflective Glass, Concrete, Farbe [paint/colour], Enamel, Aluminium alloy’ [12]. It was, however, discovered that it says on one of the handwritten lists for the exhibition at *L’Effort Moderne*, that it was a ‘construction en fer et en verre’.¹³ In the periodical *Architectura*, Van Doesburg again identified the materials as ‘Iron, Glass, Concrete and Colour’. Here, however, the reference was to the materials with which the project could ultimately be realised.

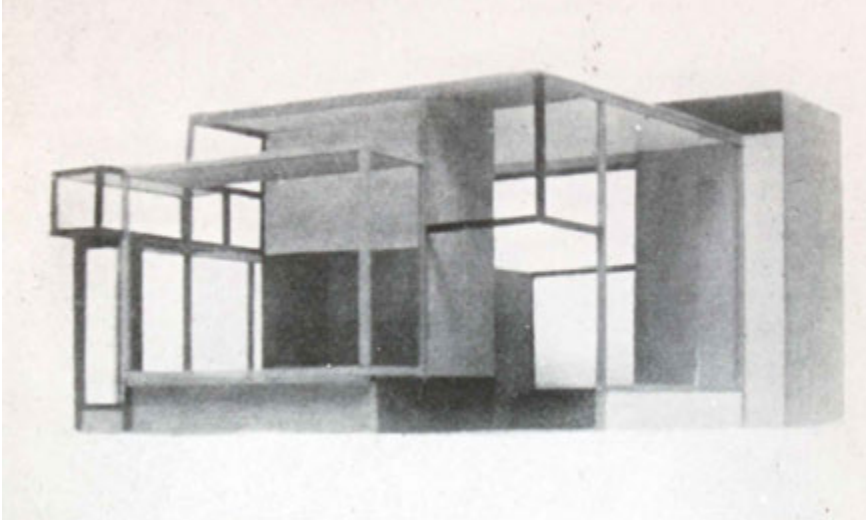


FIG. 22 Photograph of scale model by Willem van Leusden [Het Nieuwe Instituut, Van Eesteren Archive]

Wies van Moorsel brought to my attention an extremely interesting letter from Jean Leering to Mick Eeckhout. In it, Leering mentions what he had understood from Van Eesteren concerning the construction of the model. According to Van Eesteren, it was done by ‘a smith’ applying a stained-glass method, so the coloured sections could slide back and forth.¹⁴ If Van Eesteren’s remark is correct, then it is interesting, because it describes precisely where Van Doesburg was coming from. He had, after all, gained considerable experience in making stained-glass windows in the previous years. The step to a ‘spacious window’ could, under those conditions, easily be taken. But then came another two visual clues. In 1921, Gerrit Rietveld had designed stacked and overlapping glass display cases held in heavy ribs for the façade of the Goud- en Zilversmid’s Compagnie, a jeweller’s on Kalverstraat in Amsterdam. [21] Rietveld had sent a photograph of this façade to Paris, for the exhibition. Willem van Leusden, a friend of Rietveld’s, supplied a model of a bus shelter with a flower stall for the exhibition in Paris. He, too, made use of ribbing emphasising spatial angularity. [22] It actually looks as if this is a proper, until now unacknowledged style feature of De Stijl, adopted by Van Doesburg from Rietveld and Van Leusden in the structure of Maison d’Artiste. But all in all, the model of Maison d’Artiste was not made of iron and glass. The skeleton was brass. The other materials were wood, mica, cardboard and glass, as Van Doesburg indicates in a letter to Antony Kok of 18 October 1923, in which he describes Maison d’Artiste quite accurately soon after it was realised.¹⁵ I decided to be guided accordingly in producing the model. I asked Nico Bodewes and Marijke Smit to keep these materials in mind when studying the photographs.



FIG. 23 Mies van der Rohe, Model for a 'Second version of a glass skyscraper; lost, 1922

And another thing. There is much to be said in favour of considering the model to be a study model, such as those made of clay or plaster by architects to help them organise their thoughts and analyse what direction the realisation of a project should take.¹⁶ A study model is closer to dreams than realisation. It also keeps the range of intentions and aims of the makers of the model as open as possible. It seems to me that just in the years around 1920, the production of study models in clay and plaster by architects, especially Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, was replaced by more contemporary materials, such as paper, cardboard and cellophane or glass. [23]

This, however, only provides an answer to a small part of the question of what we are looking at. Can something more possibly be said, for example, about the paint used? It makes a significant difference whether poster paint, house paint, gouache or oil paint was used for the colours on the model. Technical research on materials has shown that the pigments used in one of the contra-constructions consists of synthetic ultramarine (blue), vermilion (red), lead white with barium sulphate (white), lead chromate (yellow) and possibly bone black (black).¹⁷ Whether the paint was oil-based or water-based was not determined. Since chromate yellow works best in oil-based paint, and gouache does not adhere at all well to brass, it can be assumed oil-based paint was used, especially, too, because this not only adheres to brass better, but also to wood. Against this, however, it is assumed that gouache was used on the vast majority of the works on paper associated with the project.¹⁸ Anyway. The naming of the object and the choice of materials alone are the sources of such ambiguity and equivocation that finding a clear starting point for reconstructing the intentions of the material form of the model is impossible. What, then, should one do?

Digression

In order to take a step forward, first a rather long story that might bring some clarity to these murky waters. A story set in Italy. At the extreme western end of Sicily, the place where tired English travellers on their Grand Tour through Europe finally reached the most distant point in their tiring art tour in the 18th and 19th centuries. After the Middle Ages of Aachen and Trier, the sublime Alps, the Renaissance, the Baroque and the Roman antiquities of Florence, Rome and Naples, they finally reached, at the extreme southwest point of Sicily, at Castelvetro, Greek culture. The cradle of civilization. The place is called Selinunte.

Sometime around the end of the 6th century before Christ, the Greeks established a colony there, a fortified city on three hills between two rivers. It must have been rather prosperous because in hardly any time at all, there were as many as eleven

temples, one even larger than the other. In 409, the city was besieged, conquered, looted and razed by Carthage. Only the temples remained standing. In the following centuries, they were stripped of their interiors and their roofs, but their structures remained standing. They were perfect Greek temples, precisely as you imagine Greek temples to be. Until two earthquakes put an end to all that beauty and what remained, collapsed.¹⁹ The English travellers thus encountered huge mounds of loose architectural elements. [24]

And that is exactly the point. Because those first visitors had, it seems, a genuine historic sensation. They saw their efforts to reach the end (or the beginning) of



FIG. 24 Postcard of one of the temples in Selinunte, Sicily, ca. 1930



FIG. 25 Aerial photo of one of the two reconstructed temples in Selinunte, ca. 2010

civilization rewarded with a spectacle without equal. And their imaginations set the temples back up in an instant! Piece of cake. An endless number of picturesque accounts describe the reconstruction of the fallen temples. The temptation is irresistible. What lay scattered across the landscape inspires the imagination up to the present day. When I once visited the temples with my eight-year-old daughter and she saw the chaos, she immediately shouted with amazement in her voice, 'that giant ought to tidy his playroom'! The rubble asks for, no, demands, reconstruction. Just as an expensive piece of porcelain that has fallen on the floor immediately asks for the fragments to be fitted back together, to restore order. To recapture history, to return it to where it was before things went wrong. Consider Maison d'Artiste before the model was lost.

The reconstruction of the temples is exactly what the Partito Nazionale Fascista under the impassioned leadership of Mussolini undertook starting in 1922. When it had just come into power, the party initiated large-scale excavations throughout Italy. The Ara Pacis in Rome was excavated and partially reconstructed, the Colosseum was cleared, later additions to the Pantheon were removed. The vigour was enormous. Archaeology has never been carried out with more unencumbered desire and social importance. It was called 're- restoration', all with the purpose of setting in motion a reconsideration of a glorious national past, and carrying out a reset of the national psyche. In Selinunte, the fascists were able to reconstruct two of the eleven temples.²⁰ Even today, they appeal to the imagination of tourists. [26]

Someone who regarded the impetuosity of the fascists with scepticism was Cesare Brandi, an erudite Italian who, after studying art history and law, held various administrative functions in the area of the management and conservation of Italian heritage starting in 1930. Here, he developed razor-sharp views on preservation and restoration in discussions with the fascists. In 1938, he was asked to establish the Istituto Centrale per il Restauro in Rome. In 1939, he became director of this still most estimable research institute in the world. In 1943, he resigned to avoid having to collaborate with the German occupiers. In 1944, the Allies asked him to return to his former position.

Time

This is how Cesare Brandi became the worldwide father of restoration and preservation as a science. He never argued with the fascists, especially because in discussions with them, he was able to develop his *Teoria del restauro* (1963) in all its precision. It would be too much to discuss in detail his wide-ranging and

erudite ideas in the present contribution; allow me to limit myself to a number of observations relevant to the reconstruction of Maison d'Artiste. Brandi distinguished two manifestations of the work of art. In the first place, there is the *istanza estetica*, which I translate as the aesthetic perspective; in the second place, there is the *istanza storica*, the historical perspective. Both are caught in material, in what Brandi called the physical nature of the work of art. He concluded that only these perspectives on this material should be the subject of restoration. This is principle number one. Almost a natural law.

In our case, this already creates a problem. Because there is no material. Maison d'Artiste no longer exists. There are only photographs and a few letters and notes, and there is a practice of remarks and oral positions revealing something about intentions. And this immediately results in a fuss, because as time passes, those intentions tend to change into projections. And, to make things worse, in the process – according to Brandi – the material also acts differently with time. Material is not only repeatedly given a different function, but with this, also repeatedly a different form. There is the time in which the material is assembled *during production*; there is the *time of the object* (its history), during which materials change, degrade, but also come to be viewed differently; and there is the *time of observation*, of the object as a work of art. This last is also continually changing, for every period and for every individual, even for every individual at every changing moment. And Brandi thought that in each of those forms, the aesthetic and the historical perspectives fight for attention. According to Brandi, only this strange, mutable quality of observation can occupy a central position in any restoration. This became his second principle, a second natural law of restoration as a science. The time of the object and the time of production have to be weighed again and again *in the time of observation*. “The only legitimate moment for the act of restoration is the actual moment of conscious awareness of the work of art”.²¹

If one of those principles (or both) were to be abandoned, according to Brandi, things would go awry. He had seen it happen in Rome and in Selinunte. If, for example, the original process of production was imitated in a restoration, or, worse, replicated – the object or part of it would simply be carried out again, according to what people thought the original intention was – then *immediately*, one way or another, the imagination would play a role in the search for originality. Artistic decisions and imagined intentions would also be projected onto the material, but the question is whether they would be correct.

All of the versions of Maison d'Artiste so far are products of this approach. The newly made structures do not connect in any way with, nor do they do justice to, the limitations and possibilities of the original process of production. The

photographs are at most used as a springboard, a starting point, for parading personal intentions and aims. An example from another area that might clarify the position is the Notre Dame in Paris, which was ‘restored’ in 1845 so fundamentally by Viollet-Leduc that only Victor Hugo’s hunchbacked bell-ringer wanted to have anything to do with it. Closer to home, Kasteel De Haar springs to mind, ‘restored’ by Pierre Cuypers in a literally fantastic way, on top of and at the cost of the ruins of the original 15th-century building. Nobody notices it anymore.

If, according to Brandi, the time of the object, the material history of the object, is taken as the basis of any restoration, then the restoration is quickly intended to remove the passage of time – or part of it – from view, or to eliminate it even. Restoration is then intended to return to the assumed ‘original state’. An intervention is then readily intended to make the material object, or what remains of it, appear as much as possible as the object did soon after its birth. An example is the so-called Temple E at Selinunte, which was ‘re-erected’ in 1942 with a drumroll by Mussolini and his henchmen, making use of the original fragments, against the wishes of Brandi [25]. An important effect of the intervention in the passage of time is the so-called ‘irreversibility’, the irreversibility of the interventions. Brandi was very keen on guaranteeing reversibility. It happened all too often that a restoration was carried out in such a way that earlier stages in the life of the object were removed from view, and were not only no longer visible, but definitively erased and irretrievably lost. In the case of Maison d’Artiste, this has not happened. Or perhaps it has. Because the activity that has come to exist around the object, of reconstructions and realisations and theoretical explications has rather removed from view what the photographs say *in the first instance*. And that is what it was all about for me.

Fascination

My fascination with the photographs of the models of Maison d’Artiste is great. They show how rushed, ramshackle and sloppy the business was thrown together, with crude soldering, hidden from view by a messy paint job, crooked pieces of wood, hardly sanded, and with the imprints of pliers in the unpainted brass of the ‘stairway’, the large vertical shape reaching from the bottom almost to the ‘chimney’ [15]. In what follows, I will make use of the descriptions of the spaces in the four surviving floor plans [20]. By their reflective effect, the photographs of the model suggest frosted glass must have been used in the ‘stairway’. After studying the photographs, Nico Bodewes concluded that no industrially manufactured profiles were used for the frame, but that all profiles were cut from brass and ‘placed’ at an angle by hand before being soldered. We decided to carefully follow

this working method. It is also possible to see how the ‘salle de musique’, the lowest box in the photograph, with narrow, high windows on two sides, was supported by what looks most like a large nail, in the corner of the ‘salle commune’ below it, on the ground floor [15]. This photograph also shows that the walls of this ‘salle commune’ in the model were made of clear glass, held in place with small nails, without mounting. We also carefully reproduced this. [26]

One of the photographs shows the reflective effect of the stairway [2]. This high-contrast photograph shows the slightly twisted shape of the canopy over the entrance stairs, and in fact, of the other canopies, an unintentional feature we also decided to copy accurately. [27] Moreover, from this photograph it is possible to deduce how the top of each space is pasted over with a material that could be identified, with the help of other photographs, as a light brown or black sandpaper, a use of material later confirmed by Dolf Broekhuizen, who found it in notes in the Van Eesteren archive. The photograph also gives a good impression of the sloppy way the boxes were attached to each other, the awkward way the brass profiles were placed, and the small nails with which the cardboard fillers were attached to the copper frame. Some nails had been placed improperly in the cardboard, which had caused the cardboard to bulge on the outside [2]. We decided to follow all of these unintentional disfigurements accurately in our structure. All of the profiles were painted white, with the exception of the profiles of the ‘stairway’, which were left bare. It is possible to conclude, on the basis of the spilt paint on the profile furthest to the right, that the colours were applied when the entire model had been put together.



FIG. 26 The fixation with nails and the pillar turned out of brass at the corner of the ‘salle commune’ that hold the glass sides of the ‘salle commune’, on 19 May 2017. Photo Marijke Smit



FIG. 27 The entrance of the realized model at frog eye level, with the slightly twisted canopies above the entrance and the windows, on 7 June 2017. Photo Marijke Smit



FIG. 28 The entrance of the scale model, on 3 May 2017. Photo Nico Bodewes

A print of this same photograph on different paper, making it softer and less-defined, has also survived, providing entirely different information: the profile in the corner of the ‘toilette et garderoobe’ had to be roughly treated to get it into acceptable shape [3]. In our version of the model, we decided to adopt all the flaws, an approach that was ultimately rewarding because the corrections carried out by the original makers were turned up in this way. The connection between the ‘toilette et garderoobe’ and the stairway forced the original makers to realise the lower part of the stairway in cardboard and the upper part in glass, a decision made late in the production process. This correction turned up naturally in our realisation, too. We gradually began to ‘understand’ the model. The surface between the ‘stairway’ and the ‘salle de musique’ was a simple piece of cardboard, not placed in a frame at any point. And the photograph also showed that the material used for the windows in the ‘toilette et garderoobe’, the ‘salle de musique’ and the ‘chambre à coucher’, located above, was made of mica, evident from its irregularity. In one of the other photographs, it was possible to see that the cardboard used was plain passepartout cardboard, about 1 mm thick. [9].

Yet another photograph led to the conclusion that the ‘salle de culture physique’ at the top floor was provided with very lightly tinted glass, and that this glass was held in place with raised lips of brass [7]. This same glass was also used for the large glass plates that filled the full façade in the ‘atelier’ and in the ‘salle commune’. We were able to find the right, very lightly tinted glass from the 1920s. In these photographs one can also see how the roof structures (cut from sandpaper) are not parallel with the copper mounting here and there and droop down in some of the corners [10]. We have tried to reproduce this accurately, too. At an early stage of the reconstruction, Marijke Smit was visited by an architect who advised her to simply feed the photographs into a computer programme and have it generate the measurements of all building spaces.

I was able to prevent that from happening. The photographs were made with at least three lenses, with clearly different focal lengths. The spaces, too, are hardly ever square and regular, or even rectangular, as these last photographs show. [7-10]. We did everything by sight alone. And whenever we had to determine a measurement, we would check to see if the result agreed with what the photographs conveyed. Literally. It appeared, then, that certain ribs were clearly longer or shorter than others and that some spaces even had to be minimally pushed out of the vertical to actually fit within the plan indicated by the photographs. In order to have some kind of anchor in this fleeting world of uncertainties, we made two decisions. First, we took the height of the central 'chimney' from Tjarda Mees's 1982 model as a basis for all other building spaces. Second, we decided to produce the blocks in plywood first, so we created a kind of basic form that could subsequently be produced in brass strips that could be fitted to the plan in the photographs with some pushing and pulling. When all the spaces had been soldered together, the one problem turned out to be that the stairway was too narrow and high, because the connection to the 'salle de culture physique' and the relation to the chimney was incorrect. It was as if putting one side of the puzzle together with the other side of the puzzle revealed a few pieces had been put in the wrong places. In the end, however, with lots of juggling and especially corrections, this problem was also solved.

Close

Our approach proved successful. Many original 'logical' decisions by Van Doesburg, the 'smith' and Van Eesteren, flowing more or less automatically from building the model as it developed, came to us as if on a salver. We saw, in a manner of speaking, how the rather annoyed plumber picked up the brass snips to cut the 'toilette et garderober', which he had just soldered together with blood, sweat and tears, in half again, in order to be able to fit it into the rest of the structure, especially to make that space fit in with the adjacent floors of the stairway, the 'atelier' and the 'chambre de domestique'. [28] We also discovered how the original makers, while working, decided to fill the space between the 'chambre de domestique' and 'salle de bains' and the adjacent 'salle de musique' with wooden boards, cut to size, to equalise the strange differences of level between the ceilings of the 'salle de musique' and the 'chambre de domestique', and to deal with the deviations in proportion, as can be seen in the original model. [29] We understood how ad hoc decisions were made. For example, to provisionally fix loose-hanging ribs with strips of brass, so that after the blocks were put in place, it would be possible to remove the strips. They were left in place, however, and contributed, all of a sudden, to the aesthetics. [30]



FIG. 29 The differences in height between the different building elements, equalised with wooden boards of different thicknesses, 20 April 2017. Photo Nico Bodewes



FIG. 30 Brass structures during construction, 2 May 2017. Photo Nico Bodewes

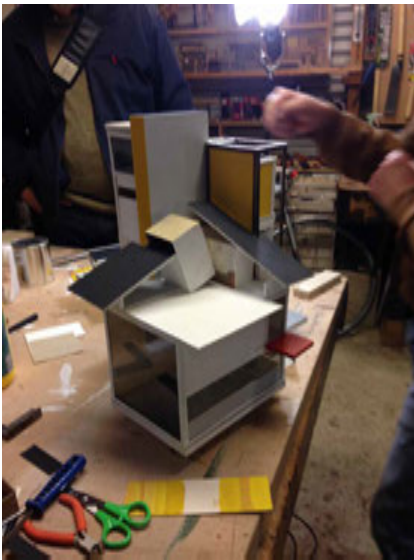


FIG. 31 Both canopies, bordering the 'chambre d'amis', op 5 June 2017. Photo Nico Bodewes



FIG. 32 The wooden sticks that were necessary to adjust and secure the walls of the 'chambre d'amis'. Photo Nico Bodewes

The placement of the final element of the construction, the 'chambre d'amis', above the studio, posed a problem to the original makers that we naturally encountered, too. The placement could only succeed if both canopies above the adjacent balconies were placed simultaneously. [31] And the 'chambre

d'amis' could only be attached to a small, closed block filling the space to the central 'chimney'. This entailed that we had to carry out work on the wall of the 'chambre d'amis', which would, after all, be beyond reach if the other – visible – walls had already been mounted in the brass frame. We had to come up with a device, the same one in which Van Doesburg and his companions must also have taken refuge: the three walls exposed to view were not yet mounted in the frame, making it possible for the remaining walls, already lying on the floor of the 'chambre d'amis', to be set in place after the back wall and the frame in which it was fixed had been put in place; they could only be attached with small wooden supports in the corners, which were raised by means of a thread in order to hold the walls in place. [32] A close look at the original photographs showed us the original makers had also taken refuge in this solution [8].



FIG. 33 Theo van Doesburg (and Cornelis van Eesteren?), *Contraconstruction*, after 1923, pencil, crayon, gouache (or oil?) on card [Het Nieuwe Instituut]

We were euphoric. It got us very close to the original process, into almost precisely the historical situation in which the original model was produced. In that sense, we were almost witnesses to the original process. Almost, but not quite, because the historical situation did not take a particular shape; it remained vague and more an image, or an illusion of a situation than the situation itself. It did, however, unmistakably create immediate contact with the past. This contact, accompanied by a complete conviction of authenticity, or truth, can be evoked by something as silly as the repetition of a set of actions. It is not something deliberate. It lies behind and not in history. As Huizinga says so well, about the experience of history: ‘The reader accommodates the writer, it is his response to his summons.’²² Replace ‘reader’ with model makers, and replace ‘writer’ with Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren, and perhaps the plumber: how close can you get!

Colour

When it was a question of determining the colour of the various surfaces in the model, we could not bridge this distance back to the historical moment. We had too many concerns about earlier attempts to adopt those results uncritically. Our motto here, too, was: back to the source. Our starting point was the *Colourdesign* associated with *Maison d’Artiste*, [33], being aware that the distribution of colours used there did not conform in any way with what the black-and-white photographs told us. The *Contra-construction*, however, revealed to us two principles [20]: that Van Doesburg avoided colours recurring in surfaces parallel to each other. Surfaces at right angles to each other, horizontal opposed to vertical surfaces; it was fine to apply the same colour to them; but not to use the same colours, white, grey or black within the same plane, unless shifting, and reappearing unexpectedly around a corner somewhere. The *Contra-construction* also taught us that colours never appear adjacent to each other (white beside white), unless windows or coloured surfaces are installed in the same surface. We also knew that Van Doesburg – because we assume he applied the colours – changed his mind about the colours to be used while painting [5]. This did not make things easier. But it was also reassuring. It confirmed the idea of a three-dimensional stained-glass window in which coloured glass could slide back and forth. And it emphasised Herman van Bergeijk’s idea, mentioned previously, that the model was a ‘study model’. Try things. Experiment. That was the motto. It also demonstrated once again the intuitive working method of the artist. Even later, following completion, Van Doesburg applied shades of grey to places that apparently wanted them, thus prompting the suggestion the colour had to be adapted, in the translation of colour to the shades of grey in the photograph, often preceding publication of the photograph, for example, in an issue of *De Stijl* [12].

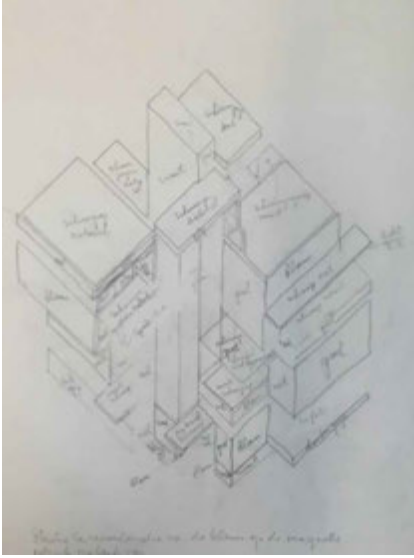


FIG. 34 Reconstruction of the colour distribution for Maison d'artiste, by Cornelis van Eesteren, 1968 [Het Nieuwe Instituut]

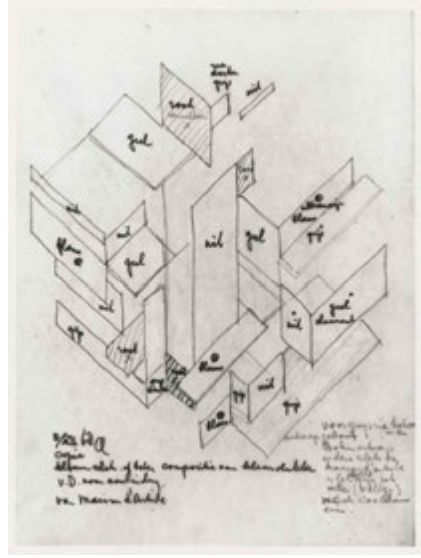


FIG. 35 Reconstruction of the colour distribution for Maison d'artiste, by Cornelis van Eesteren, 1968 [Het Nieuwe Instituut]

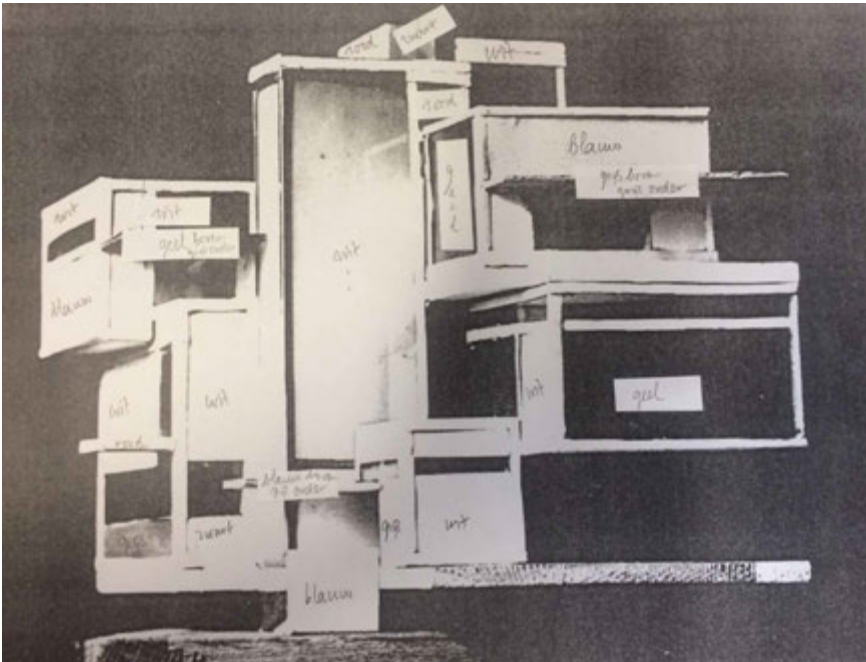


FIG. 36 Reconstruction of the colour distribution for Maison d'artiste, front, by the author; May 2017. Photo Marijke Smit

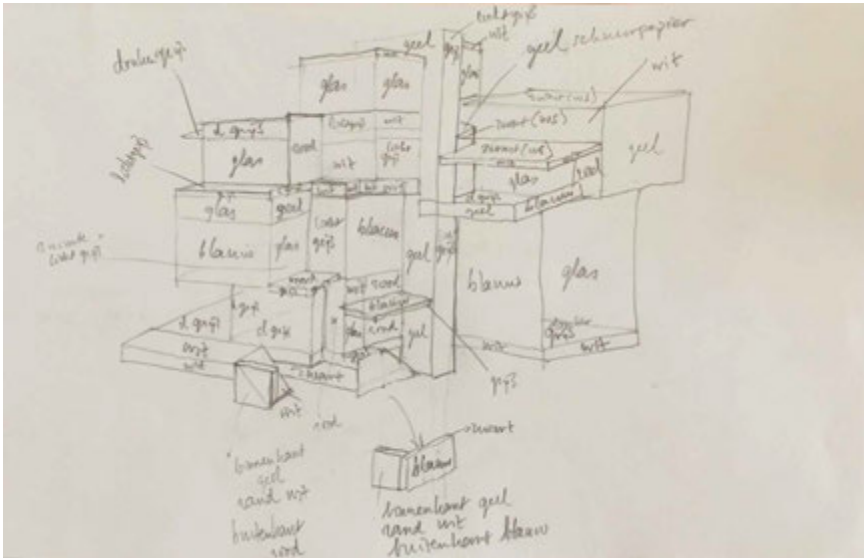


FIG. 37 Reconstruction of the colour distribution for Maison d'artiste, rear, by the author, May 2017.
Photo Marijke Smit

The use of colour is also a difficult problem for other reasons. Although we do not seem to be bothered at all by seeing black-and-white photographs daily, the translation of colour to black and white is problematic. It is particularly so if it concerns black-and-white photographs produced around 1920 or 1930.²³ In the case of certain shooting and printing techniques, yellow looks very dark or else very light, and red becomes black. To say nothing of blue. The contrasts change completely. Mondriaan already complained about this in 1917.²⁴ This also plays a role when trying to identify colours. When Jean Leering produced many models and historical spaces that had to do with De Stijl, at the Van Abbemuseum for an exhibition about De Stijl, he called on Van Eesteren for help. Van Eesteren made a few attempts to reconstruct the colours of Maison d'Artiste, but eventually gave up in late 1968.²⁵ [34-35]

We set off on our own adventure in the realm of colour after we had first collected information from as many sides as possible. We called in advice from Evert van Straaten, Mariël Polman, Mick Eeckhout and Sjoerd van Faassen. Their generous advice taught us a lot, above all that it would be nearly impossible to reconstruct the colours in an unambiguously scientific, verifiable way, but also that it would be possible to formulate a convincing proposal. Mariël Polman in particular gave us clear, practical advice there. In that period Van Doesburg was more likely to use chromate yellow than another kind of yellow. Red might well have had a basis of a mix of sienna and cadmium. Blue was too difficult. First, we chose ultramarine, then switched to cobalt, which is more in keeping with the other choices. All

colours were adjusted to each other with white, and by mixing in minute quantities of one of the other colours. Polman also supplied colour samples, reconstructed by her team, of the original paint used in the middle class housing project created by architect C.R. de Boer and Van Doesburg in Drachten in 1922.²⁶ In part, it gave our self-confidence a boost, because we could tell we were on the right track; in part, she was also able to help us make adjustments here and there.

Eventually, choices had to be made. On the basis of the photographs, I produced the following colour proposals in early June 2017. [36-37] For this and in this, I had taken into account as much as possible all empirical facts, an accurate analysis of the photographs, the various ideas that had led to earlier realisations, the principles that could be deduced from Van Doesburg's *Contra-construction* and the indispensable dose of my own obstinacy. In the execution, Smit and Bodewes added their own obstinacy to mine. They brought me back into line where I had, for example, decided – without any evidence from the photographs – to colour in the back of the model. As a result, the façades of the 'salle de bains', the 'chambre d'amis' and the 'chambre de domestique' remained white, while I had – with some slight overconfidence – marked them yellow, blue and red, respectively. The colours (or non-colours) of the 'chimney' posed a considerable problem for us. While Van Eesteren insisted that *Maison d'Artiste*, just like *Maison Particulière*, had had an entirely dark-grey chimney, the photographs of *Maison d'Artiste* show unmistakably that all surfaces of this element of the building must have had a different colour. The 'chimney' became part of the analysis of the photographs, and was partly responsible for the direction in which the distribution of colours in general was carried out.



FIG. 38 Nico Bodewes on 13 May 2017 trying to grasp the manner in which the initial builders of the scale model mounted the glass in the stairwell. Photo Nico Bodewes



FIG. 39 The connection of the 'salle de bains', and the 'salle de culture physique' on the stairwell, 30 May 2017. Photo Nico Bodewes

Conclusion

It surprised us that we could be busy with the reconstruction of something shown on a few photographs for more than six months without growing the least bit tired of the project for a moment. [38-40] The result is what it is. Everyone is free to pass judgement. But we were true to Brandi's principle, taking the time of the observation in the photographs as the universal starting point, and without losing sight of the aesthetic and historical perspectives in the process. There was no time of the object. The photographs showed the condition of the model in the autumn of 1923. This frozen condition was lifted out of time with the click of the camera and delivered to us. To become the starting point of our exercise. A fortunate incidental circumstance was that by getting as close as possible to the observed details, we could approach very closely the time when the original was made. Only it took us six months where it took the cursing plumber, the young architect and the inspired artist a little over a week. The object has now been part of the permanent De Stijl presentation at the Kunstmuseum for three years. It takes the visitor closer than ever to the reality of one of modern architecture's most beautiful models.



FIG. 40 Marijke Smit on 10 May 2017, trying to grasp the way the initial builders of the scale model equalised the spaces between the different volumes with wooden boards. Photo Nico Bodewes

Notes

I wish to express my gratitude to Wies van Moorsel, Sjoerd van Faassen, Dolf Broekhuizen, Michael White, Mariël Polman, Marijke Smit, Nico Bodewes, and Wim Janssen.

1 'Hollandsche kunst in Parijs', *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad* 17 March 1924. It concerned the exhibition *Architecture et Arts Qui s'y Rattachent* at the *École Spéciale d' Architecture* on the Boulevard Raspail.
2 For design drawings, see Els Hoek et al. (ed.), *Theo van Doesburg. Oeuvre Catalogue*, Utrecht (Centraal Museum) / Otterlo (Kröller-Müller Museum) 2000, 702.III.

3 'Data en Feiten (betreffende de invloedsonwikkeling van "De Stijl" in 't Buitenland) die voor zich zelf spreken', *De Stijl* 79/84 ([December 1927]), 53-71, 65.

4 Letter Van Doesburg to Antony Kok, 18 October 1923 [*'De Stijl overal absolute leiding'*. *De briefwisseling tussen Theo van Doesburg en Antony Kok* (ed. Alied Ottevanger), Bussum 2008, 439].

5 Evert van Straaten, *Theo van Doesburg. Painter and architect*, The Hague 1988, 139.

6 Dolf Broekhuizen, 'True-to-life experiences. Initiatives for model homes and reconstructions', in Dolf Broekhuizen (ed.), *Maison d'Artiste. Unfinished De Stijl Icon*, Rotterdam 2016, 25-33, 25.

7 Mick Eekhout et al., *Reconstructie en ontwikkeling van het Maison d'Artiste prototype*, Delft 2016.

8 For this summary, I am especially making grateful use of Broekhuizen, 'True-to-life experiences' en 'Client wanted. Possibilities and dilemmas surrounding realization', and Michael White, 'Model Living. The Maison d'Artiste as Representation and Idea', in Broekhuizen, *Maison d'Artiste*, 11-15, 17-34 and 89-97, respectively.

9 Yve-Alain Bois and Nancy Troy, 'De Stijl et l'architecture à Paris', in Yves-Alain Bois and Bruno Reichlin (ed.), *De Stijl et l'architecture en France* (Liège-Bruxelles 1985), 139-170. In the literature, it is assumed the floor plans were exhibited at the *L'Effort Moderne*, but this is not completely certain. The note paper on which Van Doesburg listed the exhibited objects – see Broekhuizen, *Maison d'Artiste*, 95 – mentions three floor plans for a *Maison d'Artiste*, but they were subsequently crossed out. Why is not clear. The 2000 oeuvre catalogue makes reference to handwritten 'room surveys', where three of the four floors are mentioned under nos. 6-8 (Els Hoek (ed.), *Theo van Doesburg Oeuvre-catalogus*, Utrecht/Otterlo 2000, 344, 363-364.
10 Manfred Bock, *Bouwkunst, Stijl, stedenbouw*, Rotterdam/Den Haag 2001, 199. I thank Sjoerd van Faassen for bringing these sketches to my attention.

11 From our correspondent [W.F.A. Röell], 'Bezoek bij Mondriaan. Het Neo-plasticisme in Schilderkunst, Bouwkunst, Muziek, Litteratuur', *Het Vaderland* 17 October 1924, Evening edition D, 1.

12 From our correspondent [W.F.A. Röell], 'Hollandsche Architectuur te Parijs. De groep "De Stijl" – Boulevard Raspail 254', *De Telegraaf* 5 April 1924, Morning edition, Page one, 2.

13 Broekhuizen, 'Client wanted. Possibilities and dilemmas surrounding realization', 94.

14 E-mail Wies van Moorsel, 15 August 2017.

15 Letter Van Doesburg to Antony Kok of 18 October 1923 [*De Stijl overal absolute leiding*, 439].

16 I wish to thank Herman van Bergeijk here, who directed me to this possibility in an email of 10 May 2017.

17 Luc Megens, Mariël Polman, *Contra-constructie Maison d'artiste. Theo van Doesburg en Cor van Eesteren, 1923. Onderzoek naar de pigmenten*, Cultural Heritage Agency, Amsterdam, # 2017-0095, September 2017.

18 Hoek et al., *Theo van Doesburg. Oeuvre Catalogue*, passim.

19 Guidoboni, Emanuele, Muggia, Anna, Marconi, Clemente, Boschis, Enzo, 'A Case study in Archaeoismology. The Collapses of the Selinunte Temples (Southwestern Sicily): Two Earthquakes Identified', *Bulletin of the Seismological Society of America*, vol.92 (2002), 8 (December), 2961-2982.

20 John H. Stubbs and Emily G. Makaš, *Architectural Conservation in Europe and the Americas*, Hoboken (NJ) 2011, 16-18.

21 Cesare Brandi, *Theory of restoration*, Florence/Rome 2005, 64: 'The only legitimate moment for the act of restoration is the actual moment of conscious awareness of the work of art.'

22 Johan Huizinga, 'De taal der Cultuurgeschiedenis', in Idem, *Verzamelde werken VII. Geschiedwetenschap. Hedendaagsche Cultuur*, Haarlem 1950, 35-94, especially 72-73.

22 At this time, lots of negatives, but also printing paper, were still orthochromatic, which means they were sensitive to blue and yellow, and less so to red. In the 1920s, the use of panchromatic film and printing materials also came into vogue, and this material reacted differently still to the various colours.

23 See his note on the back of a photograph of *Composition with color plane* (1917) which he sent to Louis Saalborn on 24 September 1917 [Els Hoek, 'Piet Mondrian', in Carel Blotkamp et al., *De Stijl: The Formative*

Years 1917-1922, Cambridge (MA) 1986, 54]; letter Piet Mondrian to Theo van Doesburg, 5 September 1917 [The Hague, RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, Theo and Nelly van Doesburg Archive, 0408/134].

24 Note on the sketch kept in the archive of the Nieuwe Instituut, Van Eesteren archive. A copy of the material was kindly put at my disposal by Dolf Broekhuizen.

25 See *De kleur lost de architectonische ruimte op. De briefwisseling tussen Theo van Doesburg en architect C.R. de Boer, 1920-1929* (ed. Sjoerd van Faassen and Herman van Bergeijk), Haarlem 2019, in particular, too, the contribution by Lisette Kappers, 'Kleurhistorisch onderzoek', 216-253.

A portrait of the architectural historian as a young man

In 1987 Herman van Bergeijk published the essay 'La prima metà del Seicento: dal castello al Palazzo' in *Il Palazzo Ducale di Modena*, edited by Albano Biondi. I'm aware it is not his best-known essay and someone might even wonder how a brilliant young scholar of twentieth-century art and architecture, who came to Italy to perfect his training with the historians of the Venetian school, first and foremost Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, ended up among the authors of that volume. Sometimes, however, it is the minor feats that reveal the talents and character of a scholar. The volume on the Ducal Palace of Modena was, if I remember correctly, the first enterprise of Multiversum, a cooperative of researchers and archivists from that city, with different backgrounds, some graduates in History of Architecture at IUAV, scene of the first meeting with Herman. None of us had yet reached the age of thirty and I remember Herman, who was thirty-three years old, as an 'elderly' colleague. He was obviously not an old man, but neither was he a colleague, because none of us, given our age, enjoyed an academic position. Multiversum, in order to obtain the task of curating the book according to the philosophy that moved us – a collective of researchers able to provide a package of archival work, writing, publishing, exhibitions and so on – went on the attack of well-established academics, in a clash which, if you know Herman's character, certainly did not bother him. Nor did it disturb him to adhere to another principle that moved the Multiversum Cooperative: researchers had to be paid for their research. Doing research is not a hobby for future glory but a profession. So, with some youthful naivety but not without reasons in the academic Italy of that time, we reasoned, taking our first steps. And as a professional, Herman, a Dutch scholar of twentieth-century architecture, strong in an Italian not yet perfectly consolidated, attacked the State Archives of Modena and impeccably reconstructed the transformation of the modest castle of Modena into the Palazzo Ducale in favour of the Estense Court, forcibly moved, in 1598, from the glorious Ferrara to the never-loved city of Modena. A story of modest works, devoid of great names – and related bibliography – on which to rely in order to complete the essay brilliantly, but which is described and told for what it is, functionally to the collective work necessary to build the volume, and with the same care reserved, on other occasions, to celebrated and authoritative works. Herman is the author of reference for many other and far more relevant researches, of course, but I find

that the respect for the object of study shown in that youthful essay immediately revealed, in purity I would like to say, the passion, the quality and the rigour – also ethical – of an architectural historian.

Stam again or Hanomag, Mercedes and Tatra

Mart Stam's famous cantilever chair seems to attract unending interest. While the Dutch, until recently, ascribed practically all right-angled cantilever chairs to Stam, the inventiveness of the architect from Purmerend has suddenly been called into question – to put it mildly. That at least is the standpoint taken in two articles about cantilever chairs by Bernard Hulsman in *NRC Handelsblad*.¹

His reason for doubt was the discovery by the Czech-British architect Ivan Margolius of a cantilever seat in a 1926 car, the Tatra T12. Margolius studied architecture in Prague and London, and occupied himself with architecture and design history, as well as with his design practice.² Like many architects, he is keenly interested in car design, especially the Czech marque Tatra which still vaguely remembered in the Netherlands for the formerly imported Tatra lorries. Tatra's main claim to a place in design history is the model T87, a streamlined limousine from the latter half of the 1930s. Margolius himself bought a later version, the Tatrapijan T600 from 1949.

That Tatra had used steel tube for car seats since the early 1920s was already known from the literature.³ The same applied to seats in Fokker aircraft made from 1924 onwards, but the tube was in that case clad in textile or reed. Since it is implausible that Stam had seen a Tatra in the Netherlands or Germany, and even less likely that he flew in a Fokker aircraft in those years, these facts are worth mentioning only as technical or cultural background information and no more than that. Margolius, however, having seen the interior of the Tatra T12, combined his discovery with his literature-based knowledge of Stam's inspiration by car seats, and arrived at a different conclusion: that Stam must have ridden with Ferdinand Kramer in Tatra T12 on the way to a meeting about the construction of the Weissenhof Estate, and thus must have seen this seat.

This story of Stam's inspiration by a car seat is apocryphal, and moreover has two versions. The first, as related by the Frankfurt architect Ferdinand Kramer, was first noted by John Heskett in *Tubular Steel Furniture*: 'On a visit to the Weissenhofsiedlung



FIG. 1 Tatra T12, 1926-32 [Tatra Archive]

in Stuttgart during its construction, Stam and Kramer drove in a small Hanomag car. When the front passenger seat was folded forward to let Stam out of the rear seat of the car, he noticed the tubular steel construction of the folded seat. According to Kramer he immediately began sketching ideas for a chair and on returning home constructed his first model.⁴ I heard something similar from Ferdinand Kramer during a conversation in Frankfurt in January 1980, but he made no mention of a shared car trip or a sketch being made; if I remember correctly, he spoke about a lorry. However, my recall of the conversation may be inaccurate.

The second variant came from Heinz Rasch, who described Stam as having a ‘spark of inspiration’ on seeing a seat in a Hanomag lorry.⁵ Later he admitted that it may have been a Mercedes. The make of vehicle was actually not important, the main thing being inspiration by an industrial product. Rasch too offered this information as a personal recollection. The event must have taken place in Germany, he reasoned, probably in Stuttgart because Stam went there for a conference about the Weissenhofsiedlung on 22 November 1926. It was his sole visit to Germany in autumn that year. The Rasch variant found a place in the literature from 1983 onwards together with that of Kramer.⁶ The source of inspiration was at first attributed to the Hanomag lorry, and only later to a Mercedes.⁷



FIG. 2 Interior Tatra T12 [Tatra Archive]

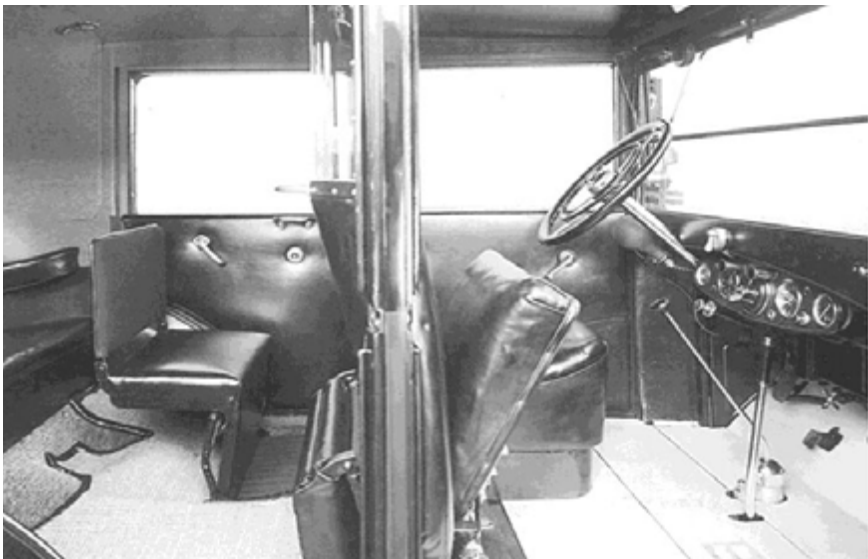


FIG. 3 Interior Mercedes, 1926 [from: Motor Journal 9/2017]

Kramer associated, in his recollection, seeing a vehicle seat with making a sketch, and referred vaguely to its subsequent elaboration. What Rasch recalled was limited to the inspiration as such, without further consequences. But when it came to the cantilever chair sketch, he remembered something entirely different. It was the well-known account of the sketch of the gas-pipe chair, which Stam made for his pregnant wife, Leni, while in Rotterdam. He presented the sketch over dinner in Hotel Marquart on 22 November 1926, during discussions of the construction plans for the Weissenhofsiedlung. Stam drew a chair made of lengths of gas piping connected by elbow joints, in blue pencil, on a card announcing the wedding of Willi Bouwmeister which had taken place two days earlier. On returning to Rotterdam, Stam developed his idea into an 'ordinary' chair. Heinz Rasch wrote of this sequence of events as early as 1960, and stuck to his account.⁸ The article was then largely forgotten, but the story was revived in 1975 in the Delft *Metal Tube Chairs* exhibition catalogue, following conversations between Gerrit Oorthuys and myself. This information thus became more widely known.⁹

Returning to Ivan Margolius: he came across the cantilevered seat of the Tatra T12 while researching the manufacturer's archives for a revised edition of his book on the Tatra marque. The seat had a bent steel frame, visually a single line although the backrest is actually hinged, and rounded corners. He combined this discovery with his knowledge of the general origins of this seat to produce a kind of collage, as follows. From Ferdinand Kramer, he took over the taxi trip and the sketch. The vehicle marque changed to a Tatra T12 because the small Hanomag car dating from 1926 (nicknamed *Kommissbrot* for its fanciful resemblance to a rye loaf) was a two-seater with non-cantilevered seats. From Rasch's account, Margolius incorporated only Stam's presentation of the sketch to his colleagues in hotel Marquart, with no mention of a gas-pipe chair being assembled earlier in Rotterdam. This implied that Stam must have noticed the cantilevered car seat while alighting from the Tatra T12 taxi and was consequently inspired during dinner to sketch a chair with elbow joints for his model dwelling in the Weissenhofsiedlung; according, at least, to Margolius. A new, hybrid story thus came into being.¹⁰ But there was a problem: if Stam had seen the Tatra T12 seat with a continuous bent tube frame, why did he sketch a chair with elbow joints? The answer might be Stam's aversion to curved lines. But this explanation is too easy: Stam could just as well have drawn a right-angled chair frame without elbow joints. Paper is patient, after all.

The version of Ivan Margolius is questionable for several reasons. The first, pragmatic, question is whether Tatra cars actually drove on German roads. This may be answered affirmatively, for Margolius sent me an email with further

information.¹¹ He had researched export data on these cars in the relevant period, and learned that the Tatra T12 was being assembled under licence in Frankfurt by the firm Deutsche Lizenz Tatra – Automobile Betriebsgesellschaft m.b.H, abbreviated as DELTA and then, after 1928, as DETRA. We may still question how wide its distribution was, but it cannot be ruled out that the T12 was to be seen in Stuttgart in that period.



FIG. 4 Mart Stam, chair for the Weißenhofsiedlung, 1927 [photo archive Otakar Máčel]

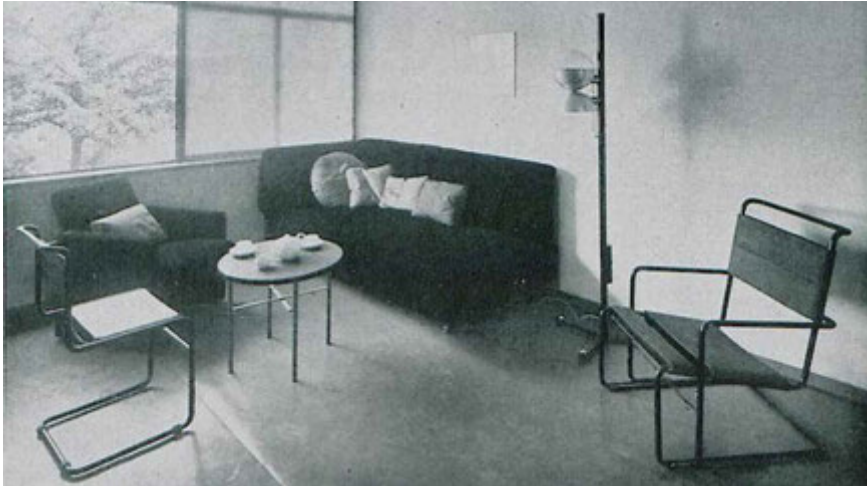


FIG. 5 Mart Stam, interior of one of the houses for the Weißenhofsiedlung 1927 [photo archive Otakar Máčel]



FIG. 6 Chair Tatra T12, from 1926 [from: Motor Journal 9/2017]



FIG. 7 Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, chair for the Weißenhofsiedlung 1927 [photo archive Otakar Máčel]

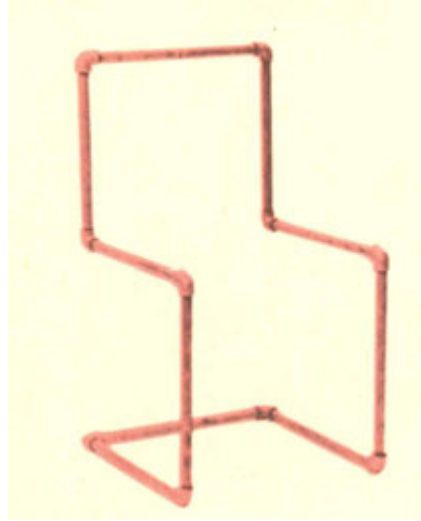


FIG. 8 Reconstruction gas pipe chair by Axel Bruchhäuser, 1985 [photo archive Otakar Máčel]

Accounts of Stam's inspiration by car seats are hard to prove. Both authors have long passed away and their recollections were in any case retrospective. And they contradict each other. Moreover, Rasch's account of the car seat, actually just a brief mention, is inconsistent with his description of a sketch in blue pencil drawn in Hotel Marquart. For this to be plausible, Stam must have seen the vehicle concerned in Germany at an earlier date, gone back to Rotterdam to assemble the gas-pipe chair, and then returned to Germany for the conference where he drew the sketch. This would certainly have been possible, except that there is no evidence at all that he visited Germany earlier in 1926. Theoretically it is possible that Stam saw a Tatra with cantilvered seat in the Netherlands and mentioned it only to Rasch. But then everything becomes rather speculative.

Compared to the tale of inspiration by a car seat, Rasch's description of the gas-pipe chair sketch is more credible. Firstly, the conference in Hotel Marquart on 22 November 1926 actually took place and those attending included Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Stam and Rasch. Willi Baumeister had married in Stuttgart two days earlier and Mies was present at the ceremony, which explains the presence of the wedding invitation card.¹² Witness to the sketch was borne by Heinz Rasch, as well as by Sergius Ruegenberg, a former employee of Mies van der Rohe who noted the comments that Mies made about Stam's sketch in Berlin at the end of November.¹³ It is also striking that Mies never claimed priority of invention as regards the cantilevered chair, although his own cantilevered design was presented

at the same time as that of Stam in the Weissenhofssiedlung. The testimonies of Rasch and Ruegenberg were admittedly *post factum*, but they seem plausible enough in the light of all the other data. However, Sergius Ruegenberg gives rise to small problem: he ceased working for Mies van der Rohe in Berlin on the first of August 1926, and joined the architecture firm Bensel und Kamps in Hamburg; then, nearly a year later, he moved to Karel Schneider, also in Hamburg.¹⁴ It was not until November 1928 that he went back to work for Mies in Berlin. Could his information have come from his Berlin colleagues? Last but not least, Mart Stam himself explained the origin of his gas-pipe chair to Axel Bruchhäuser of the firm TECTA somewhere between 1977 and 1980, and Bruchhäuser reconstructed the gas-pipe chair in accordance with Stam's instructions.¹⁵

As to Ivan Margolius' proposal regarding the Tatra T12, the car seat was indeed very modern for its time and could in theory have served as a source of inspiration to Stam along with other car seat designs and other examples of cantilevered structures. But that does not imply that Stam must have seen it. Inspiration does not after all imply making a literal copy of the source; on the contrary. Margolius moreover selected only data that was consistent with the Tatra T12 car seat, and ignored anything that did not fit. Consequently, the inspiration for the 'Kragstuhl' (a 'bracket chair', as the cantilevered chair was formerly called in Germany) remains shrouded in mist. Hardly anything is exactly right, although there must have been source; and inspiration by a car seat is in any case consistent with the myth of early modernity.

Notes

- 1 Bernard Hulsmans, '“Zitten op lucht” komt uit een auto', *NRC Handelsblad* 26 september 2019 and 'Zitten op lucht' – maar wie bedacht de vrijzwevende stoel?', *NRC Handelsblad* 25 november 2019.
- 2 See e.g. Ivan Margolius, *Cubism in Architecture and the Applied Art*, Newton Abbot 1979, or *Automobiles by Architects*, London 2000.
- 3 See e.g. Otakar Máčel, *Der Freischwinger. Vom Avantgardeentwurf zur Ware*, Delft 1992, 46; Werner Möller, Otakar Máčel, *Ein Stuhl macht Geschichte*, Munich 1992, 51; Mathias Schwarz-Claus, 'B 3 Wassily', in Alexander von Vegesack, Peter Dunas, Mathias Schwarz-Claus (ed.), *100 Masterpieces in der Sammlung des Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein 1996*, 212.
- 4 From Heskett's interview with Kramer in 25 May 1977, John Heskett, 'Germany: The Industrial Applications of Tubular Steel', in Barbie Campbell-Cole, Tim Benton (ed.), *Tubular Steel Furniture*, London 1979, 23.
- 5 Reported by Heinz Rasch to Otakar Máčel, 1979-80, during preparation of the book *Stühle aus Stahl*.
- 6 See e.g. Otakar Máčel, 'The Legend of the Steel Chair', *Plan 6* (1983), 42, or *idem.*, 'Il caso Mannesman', *Rassegna* 14/2 (1983), 28.
- 7 Otakar Máčel, 'The Continuous Line of Sitting', *Rassegna* 47/3 (1991), 51.
- 8 Heinz Rasch, 'Aus der Zwanziger Jahren', *Werk und Zeit* 11 (1960), 3.
- 9 Jan van Geest, Otakar Máčel & Gerrit Oorthuys, *Metalen buisstoelen 1925-1940*, Delft (Het Prinsenhof) 1975, 16; Jane Beckett, 'W. H. Gispen and the Development of Tubular Steel Furniture in the Netherlands',

in Campbell-Cole/Benton, *Tubular Steel Furniture*, 29; Jan van Geest, Otakar Máčel, *Stühle aus Stahl. Metaalmöbel 1925-1940*, Köln 1980, 26.

10 Ivan Margolius, 'Cars, Furniture, Architecture – How Tatra Car Seating Inspired an Iconic Modernist Chair', in *The Friends of Czech Heritage* 14 (2016); idem, 'Automobily, nábytek, architektura', in *Motor Journal* 9 (2017), 40-43.

11 Email 17 January 2019.

12 See i.a. Heinz Rasch, 'Wege der neuen Architektur', *Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt* 26 November 1926; Karin Kirsch, *The Weissenhofsiedlung*, New York 1989, 102, 107.

13 Rasch, 'Aus der Zwanziger Jahren'; Axel Bruchhäuser (ed.), *Der Kragstuhl*, Berlin-Beverungen 1986, 50, 95, 127.

14 See Eva-Maria Amberger, *Sergius Ruegenberg*, Berlin (Berlinische Galerie) 2000, 16-17.

15 Bruchhäuser, *Der Kragstuhl*. Bruchhäuser verbally confirmed the information to Otakar Máčel in 1985.

The Wendingen Edition: What Frank Lloyd Wright wanted Holland to know in 1925

‘I believe that Holland will go far along the line of architecture; it is there that the architects seem to have taken root in my work,’ Frank Lloyd Wright told his wife-to-be Olgivanna on the day in 1925 that the *Wendingen Edition* arrived at Taliesin.¹ And to this he added, ‘the enlightened minority does seem at this time to be strongest in Holland.’²

The *Wendingen Edition* did not introduce Frank Lloyd Wright to Europe. As late as 1925, no book-length collection of his work had been published in the USA, but two monographs had been published — both in Germany. The first, a large, impressive, very exclusive folio of Wright’s work, *Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe*, was published in Berlin by Ernst Wasmuth in 1910. Known now as the *Wasmuth Portfolio*, it featured 100 plates in unbound sheets showing Wright’s most important works built between 1893 and 1909. Wright himself had redrawn plans, sections, perspectives, and details of his work for the book. In re-drawing the work, he edited his architecture for a European audience, eschewing the building’s mostly suburban contexts and enhancing the architecture with lush vegetation — underscoring what he called the ‘natural’ or ‘organic’ qualities of the construction. A few copies of the *Wasmuth Portfolio* were circulated in Europe in 1910, but many were brought by Wright to the USA where before they could be distributed, they were destroyed by water. The *Wasmuth*, perhaps because it had so lightly touched the earth, thus ascended instantly to the level of legend. The second publication of Wright’s work, the *Ausgeführte Bauten*, came the year after the *Wasmuth Portfolio*. It was a far less expensive, much smaller book comprised primarily of photographs of only thirty of Wright’s works. The book’s thick, dark photographs failed to convey the organic nature Wright’s architecture. Both books came out before the First World War — both before the building of Wright’s home, Taliesin, in remote Wisconsin; both before Taliesin was burned to the ground and Wright’s beloved Mamah murdered there. Both came before his move to Tokyo and before his return to the USA and to Taliesin via three years in Los Angeles.



FIG. 1

In Paris in 1923, two years before the *Wendingen* Edition was published, Le Corbusier published *Vers une architecture*, arguments for a new architecture that would later be recognized as ‘the most influential, widely read and least understood of all the architectural writings of the twentieth century’.³ Also in 1923, in Berlin, on the twelfth of December, at the public convention of the Bund Deutscher Architekten, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe gave a short presentation, ‘Gelöste Probleme. Eine Anforderung an unsere Bauweise’.⁴ Mies’ succinct talk set forth his dictates for a new architecture. The talk was published immediately in *Bauwelt*. Both Le Corbusier and Mies, little-known at the time, would become, like Wright, great masters of modern architecture. Both were under forty and had built only a few small buildings. Wright, on the other hand, was 56-years-old and had built some 200 buildings.⁵ In 1925, when finally the *Wendingen* Edition was published, Wright was 58-years-old. He had surpassed the life expectancy of the average American man at the time (57.6 years in 1925). It was not unthinkable, therefore, that the *Wendingen* Edition might be the summation of his life’s work — that 1925 might be the beginning of the end of his life.



FIG. 2

If the *Wendingen Edition* were to be the final account of his work, what did he want it to say? For certainly it was Wright who furnished Wijdeveld, the editor, with the visual material for the edition.⁶ And it was he who wrote four of the book's twelve essays.⁷ With the *Wendingen Edition*, Wright once again would write his own history.⁸



FIG. 3

The first third of the *Wendingen Edition* shows Wright's own house, Taliesin, as well as his masterpieces from 1902-9, designs that had appeared already in both *Wasmuth* publications: the Larkin Building, Unity Temple, the Willits, Martin, Coonley, and Robie Houses. Whereas the houses are 'Light Wright' — exhibiting horizontal stretch and delicate walls that hover — the Larkin Building and Unity Temple are depicted as heavy and foreboding. Their walls are visual barriers to the outside world and they disclose nothing of their magnificent interior space. Photographs of their street facades show them as vertical and inert.⁹ [2-3] 'The Larkin Building is a simple, dignified utterance of a plain, utilitarian type with sheer brick walls and simple stone copings,' Wright noted in essay printed beneath the images, 'Photographs do not adequately present these subjects. A building has a presence as has a person that defies the photographer.'¹⁰

Wright is right, of course. His drawings for the 1910 *Wasmuth Portfolio* had evoked the nature of the work, but in the *Wendingen Edition* the photographs are a hindrance. Nearly all of the *Wendingen* photographs of *all* of the buildings illustrated are blotchy, high contrast, muddy images — photographic representation that is often awkwardly composed and awkwardly put on the page. They fail utterly to render the buildings sympathetically.¹¹



FIG. 4

With similarly ‘bad’ photographs, the final two thirds of the book presents the Dutch reader with Wright’s post-Prairie Style architecture: buildings in rural Wisconsin, in Chicago, Tokyo, and Los Angeles.¹² Larger than his earlier works, these buildings assume symmetrical Beaux Arts parti. Like the Larkin Building and Unity Temple, they appear unusually closed, blockish, and massive. [4-6] Wright cuts into them. They appear more massive. He ornaments them. They seem heavier. It is here that one recalls Wright’s remarks first at the beginning of the book: ‘I gloated over the beautiful buildings I could build if only it were unnecessary to cut holes in them.’¹³ And then at the end of the book, ‘There is a strength of Joy in the forms [...] — the joy of strength — standing square and sturdy.’¹⁴

Only for a brief few years following the publication of the *Wendingen Edition* would Wright’s architecture remain an architecture of heavy, inert mass.¹⁵ Beginning in 1934 with the Malcolm Willey House, and eventually with *Fallingwater* (1937) and the *Usonian Houses* (1937 onward), he returned to lighter buildings. When, at the time, the opaque enclave was called for, as at the Johnson Wax Administration Building and the Guggenheim Museum, he streamlined the great masses and adopted an asymmetrical parti that served to make the buildings appear softer, more energetic, and less confrontational.¹⁶

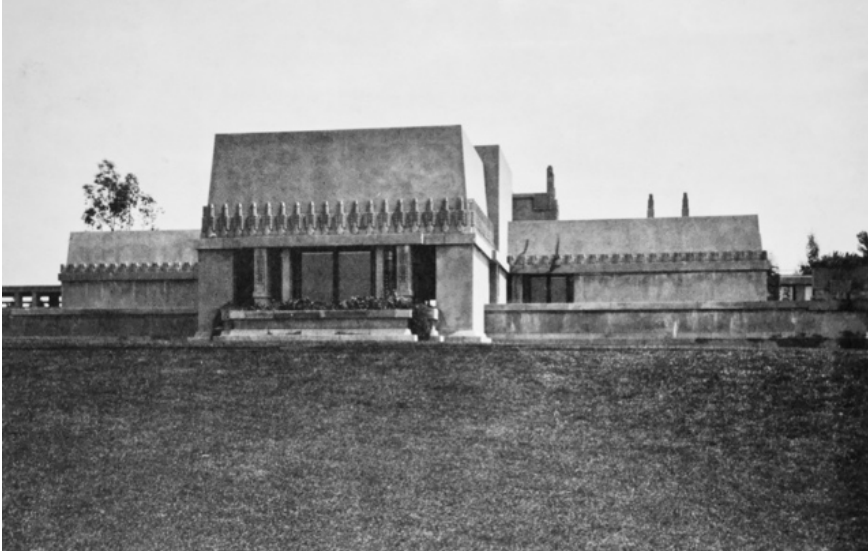


FIG. 5

Wright's work from 1915 to 1923 — buildings portrayed in the *Wendingen Edition* by poor photographs and inconsistent drawings — are some of his finest, though often they are dismissed as aberrations in his *œuvre*. Midway Gardens was demolished with the advent of Prohibition in the USA. The Imperial Hotel was taken down in 1968, a piece of it preserved and moved to the outdoor architecture museum Meiji-mura remote from Tokyo near Nagoya. Hollyhock House and the Barnsdall Theater are slowly being restored but presently are robbed of their promenades and symmetrical *parti*'s and are offered only as fragments, their magnificent site scarred by a persistent chain-link fencing.

One suspects that Wright knew what he was about when he built these buildings, that he got what he wanted, that the sometimes-awkward heaviness, the preponderance of mass, was *intentional*, albeit a deviation from what we now believe was, reprehensively put, 'Wright's trajectory'. At the end of the *Wendingen Edition*, in a wonderful essay, 'Facts Regarding the Imperial Hotel', that appears below the rough illustrations of the Tokyo building, he tells us of magnificence in the 'strength of the primitive': 'Yet with all its grace and modernity, the Imperial has the strength of the primitive — it harks back to origins. The quality of the Imperial as the Japanese say, is "shibui" — meaning, a thing at first disliked, coming back again — interested, back again — beginning to see, and ten times revisited — loved [...] a quality in a thing that asserts itself as beauty only when one has grown to it. [...] A mysterious, quiet — [...] fruit of an experience ages older than any culture the Occident yet knows.'¹⁷

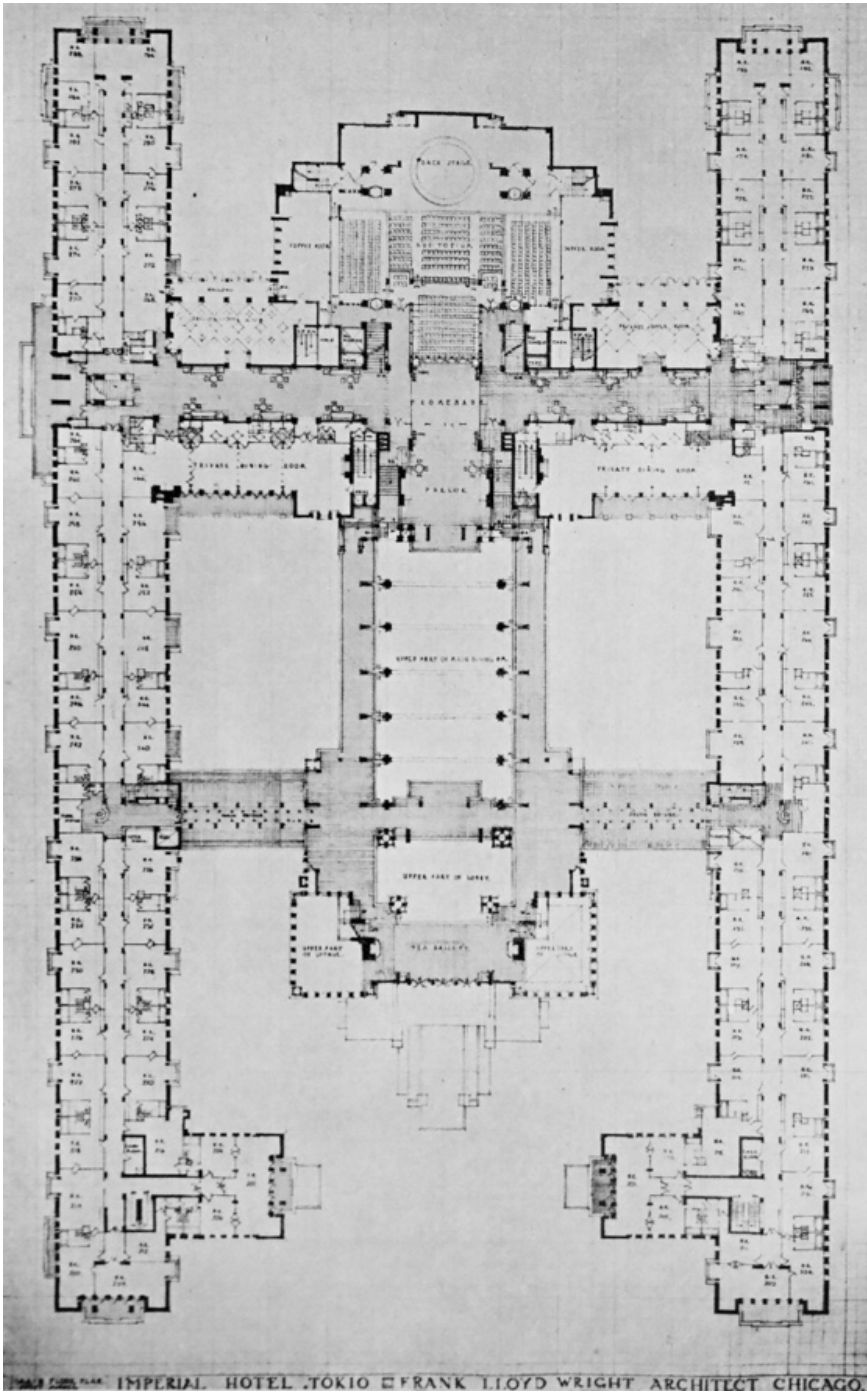


FIG. 6

'A thing at first disliked, coming back again' is an accurate description of the Imperial Hotel, one that might also apply to Midway Gardens and to the Barnsdall Theater, to Wright's A.D. German warehouse and his State Bank project for Spring Green Wisconsin, to the Bogk House in Milwaukee. Indeed, the description might be applied to the *Wendingen Edition*, itself, an essential monograph but a book unevenly weighted toward Wright's heavier works, buildings that in their heaviness and Beaux Arts parti's seem almost un-Wrightian. The *Wendingen Edition* illustrations are not good. The drawings it features are often working drawings or presentation drawings taken from the earlier publications of Wasmuth in Berlin. The photographs are dense and difficult to read, views from awkward angles, illustrating as heavy Wright's lighter works. The proportions of the book, too, are awkward: almost a square though the illustrations inside are never square. Despite all of this — or, perhaps, because of it — Wright admired the book greatly. It spoke to his condition in 1925, a time when he needed appreciation. According to Olgivanna Wright, 'Mr. Wright kept this *Wendingen Edition* close by his side [...] He admired its proportions and layout, and enjoyed turning the pages over, studying his buildings, reading the text; and he took great pleasure in the reproduction of his drawings and the splendid photographs. He would put it away for a time and a few days later pick it up again, always enjoying its beauty and often saying: "What a wonderful work this is!"'¹⁸

And to this she added, 'To him this was the book on architecture that would be good a hundred years from now; he believed it would have as much impact on the future as it has already had on the past.'

Certainly, the *Wendingen Edition* had some influence on Dutch architecture between the wars,¹⁹ though probably it hadn't as much influence as we Yankees like to believe. By the time of its publication, Wright's work was well-known in Holland and Germany through the Wasmuth publications, even to the point of imitation. So, in his highly insightful contribution to the *Wendingen Edition*, 'The Influence of Frank Lloyd Wright on the Architecture of Europe', J.J.P. Oud could declare Wright 'one of the very greatest of this time' yet at the same time caution the reader against conflating Wright's influence with that of the Dutch De Stijl architects. Indeed, Oud noted that he himself revered Wright 'because the process by which his work came into being, remains for me a mystery [...]. So firm of structure for all their movability were the piled up masses growing as it were out of the soil.' Still, he had to conclude that because 'nobody doubted the inevitable necessity of this form language' ultimately, 'Wright's influence on European architecture must be considered a less happy one'. Wright's architecture, Oud surmised, has encouraged 'a cult of forms instead of an orientation toward an inner nature.' And to this assessment — which I can only imagine to be a truthful, accurate evaluation,

one applicable to Dutch architecture between the wars — I would add Marshall McLuhan's obvious yet profound belief that 'all media exist to invest our lives with artificial perception and arbitrary values'.²⁰

Notes

- 1 Wendingen, *The Life Work of the American Architect Frank Lloyd Wright*, Series 7, issues 3-9 (October 1925-April 1926) was published by C.A. Mees in Santpoort [<http://www.steinerag.com/flw/index.htm>]. A facsimile copy of the book was published by Horizon Press in 1965. A far less expensive edition of the facsimile, *The Work of Frank Lloyd Wright: The Wendingen Edition*, was published by Bramhall House books in New York City later in 1965. As the dust jacket notes, 'economies in machine production' finally brought 'this great work within the reach of many who have for years doubtless awaited its availability'. It is of this version – with its cheap, glossy paper, rather poorly printed on both sides; with its dense black and white photographs and its 'slightly smaller margins' – that I write. It is unfair, I know. It is, however, the only Wendingen Edition I have ever known, the only one accessible to me today, and the only Wendingen most Wright-Os in the USA have 'experienced'.
- 2 Olgivanna Wright, 'An Introduction by Mrs. Frank Lloyd Wright', from the facsimile copy of *The Wendingen Edition*, New York 1965), unpagged (first page of this 3-page introduction).
- 3 Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, New York 1960, 220.
- 4 The talk was delivered in the large lecture hall of the Museum for Applied Arts. It was published in *Bauwelt* 14 (1923) 52, 719 and re-published in English as 'Solved Problems. A Demand on our Building Methods' (trans. Rolf Achilles), in *Mies van der Rohe. Architect as Educator*, Chicago 1986, 165-166.
- 5 On the opening page of *The Wendingen Edition*, H.Th. Wijdeveld lists 1869 as the year in which Wright was born. That fact was probably enjoyed and promoted by Wright. In truth, he was born in 1867.
- 6 See for the origins and printing history of the *Wendingen Edition*: Martijn Le Coultre, *Wendingen 1918-1932. A Journal of the Arts*, Princeton 2002, 166-169.
- 7 Illustrations dominate the *Wendingen Edition*, but where they are not, there are essays on Wright and by Wright. Several are exceptional: H.Th. Wijdeveld, 'Some Flowers for Architect Frank Lloyd Wright'; Frank Lloyd Wright, 'In the Cause of Architecture, March 1908' and 'In the Cause of Architecture, May 1914'; Lewis Mumford, 'The Social Background of Frank Lloyd Wright'; H.P. Berlage, 'Frank Lloyd Wright'; J.J.P. Oud, 'The Influence of Frank Lloyd Wright on the Architecture of Europe'; Rob. Mallet Stevens, 'Frank Lloyd Wright et l'Architecture nouvelle' (in French); Erich Mendelsohn, 'Frank Lloyd Wright' (in German); Louis Sullivan, 'Concerning the Imperial Hotel Tokio' and 'Reflections on the Tokio Disaster'; Frank Lloyd Wright, 'Facts Regarding the Imperial Hotel' and 'To My European Co-Workers'.
- 8 Like Le Corbusier, Wright excelled at 'image management'. Many have commented on the inaccuracies in his 1932 *An Autobiography* but few have noticed that Wright wrote his own architectural history — selecting and often re-drawing the works that would appear in major monographs including the Wasmuth Portfolio, the *Wendingen Edition*, two special editions of *Architectural Forum* dedicated entirely to his work, and Henry Russell Hitchcock's *In the Nature of Materials. The Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright, 1887-1941* (1942). Wright also controlled the content of many of the exhibitions of his architecture throughout the world and to a large extent of the many popular press articles about him in the American journals *Life*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *House Beautiful*. See my 'Waiting for the Site to Show Up-2. Henry Luce Makes Frank Lloyd Wright America's Greatest Architect', *Histories of Post War Architecture* 0 (2017) 1, 1-12, <https://hpa.unibo.it/article/view/6721/6535>.
- 9 See particularly the photograph of the Larkin Building, and of Unity Temple (Figures 2 and 3).
- 10 Wright, 'In the Cause of Architecture', 14. This essay, a cornerstone of Wright's early theory, was originally published in the USA in March, 1908.
- 11 Excellent architectural photography was possible at the time as is evident in the contemporaneous French series *L'Architecture Vivante* (Editions Albert Morancé) and in the work of French photographers Marius Grivot and G. Thiriet, well-known today for their photographs of Le Corbusier's architecture in the mid-1920s.

- 12 A.D. German Warehouse (100-103); Midway Gardens (63-77); Imperial Hotel (105-130); Skyscraper (80-81); and Barnsdall Theater (58-161) are the obvious large scale, symmetrical works. One could add to these the asymmetrical Coonley Playhouse, Illinois (30); State Bank, Spring Green (83); and the Millard house, Pasadena (95). Unlike the other buildings, with the playhouse, the apparent inertness of the building is the product of its 'heavy' photographic image. Many of these photographs also appear in Wasmuth's *Ausgeführte Bauten* (1911). It occurs to me that perhaps Wijdeveld chose the 'heavier' images from that publication, not Wright.
- 13 Wright, 'In the Cause of Architecture', 14.
- 14 Wright, 'Facts Regarding the Imperial Hotel', 139.
- 15 The Richard Lloyd Jones House, Tulsa (1929-31) is asymmetrical and wanna-be-massive architecture. Of stacked concrete block with a flat roof and vertical-slot windows on the exterior; it sports two, all-glass nosepieces (aviaries, initially; greenhouses, later). The glass lightens the appearance of the house as it advances its Art Deco stylization. Wright's St. Marks in the Bowery Towers, designed in the 1920s for NYC but ultimately built in 1953 as Price Tower in Oklahoma, was cloaked in vertical louvers of copper. These extended the full height of the building, thus presenting it as striated mass while allowing for exquisite light and tremendous views from the inside.
- 16 There are exceptional post-1940 Wright buildings — his 1949 V.C. Morris Gift Shop in San Francisco, for instance — that present 'strong and silent' fronts on the outside and soft, delicate, welcoming, and warm space on the inside.
- 17 Wright, 'Facts Regarding the Imperial Hotel', 138-139.
- 18 Olgivanna Wright, 'An Introduction by Mrs. Frank Lloyd Wright'.
- 19 See for Wright's influence on Dutch architecture: Herman van Bergeijk (ed.), *Amerikaanse dromen, Frank Lloyd Wright en Nederland*, Rotterdam 2008.
- 20 Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*, London 1964.

Sind Steine unschuldig? – Zum Umgang mit NS-Architektur

Für Herman van Bergeijk

In Erinnerung an die vielen Gespräche und die gute Zusammenarbeit in München

Im Herbst 2016 wurden fast gleichzeitig zwei Meldungen verbreitet: Das Haus der Kunst, ehemals Haus der Deutschen Kunst, soll nach den Vorstellungen des britischen Architekten David Chipperfield und des Museumsdirektors Okwui Enwezor wieder die äußere Erscheinung wie bei der Eröffnung 1937 erhalten, während umgekehrt das Geburtshaus Adolf Hitlers in Braunau baulich so verändert werden soll, dass sein ursprünglicher Zustand nicht mehr ablesbar ist.¹ Man könnte die beiden Fälle als Extreme des Umgangs mit Architektur, die mit dem Nationalsozialismus verknüpft ist, bezeichnen. Beide Konzepte erregten großes Aufsehen und führten zu heftigen Kontroversen. Der Bau, der gezielt zur Präsentation und Propaganda rassistischer Kunst geplant und errichtet wurde, soll wieder seine Erscheinung im Stadtbild wie zur NS-Zeit zurückerhalten, während das Gebäude, in dem zufällig Hitler geboren wurde, zumindest optisch verschwinden soll. Beim Haus der Kunst – von Hitler als ‘der erste schöne Bau des neuen Reiches’ gefeiert – wurde das Argument bemüht, die Steine seien doch unschuldig, und deshalb könne das angeblich großartige Museum einfach so wie es einmal war wieder präsentiert werden. Historische Zusammenhänge hätten demnach also keinerlei Bedeutung für die Bausubstanz beziehungsweise für die auf den Besucher wirkenden Räume. Beim ‘Hitlerhaus’ in Braunau, das nicht für Hitler errichtet worden ist – er verbrachte dort nur ein paar Kinderjahre – wurde dagegen umgekehrt eine derartige Verbindung der Substanz mit der Historie behauptet, dass die angeblich dadurch kontaminierten Steine so verändert werden sollen, dass sie mit keiner Erinnerung an Hitler mehr verknüpft werden können. Wie viel Geschichte befindet sich in einem Bauwerk, und wie kann, soll oder darf mit baulichen Relikten umgegangen werden, die im Nationalsozialismus entstanden oder mit diesem in Verbindung stehen? Diesen Fragen soll im Folgenden nachgegangen werden, denn auch 70 Jahre nach Kriegsende ist dieses Thema offensichtlich genauso brisant wie ungelöst. Im ersten Teil wird ein kurzer Überblick zum Umgang mit den Bauten und Orten des Nationalsozialismus in der Nachkriegszeit ganz generell gegeben, im zweiten Teil geht es um den Umgang mit spezifischen Funktionsbauten der NS-Zeit, und im abschließenden dritten Teil wird das Haus der Kunst behandelt.



FIG. 1 Reichsluftfahrtministerium 1936–45; Russische Militärverwaltung 1945–48; Finanzministerium der DDR 1949–90; Zentrale der Treuhandanstalt 1992–97; Finanzministerium der BRD seit 1999

Der Umgang mit Bauten aus der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus verlief nach 1945 weitgehend pragmatisch: Nur drei repräsentative Bauten wurden auf Anordnung der Alliierten beseitigt: Die Reichskanzlei in Berlin – die Zentrale der NS-Macht; die Aufbauten der Münchner NS-‘Ehrentempel’ – die Kultstätten der NS-Ideologie; und der Berghof am Obersalzberg – Hitlers Wohnhaus und zeitweilige zweite Reichskanzlei. Eingriffe erfolgten am Berliner Olympiagelände, wo 1947 der Glocken- oder ‘Führerturm’ über der ‘Langemarkhalle’ gesprengt, dann allerdings schon 1960 wiederaufgebaut wurde (im Übrigen von seinem ursprünglichen Erbauer, dem Architekten des Olympiastadions Werner March), sowie an der Nürnberger Zeppelintribüne, deren Kolonnaden 1967 gesprengt wurden. Sofern Gebäude mit NS-Bezug stark beschädigt waren, wurden sie abgeräumt. Dabei verschwanden auch einige gefürchtete Orte des Terrors wie das Berliner Prinz-Albrecht-Palais und das Münchner Wittelsbacher Palais, Sitz des Reichssicherheitshauptamts beziehungsweise Gestapo-Zentrale. Der komplette Rohbau der Wehrtechnischen Fakultät wurde unter dem Trümmerschutt Berlins begraben, und das Haus des Fremdenverkehrs 1962 für das Kulturforum am Kempnerplatz entfernt. Militärische Anlagen wurden entweder gesprengt, wie der U-Boot-Bunker in Kiel und die Bunkerfabrik in Mühldorf, oder demontiert, zumeist aber von den alliierten Truppen nahtlos weiter genutzt. Die Alliierten belegten sämtliche Kasernen und Militärverwaltungen, übernahmen Flughäfen wie Tempelhof und Forschungseinrichtungen wie Peenemünde, und auch die drei Ordensburgen zur Erziehung der NS-Elite wurden von amerikanischen, belgischen und russischen Einheiten bezogen. Die repräsentativen NS-Gebäude wurden von den Verwaltungen der Alliierten übernommen und dazu bei Bedarf wiederhergestellt – so beispielsweise Görings Luftfahrtministerium für die



FIG. 2 Wehrkreiskommando Dresden 1938–45; ein Viertel kriegszerstört, detailgenaue Rekonstruktion 1946; Sitz der sächsischen Landesregierung 1946–58; Militärakademie Friedrich Engels der NVA 1959–89; Verwaltungsgebäude der Bundeswehr seit 1990

russische Militärregierung. [1] Nach Gründung der Bundesrepublik beziehungsweise der DDR wurden die meisten der von den Alliierten übernommenen NS-Verwaltungsgebäude, aber auch viele Militäranlagen an deren Verwaltungen beziehungsweise Militär übergeben: Das Göring-Ministerium wurde Finanzministerium der DDR, das Goebbels-Ministerium zuerst Amtssitz des Staatspräsidenten der DDR, Wilhelm Pieck, dann passenderweise DDR-Pressamt, im Dresdner NS-Wehrkreiskommando residierte die Nationale Volksarmee NVA [2], während in der BRD der Berliner Senat die NS-Bauten am Fehrbelliner Platz übernahm und das bayerische Landwirtschaftsministerium die ehemalige Gauleitung an der Münchner Ludwigstraße bezog.

Die große Masse der in der NS-Zeit errichteten Bauten diente nach einer mehr oder weniger gründlichen Entnazifizierung der Oberflächen durch Entfernung von NS-Symbolen oder NS-Beschriftungen wieder ihrer ursprünglichen Funktion als Schulen, Wohnungen, Verwaltungen, Fabriken, Landheime oder Kirchen. Angesichts der Unzahl zerstörter Wohnungen und Arbeitsplätze gab es keine Diskussionen darüber, dass Kinder in Adolf-Hitler-Schulen gingen, NS-Gefolgschaftshäuser und HJ-Heime als Jugendherbergen dienten, in NS-Akademien von der Reichsakademie in Braunschweig bis zur Reichfinanzschule in Herrsching wieder unterrichtet [3] und in den NS-Wohnanlagen – von der SS-Kameradschaftssiedlung in Berlin über die Schlageterstadt in Düsseldorf bis zur Mustersiedlung in München-Ramersdorf – einfach weiter gewohnt wurde. Ehemalige Konzentrationslager wie Buchenwald und Sachsenhausen dienten ohne Unterbrechung als Lager für die russische Militärregierung, und das KZ Neuengamme ging fast nahtlos in ein Hamburger Gefängnis über. Auch die Gebäude der SS-Wachmannschaften von Konzentrationslagern – von Dachau über Natzweiler

bis Gusen – dienten bald wieder als Wohnungen. Manche NS-Rüstungsbetriebe konnten für Wohnzwecke umgebaut werden, so entstanden beispielsweise aus den bayerischen Munitions- und Chemiefabriken neue Städte für Vertriebene wie Geretsried, Traunreut oder Waldkraiburg. Größere NS-Repräsentationsgebäude wurden entweder für kulturelle Einrichtungen genutzt, wie der Münchner Führerbau, oder Verwaltungen zogen ein, wie beim Gauforum in Weimar. Gewisse Schwierigkeiten machten nur die Nutzung der riesigen Flak-Türme mit meterdicken Mauern – einige davon sind inzwischen Wohnanlagen – sowie des Nürnberger Reichsparteitagsgeländes. Diese größte bauliche Anlage des NS-Regimes konnte nicht weiter für Repräsentationszwecke verwendet werden, deshalb wurde sie durch eine gezielt triviale Nutzung als Park- und Lagerfläche für Jahrzehnte aus dem täglichen Leben weitgehend entfernt. Bei Großveranstaltungen wie dem Sudetendeutschen Tag diente das Gelände allerdings doch wieder als repräsentativer Rahmen, sogar unter Einbeziehung der sogenannten 'Führerkanzel'.² [4]

Über die Zehntausende von Bauten, die in Deutschland während der NS-Zeit entstanden beziehungsweise für NS-Zwecke verwendet wurden, gab es in der Bundesrepublik wie auch in der DDR genauso wenig Diskussionen wie über die vielen Hunderttausende ehemaliger Parteimitglieder, die wieder in Amt und zum Teil höchste Würden kamen. Die kollektive Verdrängung umfasste auch die vom Nationalsozialismus kontaminierte Architektur, die somit einfach in den Alltag der Wiederaufbaugesellschaft integriert wurde. Aber während sich die allermeisten bundesdeutschen Bewohner zwischen den Alt- und Neubauten schnell wieder heimisch einrichteten, blieb die jüngste Geschichte für sensible Beobachter in der Architektur und in den Städten präsent. So beschrieb Ingeborg Bachmann in ihrer Büchnerpreisrede 1964 die Stadt Berlin, in der sie seit einem Jahr wohnte, als einen 'Symptomkörper [...] dessen Zeichen auf eine vergangene Schreckensgeschichte verweisen'.³ Ihr Text 'Deutsche Zufälle' schildert '21 Krankheitsbilder', die Berlin als 'Schauplatz von Symptomen einer verdrängten Geschichte' präsentieren. Diese Krankheitsbilder sind 'als Überblendung von Krankenhauszenarien und einzelnen Plätzen aus dem Stadtplan Berlins dargestellt, als entstellte Topographie im wörtlichen Sinn.' In eindringlichen Sprachbildern zerreit Ingeborg Bachmann die Oberflächen, um die darunterliegende Geschichte zu erfassen: Die Häuser verrutschen, verkohlte Knöchel liegen im Gras, überall brechen 'die Zeichen einer aus dem historischen Bewusstsein der Stadt verdrängten Geschichte' hervor: 'Am Knie der Königsallee fallen, jetzt ganz gedämpft, die Schüsse auf Rathenau. In Plötzenssee wird gehenkt'. Die traumatischen Ereignisse der jüngsten deutschen Geschichte werden an den architektonischen und topographischen 'Erinnerungsspuren' beschrieben, die Mörder wie Ermordete präsent werden lassen. Berlin ist der Schauplatz, auf dem der Betrachter auf 'den historischen Prätext der eigenen Krankheitsbilder' stoßen kann.⁴



FIG. 3 Reichfinanzschule in Herrsching 1937–43; Lungenheilstätte 1947–55; Beamtenfachschule seit 1955



FIG. 4 Zeppelintribüne des ehem. Reichsparteitagsgeländes in Nürnberg. Veranstaltung am Sudetendeutschen Tag, 1955

Ganz ähnlich beschrieb der polnische Schriftsteller Witold Gombrowicz, der sich im selben Jahr 1964 in Berlin aufhielt, in seinen Berliner Notizen eine Stadt, besetzt mit 'Todeszeichen', die ihn traumatisierten, während die Bewohner der Stadt von dieser Vergangenheit, die sie mit den Bauten umgab, unberührt zu sein schienen.⁵ Bei Paul Celan, Heinrich Böll, Uwe Johnson oder Peter Weiss finden sich vielfach derartige Assoziationen und Verknüpfungen der jüngsten Vergangenheit mit Architektur, und München, wie es in Wolfgang Koeppens Roman *Tauben im Gras* dargestellt ist, wurde treffend als 'kalte stinkende Hölle' charakterisiert.⁶ Auch hinter den neuen Fassaden der Wirtschaftswunderwelt, jener Architektur gewordenen 'Unfähigkeit zu trauern', wurde für sensible Beobachter der große Mord- und Mörderschauplatz Deutschland sichtbar: 'Mein Blick aus dem Fenster fällt / Auf den Mercedesstern / Der sich am Nachthimmel dreht melancholisch / Über dem Zahngold von Auschwitz und andere Filialen / Der Deutschen Bank auf dem Europacenter' schieb Heiner Müller mit beißender Schärfe.⁷ Diese Sensibilität für das Sprechen der Dinge – ein literarischer Topos seit der Romantik⁸ – findet sich immer wieder bei Schriftstellern, erinnert sei an Thomas Bernhards *Heldenplatz*, Gerhard Roths *Reise in das Innere von Wien* oder Uwe Timms Roman *Halbschatten*, in dem er den Invalidenfriedhof in Berlin besucht und dort die Stimmen der Begrabenen hört. Aus den Gräbern spricht vielstimmig die jüngste deutsche Geschichte zu ihm. 'Les murs de Berlin parlent,' schreibt Emmanuel Terray in seiner Studie *Ombres Berlinoises*.⁹

'Wo die Menschen schweigen, werden die Steine schreien,' heißt es bei Herder in Anlehnung an einen Vers aus dem Lukasevangelium, sie sprechen aber nur zu dem, der hören will, beziehungsweise zum Hören nicht zu abgestumpft ist.¹⁰ In der Bundesrepublik gab es jahrzehntelang an öffentlichen Bauten keinerlei Hinweise auf deren Zusammenhang mit der NS-Zeit, das 'Sprechen der Steine' wurde bewusst verhindert. Warum sollte man sich auch mit den baulichen Relikten auseinandersetzen, wenn doch die meisten ihrer Nutzer weitgehend wieder in die bundesrepublikanische Gesellschaft nicht nur integriert worden waren, sondern deren Kern bildeten?

Hier soll nun genauer unterschieden werden zwischen Bauten, die für spezielle Funktionen in der NS-Zeit errichtet wurden, und vorhandenen Gebäuden, die mit dem Nationalsozialismus in Verbindung kamen wie das Hitlerhaus, oder die für NS-Zwecke gebraucht und missbraucht wurden wie beispielsweise die zahllosen Villen, in die sich NS-Bonzen in den 1930er-Jahren einquartierten. Vom Pleikershof, dem Landgut des übelsten Antisemiten Julius Streicher in Franken, über Himmlers Bauernhof am Tegernsee bis zur Villa von Robert Ley in Grünwald gab es zwar Wechsel der Bewohner, aber keine Unterbrechung der Nutzung. Die Dahlemer Villa des SS-Oberst-Gruppenführers Kurt Daluge bezog

der Ratsvorsitzende der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands, Otto Dibelius, und in die Villa des Chefs der Reichskanzlei, Hans Heinrich Lammers, zog die Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Die Nutzung in der NS-Zeit wurde zumeist einfach als kurze, vernachlässigbare Episode in der Geschichte des Gebäudes betrachtet.

Bei einigen besonders schrecklichen Täterorten erfolgte erst nach Jahrzehnten ein Umdenken: So wurde die Wannsee-Villa, Gästehaus der SS und Ort der Planung des Holocaust, 1952 ein Landschulheim für Kinder und erst 1992, 40 Jahre später, eine Gedenk- und Bildungsstätte.¹¹ Ähnlich wurden die beiden Schwurgerichtssäle, in denen der Blutrichter Roland Freisler in München wütete, weiterverwendet, erst 2009 erfolgte die Umbenennung des kleineren Raums in 'Weiße-Rose-Saal' sowie die Installation einer Dauerausstellung zur NS-Justiz. Die Wohnung Hitlers am Prinzregentenplatz dient seit 1949 als Polizeidienststelle und wurde somit dem öffentlichen Zugang entzogen. Dass der bayerische Ministerpräsident in dem 1938 zum Gästehaus für Mussolini umgebauten Prinz-Carl-Palais und die thüringische Staatskanzlei in der Erfurter Gestapozentrale residieren und dass auch Schloss Bellevue, der Sitz des Bundespräsidenten, in Teilen aus der NS-Zeit stammt, hat nie Anstoß erregt. Als aber das Palais Skyva-Primavesi in Wien für den österreichischen Staatspräsidenten hergerichtet werden sollte, erinnerte man sich dann doch noch daran, dass dort die SS residiert hatte, und der Umbau unterblieb. Die Nutzung von historisch kontaminierten Bauten wird somit selbst bei hohen Repräsentationsformen und dem damit verbundenen medialen Interesse höchst unterschiedlich eingeschätzt, es scheint kaum Grenzl意思ien oder Anstandsregeln zu geben.

Haben nun die Steine des Hitler-Hauses etwas mit Hitlers Verbrechen zu tun? Sind die Räume der Wannsee-Villa schuldig oder unschuldig am Holocaust? Schon die Fragestellung verweist darauf, dass diese Kombination von Materie und Moral unsinnig ist. Schuld ist ein Thema der Ethik, nur Menschen können schuldig werden. Die Räume und Bauten sind schlichtweg historische Orte, mit denen sich individuelle oder kollektiv tradierte Erinnerungen an Ereignisse verbinden. Wer nicht weiß, wo er sich befindet, kann sich im Hitler-Haus genauso wohlfühlen wie an beliebigen anderen Orten. Erst durch die historische Erinnerung, die wir mit einem Ort verknüpfen, wird dieser zu einem lieu de mémoire, zu einem Kristallisationspunkt von Geschichte. Ohne unsere Erinnerung, gleich ob individuell oder kollektiv, ist jeder Ort und jeder Bau nur tote Materie. Die Übertragung von Spiritualität auf Substanz hat zwar in der abendländischen Kultur in der Form von Reliquien und Hostien eine Tradition, aber auch diese religiöse Transsubstantiation ist reine Glaubenssache, findet also im Betrachter und nicht im Betrachteten statt.¹²



FIG. 5 Bundespräsident Gustav Heinemann in der Gedenkstätte Hollandsche Schouwburg, 1969

Dass der historische Bezug zu bestimmten Orten höchste kulturelle oder auch individuell menschliche Bedeutung hat, wird damit selbstverständlich nicht ausgeschlossen. Im Gegenteil, erst durch Erinnerung, die sich bekanntlich bevorzugt mit Orten verknüpft, entsteht ein individuelles Gedächtnis. So stellte sich für manche Zeitgenossen der Missbrauch eines historischen Gebäudes durch Nationalsozialisten als bleibender gravierender Eingriff in ihr Leben dar. Thomas Mann blieb es erspart, sich nach 1945 mit seiner Poschi-Villa, die als SS-Lebensborn-Heim verwendet worden war, auseinanderzusetzen, da er ohnehin nicht mehr nach Deutschland zurückkommen wollte; die Nobelpreisträgerin Sigrid Undset litt jedoch zutiefst darunter, dass die deutschen Besatzer ihren geliebten Gutshof in Lillehammer als Bordell missbraucht hatten, sie ging buchstäblich psychisch daran zugrunde. Das Theater Hollandsche Schouwburg (nach 1941 Joodsche Schouwburg), die Sammelstelle der Amsterdamer Juden vor der Deportation in die Vernichtungslager, kauften jüdische Bürger 1947 auf, um damit eine erneute Nutzung als Theater zu verhindern, denn sie wollten nicht, dass an dem Ort, der mit so viel Leid und Tränen verknüpft war, jemals wieder gelacht wird.¹³ [5] Diese Form von Sensibilität war in Deutschland und Österreich kaum zu finden. So diente der Appellplatz des KZ Flossenbürg bis in die 1990er-Jahre für Jahrmärkte, die geschändete Synagoge in Hohenems wurde bis zur Jahrtausendwende als Feuerwehrhaus genutzt, und in der Frankfurter Großmarkthalle, Sammelstelle

der Juden vor der Deportation, wurde erst beim Neubau der Europäischen Zentralbank EZB eine Gedenkstätte eingerichtet, die aber derartig abgeschirmt im Hochsicherheitsbereich liegt, dass ein Besuch mehr verhindert als ermöglicht wird. Auch die Orte des vielleicht größten versammelten Leids im Münchner Raum, die sogenannten Judenlager in Berg am Laim und Milbertshofen, die 'Euthanasie'-Pflegeanstalt Eglfing-Haar oder das Gefängnis mit Hinrichtungsstätte Stadelheim blieben jahrzehntelang ohne jeden Hinweis auf ihre Geschichte. Die dann endlich installierten, buchstäblich bedeutungslosen Erinnerungszeichen sind das Ergebnis kleingeistiger und kleinlicher Kulturpolitik. Der Umgang mit den Orten des NS-Terrors in der Bundesrepublik ist mit wenigen Ausnahmen genauso von Verdrängung gekennzeichnet wie der Umgang mit NS-Architektur allgemein. Generell kann festgestellt werden, dass die Nutzung historischer Bauwerke für NS-Zwecke weitestgehend als eine Art Betriebsunfall innerhalb einer längeren Nutzungsgeschichte gesehen und diese Zeit bei der weiteren Nutzung deshalb zumeist problemlos ausgeblendet wurde.¹⁴

Im zweiten Teil dieses Beitrags soll nun der Umgang mit den Bauten, die während des Nationalsozialismus für ganz bestimmte Funktionen neu errichtet wurden, genauer betrachtet werden. Bauformen, Konstruktionen und Räume werden geschaffen, um Zwecke und Funktionen, dazu gehören auch Repräsentation und Propaganda, zu erfüllen beziehungsweise zu bedienen. Die Funktion führt zur Bauform, eine Beurteilung von NS-Bauten und des angemessenen Umgangs mit ihnen kann somit nur über eine Analyse der in Architektur gefassten Funktionen erfolgen. Funktionen sind jedoch nicht abstrakt, sondern sie werden in einem historischen Kontext definiert – Wohnen in der Antike ist etwas völlig anderes als Wohnen in der Renaissance – das heißt im Nationalsozialismus sind Funktionen auf ein Ziel ausgerichtet, das die NS-Ideologie vorgibt. Militärische Einrichtungen dienen generell zur Kriegsführung, im Nationalsozialismus ist das Ziel der Militarisierung der geplante ideologisch begründete Vernichtungskrieg; eine NS-Militäranlage steht somit im funktionalen Zusammenhang mit dem Vernichtungskrieg; Verwaltungen dienen zur Organisation der Gesellschaft und damit im Nationalsozialismus dem Ziel, eine ideologisch konstruierte rassistische 'Volksgemeinschaft' zu schaffen und Minderheiten auszuschließen; NS-Verwaltungsgebäude sind somit funktionale Bestandteile des rassistischen Exklusionsapparats; Schulen dienen der Erziehung, und deren Endziel im Nationalsozialismus ist die Rassenideologie und die Einübung in das Sterben für Deutschland; NS-Schulgebäude sind somit Teil des rassistischen Erziehungsprogramms; Repräsentationsbauten dienen der Darstellung der Größe des NS-Staates und damit zur psychologischen Aufrüstung der Bevölkerung, und Kulturbauten dienen zur Präsentation rassistischer Kunst und damit zur lebensweltlichen Stärkung der nationalistischen Rassenideologie; ein NS-Ausstellungsgebäude wie das Haus der Deutschen Kunst ist somit ein zentrales

Propagandainstrument rassistischer Ideologie. Jede bauliche Funktion ist auch Teil der übergreifenden NS-Ideologie, das heißt jedes NS-Gebäude wurde zur Erfüllung einer ideologisch geprägten Funktion geschaffen. Jede Kasernenanlage, jedes Verwaltungsgebäude, jeder Schulbau, jeder Repräsentationsbau steht somit auch im funktionalen Zusammenhang mit einer Ideologie, die zum Holocaust führte.

Wie werden nun Funktionen und deren Ziele materialisiert und wie können sie in der Form erfasst werden? Dazu ein Beispiel: Wenn ein Architekt eine Schule plant, dann versucht er, ein Gebäude und Räume zu gestalten, in denen unterrichtet und gelernt werden kann. Die bauliche Ausformung dieser Funktion wird zum einen bestimmt durch Vorstellungen von Erziehung und vorgegebene Regeln, zum anderen vom Erziehungsziel. So soll der Schulbau in einer Demokratie beispielsweise durch Offenheit, Flexibilität und Helligkeit gekennzeichnet sein, Architektur wird also mit der Begrifflichkeit demokratischer Tugenden parallelisiert, während das Schulideal des Nationalsozialismus von militärischer Ausrichtung sowie Erziehung zu Gehorsam und zu Ertüchtigung bestimmt war und deswegen zu völlig anderen Schulbauten als in der Weimarer Republik oder in der Bundesrepublik führte. Die Ideologie oder das Weltbild geben somit die Richtung der Gestaltung vor, aber sie können die Formen nicht determinieren. Funktion und ideologische Zielsetzung sind nicht trennbar, aber Ideologie ist nicht auf eine konkrete Form reduzierbar. Offener Grundriss und offene Gesellschaft korrespondieren zwar innerhalb eines assoziativen Begriffsfelds, aber es gibt keine spezifisch demokratische Schulform. Oder, um Frei Otto zu zitieren: 'Man kann das freie Gespräch nicht bauen, wohl aber mit baulichen Mitteln möglich machen.'¹⁵ Demokratisch sind Art und Inhalt des Unterrichts, der Raum liefert dazu nur ein Dispositiv. Genauso wenig kann man etwa Rassenideologie, Nationalismus oder Deutschtum bauen. Eine Ideologie kann in eine zeitspezifische Form gebracht werden, die jedoch zum einen selbst in einer Tradition steht, und die zum anderen keinerlei differenzierten Inhalte ausdrücken kann. Das Haus der Deutschen Kunst sollte rassistische Kunst präsentieren, mit dem Ziel, eine rassistische Ideologie zu propagieren. Seine Funktion ist ausgerichtet zur Mitwirkung an einer Ideologie, die zum Holocaust führte – genau hierin liegt die historische Bedeutung dieses Bauwerks. Es geht also um die Analyse der in Form gebrachten Funktion, deshalb sollte man immer vorsichtig sein mit verkürzten Begriffen wie 'gebaute Rassenideologie',¹⁶ mit denen eine direkte Ablesbarkeit suggeriert wird.¹⁷

Derartige Benennungen sind nicht nur begriffliche Kurzschlüsse, sondern man fällt damit im Nachhinein nochmals auf die NS-Propaganda herein. Die Nationalsozialisten erklärten, dass ihre Bauten 'Worte in Stein' seien, dass die Säulen ihrer Repräsentationsgebäude den Marschtritt der SA-Kolonnen

wiedergäben, dass die Besucher der 'Ehrentempel' am Königsplatz 'aus der Härte des Steins', über den sie schreiten, auch 'der Geist vom Geiste jener Toten' erreiche, oder dass der Naturstein am Berliner Olympiastadion die 'unerschütterliche Kraft und Wehrhaftigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Weltanschauung' symbolisiere.¹⁸ Das waren Zuschreibungen und Wunschvorstellungen, die man der Architektur anheften konnte, um sie den Zielen der NS-Ideologie besser einzupassen. Aber Architektur funktioniert nicht so simpel als Bedeutungsträger, denn Formen stehen immer in Funktions-, Konstruktions- und Traditionszusammenhängen. Eine einfache Betrachtung oder stilistische Zuordnung von Formen hilft hier nicht viel weiter. Die NS-Repräsentationsarchitektur ist im Wesentlichen ein archaisierender, reduzierter Neoklassizismus, der nach den Vorstellungen der Architekten und ihrer Auftraggeber Härte, Geschlossenheit und Dauer ausdrücken soll, aber diese Epitheta definieren keine rassistische Ideologie, sondern sind ebenfalls als Projektionen zu verstehen. Die gleichzeitige monumentale Bauweise in anderen Ländern bediente sich zwar ähnlicher formaler Mittel, deren Funktion basierte aber auf völlig anderen geistigen und historischen Zusammenhängen. Der NS-Monumentalstil kann somit durch Analyse der rassistischen Funktionen sowie des jeweiligen historischen Kontexts und Traditionszusammenhangs präzise abgegrenzt und definiert werden. Auch hier sollte man nicht im Nachhinein auf Albert Speer hereinfallen, der seine Architektur über eine Einordnung in einen internationalen Neoklassizismus verharmlosen und letztlich nobilitieren wollte.¹⁹

Die Zuweisungen und Assoziationen von Charakteristika eines NS-spezifischen Ausdrucks sind Wunschbilder oder Projektionen und genauso wenig zwingend wie umgekehrt die negativen Benennungen von NS-Bauten, die wiederum nur Spiegel von Aversionen sind. Wenn die Münchner das Haus der Kunst als 'Palazzo Kitschi' oder als 'Weißwursttempel' bezeichneten,²⁰ wenn der Kunstkritiker Paul Westheim von einem 'Karton mit Säulen' schrieb, Kübel von Spott über das 'germanische Hollywood in Nürnberg' ausschüttete und die neue Staatsbaukunst als 'gefrorene Reklametrommel' bezeichnete, dann sind auch das letztlich nur mehr oder weniger witzige Assoziationen.²¹ Auch die Behauptung des von mir sehr geschätzten Religionsphilosophen Klaus Heinrich, die gesamte NS-Architektur sei, nach einem Aperçu von Gottfried Benn, als 'Lagerarchitektur' zu charakterisieren,²² Lager aus denen immer nur aus- und einmarschiert und in denen Opfer veranstaltet werden sollten, überträgt letztlich nur Literatur auf Architektur.

In der Nachkriegszeit wurde NS-Architektur durch eine falsche Begrifflichkeit vollends aus dem Bereich einer diskursiven Analyse, mit der die Bauten zur Aufklärung hätten beitragen können, verdrängt. Jahrzehntlang galt entweder das

Verdikt Nikolaus Pevsners, was diese Architektur angehe, so sei 'jedes Wort über sie zuviel',²³ oder die NS-Bauten wurden mit Begriffen wie Größenwahn, Megalomanie, Unterdrückungs- und Überwältigungsarchitektur versehen und die Diskussion damit ad acta gelegt. Damit konnte man sich ihre Geschichte vom Leibe halten, sie in den Bereich des Irrsinns abdrängen, und gleichzeitig die Rolle der Opfer und der Verführten weiter beibehalten, denn die Bauten hatten ja angeblich, wie die NS-Propaganda, die arglosen Zuschauer zum Mitmachen überwältigt. In Wirklichkeit war es genau umgekehrt: Die großen NS-Repräsentationsbauten dienten nicht der Unterdrückung, sondern der psychologischen Aufrüstung, das war ihre ganz klar benannte Funktion und Zielsetzung.²⁴ Das Herrenvolk sollte seine eigene Größe in den Monumentalbauten gespiegelt sehen, in der homogenen Volksgemeinschaft und umgeben von Großbauten sollte sich der 'Arier' stark fühlen, so wie sich der Einzelne im größten Fußballstadion nicht klein, sondern in der Masse mächtig fühlt. Die Bauten und Achsen sollten nicht unterdrücken, sondern nach innen aufrichten und nach außen imponieren, und deshalb war auch geplant, nach dem sogenannten 'Endsieg' in der Hauptstadt 'Germania' eine Weltausstellung abzuhalten, was mit 'Unterdrückungsarchitektur' ja völlig absurd gewesen wäre. Der Welt sollte doch kein unterdrücktes Volk, sondern die in Architektur gespiegelte Größe der arischen Weltenherrscher vorgeführt werden. Größenwahnsinnig war der Herrschaftsanspruch, die Architektur war es nicht. Es gibt keine einzige Planung der NS-Zeit, die nicht auch damals schon bautechnisch durchführbar gewesen wäre.

Während bei den meisten NS-Bauten die ursprüngliche Nutzung in den ersten Nachkriegsjahrzehnten einfach durch neue Nutzungen überlagert und verdrängt wurde, ist der Umgang mit den großen NS-Repräsentationsbauten von dem Versuch gekennzeichnet, entweder den Gebäuden die ihnen angeblich innewohnende Verführungskraft zu nehmen, oder sie durch eine andere Nutzung allmählich zu entgiften, zu dekontaminieren. So wurde beispielsweise das Haus der Erziehung in Bayreuth von Franz Hart gezielt durch Umbau 'entmonumentalisiert'.²⁵ Auch die Sprengung der Kolonnaden der Zeppelintribüne 1967 zielte darauf, der Anlage ihre Monumentalität zu nehmen.

Ansonsten unterblieb diese äußerliche Form von Entnazifizierung, denn auch von den größten NS-Bauten geht selbstverständlich keinerlei 'Verführung' oder gar Bedrohung mehr aus, niemand wird verführt oder überwältigt beim Besuch des Flughafens Tempelhof, des Berliner Olympiastadions, des KdF-Bads in Prora, des Reichsparteitagsgeländes in Nürnberg oder des gerade mal gut 150 Meter langen Hauses der Kunst. Die Dimensionen nahezu aller NS-Bauten sind ohnehin von anderen Großbauten in der Nachkriegszeit längst übertroffen worden. Eine Dämonisierung von NS-Bauten ist völlig abwegig, damit würden nur die von den Nationalsozialisten behaupteten Wirkkräfte irrational in die

Gegenwart transportiert.²⁶ Dass sich in der Ludwigstraße drei monumentale NS-Bauten befinden, dürfte der großen Mehrheit der Münchner unbekannt sein beziehungsweise sie könnten die Bauten nicht einmal identifizieren. Bei systematischen Befragungen stellte sich heraus, dass Laien nahezu überhaupt nicht, aber auch die überwiegende Zahl von Architekten nicht zwischen klassizistischen und NS-Bauten unterscheiden können.

Die Bemühungen richteten sich seit 1945 darauf, die NS-Bauten mit demokratischen Nutzungen gleichsam von ihrer NS-Nutzung zu entgiften. Die historische Funktion und das mit ihr verbundene ideologische Ziel sollten durch neue Nutzung verdrängt, die Bauten neutralisiert und schließlich normalisiert werden. In den ehemaligen Führerbau am Königsplatz zog zuerst das Amerika-Haus, dann die Musikhochschule ein, die Bauten am Fehrbelliner Platz bezog die Berliner Senatsverwaltung, in Kassel übernahm das Bundessozialgericht das Wehrkreiskommando und so fort. An keinem NS-Gebäude wurde jedoch in irgendeiner Weise kenntlich gemacht, für welche Funktion die Bauten errichtet worden waren, um welchen historischen Ort es sich handelt. Die angebliche Dekontamination wurde also nicht als Vorgang aufklärend bewusstgemacht, die Schwerter wurden nicht zu Pflugscharen geschmiedet, sondern die 'Entgiftung' sollte sich gleichsam mit der Zeit von selbst vollziehen – eine schrittweise Weißwäsche wie bei den Millionen von Parteimitgliedern.



FIG. 6 Bankett in der von Josef Wiedemann umgebauten ehem. Ehrenhalle im Haus der Kunst, 1955

Eine Art Boom erlebten die Berliner NS-Bauten mit der Wiedervereinigung. Die Bundesministerien zogen von Bonn in alte Berliner NS-Großbauten, die nach entsprechender Modernisierung anscheinend bestens die neuen Funktionen erfüllen. Es gab ein paar verschämte Diskussionen darüber, dass sich die Berliner Republik in einer Vielzahl von NS-Bauten etablierte, aber mit einigen kleinen Hinweisschildern, die zumeist kaum auffindbar beziehungsweise schwer zugänglich sind, schien der Aufklärungspflicht genüge getan. So befindet sich das Außenministerium der BRD in der NS-Reichsbank, das Wirtschaftsministerium im NS-Luftfahrtministerium und das Arbeitsministerium im NS-Propagandaministerium.

Damit kommen wir zum Münchner Haus der Kunst, das nach der Freigabe zur Nutzung wieder als Museum so umgebaut wurde, dass das Gebäude nur noch durch die östlichen und westlichen Seiteneingänge betreten werden konnte. Nach dem Entwurf von Josef Wiedemann, einem der wichtigsten Architekten des Wiederaufbaus, erhielten die Räume durch Trennwände, eingezogene Decken und weiße Wandbespannungen einen völlig anderen Ausdruck. [6] Die pompöse Ehrenhalle war überhaupt nicht mehr erkennbar, der Marmor und die schweren Türen wurden weiß überstrichen und damit so 'entmaterialisiert', dass die Blut- und Bodenschwere verschwand. Wiedemann, ehemaliges Mitglied der SS, entnazifizierte somit das Haus im Inneren ganz im Sinne und in der Art der überall – bei Menschen wie Dingen – üblichen Weißwäsche: Der Nazi-Dreck wurde einfach übertüncht und verkleidet. Ganz ähnlich verschwanden später die NS-Mosaiken von Hermann Kaspar, dem Ausstatter der Reichskanzlei und Professor an der Münchner Akademie bis 1972, im Kongresssaal des Deutschen Museums. Weiterhin sollte durch Ausstellungen von modernen Künstlern, zu deren Exklusion das Haus errichtet worden war, eine Art Wiedergutmachung geleistet werden. Im ehemaligen Tempel der NS-Kunst lernten die Besucher diejenige Kunst kennen, deren Vertreibung dieser Bau einst demonstrieren sollte. Zudem diente das Gebäude für Faschingsbälle, sodass eine spezielle Aneignung durch die Münchner Bürger und die Jugend erfolgte.

Dies war sicher keine besonders intensive und schon gar nicht tiefeschürfende Auseinandersetzung mit einem zentralen NS-Gebäude, im Gegenteil, sowohl die Tarnung der Ehrenhalle und die Entmaterialisierung wie auch die angebliche Wiedergutmachung durch Präsentation der ehemals als 'entartet' geschmähten Kunst waren alles Formen der Verdrängung der ursprünglichen Funktionen des Hauses. Die moderne Kunst sollte in der Art eines Exorzismus das im Inneren mit weißer Unschuldssfarbe ausgekleidete Gebäude von seiner Geschichte befreien. Es ist jedoch das Wesen von weißen Räumen, des White Cube, dass sie ohne Geschichte und Kontext sind, dass also eine ahistorische, autonome Präsentation stattfindet.



FIG. 7 Ausstellung der Barnes Collection in den weißen Räumen des Hauses der Kunst, 1995

Im Gegensatz zu den Innenräumen war der äußere Eindruck des Gebäudes nicht so leicht zu verändern und zu verdrängen, deshalb wurde im Zuge einer Straßenverbreiterung eine Baumreihe gepflanzt, die dem Haus etwas von seiner Wucht nehmen sollte. Die Bepflanzung war kein Zeichen der Scham, Chipperfields Begriff *trees of shame* zeigt eine historische Ahnungslosigkeit,²⁷ denn geschämt hat sich nach 1945 kaum jemand in Deutschland, sondern es handelt sich um eine etwas hilflose Bemühung, den NS-Bau ins tägliche Leben, in den Münchner Alltag zu integrieren und ihn damit zu 'normalisieren'. Trotzdem fühlten sich manche Besucher und Mitarbeiter dort immer unwohl, beispielsweise die damalige Direktorin Magdalena Huber-Ruppel, die dies öffentlich erklärte, und auch der Münchner Kulturreferent Jürgen Kolbe meinte in den 1980er-Jahren, in dem Bau immer noch die Schritte Adolf Hitlers zu hören.

Als 1993 der Schweizer Christoph Vitali die Direktion des Hauses übernahm, erklärte er in einem Interview, 'Mauern tragen keine Schuld', das Haus der Kunst sei eine 'wunderbare Museumsarchitektur'.²⁸ Daraufhin ging ein Entrüstungssturm durch Öffentlichkeit und Presse, Vitali nahm seine Äußerungen weitgehend zurück und ließ in einer Art Wiedergutmachung seines Lapsus erstmals nach fast einem halben Jahrhundert musealer Nutzung im östlichen Mittelgang ein paar erläuternde Tafeln zur Geschichte des Hauses anbringen. Gleichzeitig wurde allerdings der Haupteingang in der Mitte des Hauses wieder geöffnet. Die Ehrenhalle blieb aber weiter verbaut, und die Ausstellungen wurden weiter in einem geschichtslosen White

Cube präsentiert. [7] Erst Vitalis Nachfolger Chris Dercon begann ab 2003 unter dem euphemistischen Begriff 'kritischer Rückbau' eine Re-Nazifizierung des Gebäudes. Ähnlich wie bei der sogenannten 'kritischen Rekonstruktion' handelt es sich dabei um eine Mischung aus Rekonstruktion des Zustands bei der Erbauung mit Elementen, die auf den zeitgenössischen Eingriff hinweisen und idealerweise zu einer Reflexion über den Rückgriff und damit über den ursprünglichen Zustand anregen sollen.

So ließ Dercon die von Wiedemann vorgenommenen Einbauten und Übertünchungen entfernen und die bislang immer noch tabuisierte Ehrenhalle, das Zentrum des NS-Kults um rassistische Kunst, weitgehend in den ursprünglichen Zustand zurückbauen; allerdings hüllte er die Halle mit einem grauen Vorhang ein. Eine geschickte Inszenierung, aber auch ein problematischer Weg zurück zur NS-Zeit. Die Ehrenhalle war nach einem halben Jahrhundert aus der Erinnerung zumindest der Mehrzahl der Besucher verschwunden, sie wurde in die Gegenwart zurückgeholt, aber letztlich nur, um einerseits die Nutzflächen zu vergrößern und andererseits dem Gebäude wieder etwas von der offensichtlich besucherattraktiven morbiden Aura seiner NS-Geschichte zurückzugeben, ohne dass jedoch eine Auseinandersetzung mit diesem zentralen NS-Kultort stattfand. Um diesem Balanceakt einer bewussten Re-Nazifizierung ein Gegengewicht zu geben, ließ Dercon die Archive öffnen und die Geschichte des Hauses aufarbeiten.²⁹ Die aus dieser Arbeit entstandene und 2014 eröffnete Archiv-Galerie mit historischen Dokumenten in einem eigenen Raum am Eingang kann als eine ebenso gelungene wie längst überfällige Maßnahme zur Reflexion über die Geschichte des Hauses bezeichnet werden, aber sie hatte von Anfang an einen Feigenblattcharakter, denn eine konkrete Auseinandersetzung mit der Funktion des Gebäudes wurde umgangen. Allein durch die Präsentation moderner Kunst sollte weiterhin in einer Art von Exorzismus der NS-Bau in einen modernen Kunstbau verwandelt werden.

Die Re-Nazifizierung des Hauses der Kunst, die bei Dercon noch eine leichte, wenn auch nicht ausgeprägt kritische Brechung erhielt, wurde von seinem Nachfolger Okwui Enwezor ab 2011 fortgeführt. Bei einigen Installationen mit historischem Bezug zu Ort und Kontext des Hauses konnte man immer noch den Eindruck haben, dass wie bei Dercon eine gewisse Form von kritischer Reflexion den Umgang mit dem Gebäude begleitete. Mit dem Projekt von Chipperfield, der auf eine völlig intransparente Weise und ohne Mitwirkung einer kompetenten Fachjury den Planungsauftrag zur Renovierung des Hauses erhielt, wird die äußere und zum Teil auch innere Re-Nazifizierung ganz offen zum Programm gemacht. [8] Die Baumreihe vor dem Haus soll verschwinden und die Treppe wieder rekonstruiert werden, damit der Bau sich wie bei der Eröffnung 1937 den Besuchern zuwendet. Wer im Jahr 2017 einfach wieder auf die NS-Zeit zurückgehen will, ist, gelinde gesagt, geschichtsblind. [9] Die Ankündigung des Direktors Enwezor, er wolle



FIG. 8 Planung von David Chipperfield zum Umbau des Hauses der Kunst, 2016



FIG. 9 Haus der Deutschen Kunst, Aufnahme 1938

das Haus der Kunst den Münchnern 'zurückgeben' – 'give it back to the future',³⁰ kann nur als grotesk bezeichnet werden, denn den Bau hat schließlich Hitler den Münchnern 1937 übergeben, er wurde nie weggenommen, sondern sieben Jahrzehnte wurden Formen des Umgangs mit diesem Danaergeschenk gesucht. Die Aussagen von Chipperfield und Enwezor zum Bau können leicht als reines Marketing-Interesse durchschaut werden. So schrieb Patrick Bahners in der FAZ treffend, hinter der Machbarkeitsstudie Chipperfields stehe ein ganz 'prosaisches kommerzielles Kalkül', es gehe um Steigerung der Besucherzahlen, 'und diese Besucher sollen schon von weitem sehen, dass sie sich einem Kunsttempel nähern'.³¹ Und genau aus diesem Grund soll im öffentlichen Raum, wie im Übrigen überall in München bei NS-Bauten, kein Hinweis auf die ursprüngliche Funktion erfolgen.

Das entscheidende Problem liegt darin, dass die historische Funktion und Zielsetzung des Gebäudes anscheinend weder Chipperfield noch Enwezor bewusst sind, beziehungsweise dass beide – wie schon vor ihnen eine Reihe anderer – gezielt versuchen, die NS-Architektur von ihrem historischen Kontext abzutrennen, um sie zu normalisieren und zu vermarkten.³² So argumentiert der Museumsdirektor nur damit, das Haus sei doch seit 1945 mit seinen modernen Kunstausstellungen geradezu zu einem 'Symbol kultureller Integrität' geworden.³³ Dass aber die Ausstellungen zur Moderne nicht das Geringste an der im Gebäude selbst verankerten Geschichte und Funktion verändern, wird geflissentlich übersehen. Und Chipperfield glaubt anscheinend tatsächlich, es handle sich um eine großartige Museumsarchitektur, seine Aussagen zum Gebäude sind von einer erstaunlichen historischen und ästhetischen Unbedarftheit. Für ihn handelt es sich um einen Bau mit 'unglaublichem Charakter', mit 'extrem klaren Räumen', die Ausstellungsräume seien 'einzigartig' und 'am unschuldigsten' (!),³⁴ nur die Ehrenhalle und die Säulenreihe seien 'problematisch', aber Monumentalität gehöre nun mal zu Großbauten, das sei auch beim Bau der Zentrale eines Ölkonzerns so, der Bau habe seine 'Faszination' und die sollte man 'erzählen'.³⁵ Die NS-Mordmaschinerie wird parallelisiert mit einem Ölkonzern – hier fehlt es einfach grundlegend an historischem Bewusstsein.

Das Haus der Deutschen Kunst war ein zentrales Propagandainstrument rassistischer Ideologie und stand somit im funktionalen Zusammenhang mit einer Ideologie, die zum Holocaust führte. Dies ist mit dem Bauwerk verkörpert und wird, so lange das Gebäude besteht, auch damit untrennbar verknüpft sein. Wer davon wegsieht, ist geschichtsblind. Jede Auseinandersetzung mit dem Haus der Kunst muss damit beginnen, zu fragen, wie man mit der NS-Funktion des Gebäudes umgeht. Die Präsentation moderner, insbesondere abstrakter Kunst ist darauf keine Antwort, denn diese hat die Schrecken des NS-Regimes

fast durchgehend ausgeblendet und verdrängt. Überspitzt gesagt: Wenn man in eine ehemalige NS-Militäranlage Rote-Kreuz-Szenen hängt, werden dadurch nicht die Räume humanisiert. Auch die derzeit gezeigte Inschrift am Architrav des Hauses mit jiddischen Worten wirkt nur wie ein Werbezeichen, sie liefert keine verständliche Botschaft, klärt nicht auf und hat deshalb bezeichnenderweise keinerlei Diskussion bewirkt.

Die Zeitzeugen verlassen uns, umso wichtiger ist der authentische historische Ort für die Erinnerungsarbeit. Die 'steinernen Zeugen' können die Zeitzeugen nicht ersetzen, aber sie geben deren Stimmen einen dauerhaften Ort, über den die Erinnerung wieder aktiviert werden kann. Die Bauten des NS-Regimes zeugen weiterhin von den mit der mörderischen rassistischen Ideologie verbundenen Funktionen und Zielen. Die Geschichte ist in die Bauten und in den Raum 'eingeschrieben'.³⁶ Über die baulichen Zeitzeugen kann die Auseinandersetzung mit der NS-Geschichte im öffentlichen Raum fortgesetzt und an kommende Generationen weitergegeben werden; dieses Lernen am historischen Ort mit den baulichen Zeugen ist die wirkmächtigste Form der Aufklärung und der Verankerung in der Erinnerung. Wir brauchen die konkrete Anschauung, um uns erinnern zu können, dies ist kulturwissenschaftlich und geschichtspädagogisch eindeutig und detailliert nachgewiesen worden. Die Auseinandersetzung mit der NS-Geschichte muss im öffentlichen Raum und nicht irgendwo versteckt im Inneren eines NS-Gebäudes stattfinden. NS-Bauten sollten deshalb nicht von der Geschichte abgekoppelt, sondern mit ihr rückgekoppelt werden, dann kann sich Erinnerung mit Materie und Funktion verknüpfen, und auf diesem Wege kann ein NS-Bau Teil aufklärender Kulturgeschichte werden. Genau das passiert in München an keinem der ehemaligen NS-Repräsentationsgebäude, weder am Führerbau, noch am Verwaltungsbau der NSDAP, an der Gauleitung, am Luftgaukommando oder eben am Haus der Kunst.³⁷

Man kann darüber diskutieren, die Bäume vor dem Haus der Kunst zu entfernen und die Ehrenhalle zurückzubauen, aber alle Maßnahmen müssten davon ausgehen und darauf abzielen, sich mit dem Bau als materialisiertem Produkt rassistischer Ideologie und Propaganda und damit Teil einer Ideologie, die zum Holocaust führte, auseinanderzusetzen. Diese Auseinandersetzung ausgerechnet unserem medien- und kapitalgesteuerten Kunstbetrieb überlassen zu wollen, ist abwegig, und es genügt auch nicht der Verweis auf eine Dokumentation irgendwo im Haus.

Beispiele dafür, wie eine derartige produktive öffentliche Konfrontation durchgeführt werden kann, sind die Dokumentationszentren in Berlin, Köln, München und Nürnberg, bei denen die baulichen Relikte der NS-Zeit als

Zeitzeugen einbezogen werden und mit ihnen Aufklärungsarbeit geleistet wird. Auch beim ehemaligen Reichssportgelände in Berlin klärt die Installation 'Geschichtsort Olympiagelände' öffentlich darüber auf, dass es bei der Anlage nicht um Sport, sondern um Ertüchtigung zur Einübung der Jugend zum Sterben für NS-Deutschland ging. Ein Vorbild bietet auch die 'Geschichtsmeile Wilhelmstraße' in Berlin, hier wird im Straßenraum über die Funktion der dort versammelten Ministerien in der NS-Zeit aufgeklärt. Derartige Zeichen im öffentlichen Raum vermitteln eine bleibende, für jeden sichtbare Auseinandersetzung mit der Geschichte sowie das dauerhafte Bekenntnis einer demokratischen Gesellschaft zu einer die Gegenwart verpflichtenden Erinnerung.

Genau diese öffentlich sichtbare Auseinandersetzung mit der im Bau verankerten Funktion und Ideologie fehlt beim Masterplan für das Haus der Kunst. Nicht einmal eine Tafel am Eingang ist vorgesehen, es geht nur um bessere Vermarktung. Der Umgang mit einem NS-Bau verpflichtet aber Besitzer wie Nutzer, über das Gebäude als Träger und Zeuge von NS-Funktionen aufzuklären.

Noten

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- 1 Susanne Hermanski, 'Die Vision', *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 24-25. September 2016; Stephan Löwenstein; Kia Vahland, 'Die Spur der Steine. Das Münchner Haus der Kunst soll wieder so sichtbar werden, wie es die Nazis erdachten. Darf das sein?', *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 1.-3. Oktober 2016; 'Der Schandfleck. Österreich streitet über Hitlers Geburtshaus in Braunau', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 28. Oktober 2016.
 - 2 Alexander Schmidt (ed.), *Das Gelände. Dokumentation. Perspektiven. Diskussion 1945-2015*, Nürnberg 2015, 43-47.
 - 3 Sigrid Weigel, *Ingeborg Bachmann. Hinterlassenschaft unter Wahrung des Briefgeheimnisses*, München 2003, 373; den Titel der Büchnerpreisrede änderte Bachmann für die Publikation 1965 in Ein Ort für Zufälle.
 - 4 Weigel, *Ingeborg Bachmann*, 375, 376.
 - 5 Weigel, *Ingeborg Bachmann*, 380ff.
 - 6 Karl Heinz Götze, "'Eine kalte, stinkende Hölle". Warum Wolfgang Koeppen in den fünfziger Jahren keinen Erfolg hatte', in Günter Häntzschel et al. (ed.), *Treibhaus. Jahrbuch für Literatur der fünfziger Jahre 2* (2006), 90-106
 - 7 Heiner Müller, 'Ajax zum Beispiel', in Ders., *Werke 1. Die Gedichte* (ed. Franz Hörnigk), Frankfurt am Main 1998, 292.
 - 8 Heinz Brüggemann, 'Mitgespielt: Vom Handeln und Sprechen der Dinge. Thema mit Variationen in Texten der Romantik', in Christiane Holm/Günther Oesterle (ed.), *Schläft ein Lied in allen Dingen? Romantische Dingpoetik*, Würzburg 2011, 97-119; José Brunner, *Erzählte Dinge. Mensch-Objekt-Beziehungen in der deutschen Literatur*, Göttingen 2015.
 - 9 Emanuel Terray, *Ombres berlinoises. Voyage dans une autre Allemagne*, Paris 1996, 73.
 - 10 Johann Gottfried Herder, *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität* Frankfurt am Main 1991, 528, ursprünglich bei Lukas 19 : 38-40.
 - 11 Wolfgang Benz, 'Umgang mit dem Nationalsozialismus in Berlin', in Winfried Nerdinger (ed.), *Stadt und Erinnerung. Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus in Berlin, Hamburg und München*, München 2017, 9-23; Raul Hilberg setzte sich bis zu seinem Tod vergeblich dafür ein, die Wannsee-Villa als ein NS-Dokumentationszentrum zu etablieren.

- 12 Vgl. Winfried Nerdinger, 'Politische Architektur – Betrachtungen zu einem problematischen Begriff', in Ders., *Architektur Macht Erinnerung. Stellungnahmen 1984 bis 2004*, München 2004, 13-26; Jeffrey C. Alexander, 'Iconic Consciousness, the Material Feeling of Meaning', *Thesis Eleven* 103 (2010) 1, 10-25.
- 13 Bundespräsident Gustav Heinemann besuchte die Gedenkstätte 1969, seine Entschuldigung für die deutschen Verbrechen hatte in den Niederlanden eine ähnliche Bedeutung wie der Kniefall Willi Brandts 1970 am Denkmal des Warschauer Ghettos für Polen.
- 14 Detlev Schöttker, 'Barackenbau und Wiederaufbau. Zur Verdrängung der Konzentrationslager im Architekturdiskurs der Nachkriegszeit', in Jörn Düwel/Michael Mönninger (ed.), *Zwischen Traum und Trauma. Stadtplanung der Nachkriegsmoderne*, Berlin 2011, 217-229.
- 15 Frei Otto, *Schriften und Reden 1951-1983*, Wiesbaden 1984, 45.
- 16 Magnus Brechtken, zitiert nach Patrick Guyon, 'Fehlt nur noch die Hakenkreuzfahne', *Tagesspiegel* 29. Dezember 2016.
- 17 Zum 'Lesen' architektonischer Formen vgl. Richard Krautheimer, *Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur europäischen Kunstgeschichte*, Köln 1988, 190ff; Carlpeter Braegger (ed.), *Architektur und Sprache*, München 1982; Gottfried Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, Tübingen/Berlin 2000, 23ff; Manar Hammad, *Lire l'espace. Comprendre l'architecture*, Paris 2006.
- 18 Friedrich Tamms, 'Die Bedeutung des Natursteins für die Baukunst', *Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich*, Ausgabe B, November 1943, 200; Ludwig F. Barthel, 'Neues München', *Kunst und Volk* 4 (1936), 166-169; vgl. Hans-Ernst Mittag, 'NS-Architektur für uns', in Werner Durth/Winfried Nerdinger (ed.), *Architektur und Städtebau der 30er/40er Jahre*, Bonn 1993, 125-149, mit etwas überzogener 'Architekturpsychologie'.
- 19 Vgl. Winfried Nerdinger, 'Baustile im Nationalsozialismus. Zwischen "Internationalem Klassizismus" und Regionalismus', in Ders., *Architektur Macht Erinnerung*, 119-132.
- 20 Vgl. Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, *Architektur und Gedächtnis. München und Nationalsozialismus – Strategien des Vergessens*, München/Hamburg 2004, 161.
- 21 Paul Westheim, *Karton mit Säulen. Antifaschistische Kunstkritik*, Leipzig/Weimar 1985, 146-148.
- 22 Klaus Heinrich, *Karl Friedrich Schinkel – Albert Speer. Eine architektonische Auseinandersetzung mit dem NS. Dahlemer Vorlesungen. Zum Verhältnis von ästhetischem und transzendentelem Subjekt*, arch+ (2015) Sonderheft, 186ff.
- 23 Nikolaus Pevsner, *Europäische Architektur*, München 1967, 466.
- 24 Winfried Nerdinger, 'Funktion und Bedeutung von Architektur im NS-Staat', in Wolfgang Benz et al. (ed.), *Kunst im NS-Staat. Ideologie, Ästhetik, Protagonisten*, Berlin 2015, 279-300; Ders., 'Hitler als Architekt. Bauten als Mittel zur Stärkung der Volksgemeinschaft', in Hans-Ulrich Thamer/Simone Erpel (ed.), *Hitler und die Deutschen. Volksgemeinschaft und Verbrechen*, Dresden 2010, 74-81.
- 25 Vgl. Winfried Nerdinger (ed.), *Architektur der Wunderkinder. Aufbruch und Verdrängung in Bayern 1945-1960*, Salzburg/München 2005, 309.
- 26 Vgl. zu einer überzogenen psychologisierenden Interpretation die ansonsten wichtige Studie: Hans-Ernst Mittag, 'NS-Stil als Machtmittel', in Romana Schneider/Wilfried Wang (ed.), *Moderne Architektur in Deutschland 1900 bis 2000. Macht und Monument*, Ostfildern-Ruit 1998, 101-116.
- 27 'Chipperfield warnt', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 26. Januar 2016; Susanne Hermanski, 'Hell, offen, nicht unbedingt grün: Architekt Chipperfield erläutert seine Pläne für das Haus der Kunst', *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 26. Januar 2017.
- 28 Christoph Vitali, in Sabine Brantl, *Haus der Kunst 1937-1997 – Eine historische Dokumentation*, München 1997, 5.
- 29 Brantl, *Haus der Kunst*.
- 30 'Renovate/Innovate – Gespräch mit David Chipperfield', *Haus der Kunst*, 16. September 2016; Jürgen Moises, 'Mehr Offenheit, mehr Öffentlichkeit. Bei einem Gesprächsabend stellt der britische Architekt David Chipperfield seine Pläne für die Umgestaltung des Hauses der Kunst vor und überrascht mit Konkretem und Kontroversen', *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 19. September 2016.
- 31 Patrick Banners, 'Die Baumfrage', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 28. Januar 2017.
- 32 Siehe dazu detailliert und die jeweiligen Zielsetzungen der Apologeten hervorhebend: Hans-Ernst Mittag, 'NS-Kunst im milderen Licht? Apologien heute', *Kritische Berichte* 1 (2001), 5-22.
- 33 Christa Sigg, *Zeige deine Wunde*, *Abendzeitung* 3. Februar 2017.
- 34 'Ich schätze die Klarheit dieser Räume, David Chipperfield im Interview mit Laura Weißmüller', *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 3. Januar 2014.
- 35 'Chipperfield warnt'.

- 36 Michel Foucault, *Vom Licht des Krieges zur Geburt der Geschichte*, Berlin 1986, 19, zitiert nach Julia Binder, *Stadt als Palimpsest*, Berlin 2015, 12.
- 37 Als einziger Hinweis im öffentlichen Raum an einem staatlichen Gebäude in München auf die NS-Zeit wurde am ehemaligen Führerbau 2016 eine kaum lesbare Tafel angebracht, die auf den Ort der Unterzeichnung des Münchner Abkommens verweist. Die Tafel befindet sich versteckt im Bereich des immer verschlossenen Nebeneingangs und liefert keinen historischen Kontext.

Courting Frank Lloyd Wright: the Dutch-German competition for his first monograph

After a trip to Europe in the summer of 1927, the young American art historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock noted that in order to comprehend ‘the formation of contemporary architecture and the ideology behind it’, it was crucial to understand the European admiration for Frank Lloyd Wright. After all: ‘The American in Europe finds himself a little embarrassed by the excessive adulation for Frank Lloyd Wright on the part of the leading contemporary architects.’ Hitchcock found it ‘paradoxical [...] that on the desks of these same European architects for whom Wright is Mohammed, Sweet’s catalogue of architectural and engineering details lies as a Koran, describing in detail the joys of the American paradise where almost all fixtures may be had in standard and mechanical forms. Yet the prophet who has been much read in Holland and Germany – and much written about – [...] has not shown in his work indication of that practical allurements to the modern aesthetic.... The American, anxious to understand and if possible to join in the admiration of Wright [...] turns to Europe, as he could not in America, to a set of elaborate publications in German and Dutch.’¹

Hitchcock was merely 24 years old at the time, had just received his Master’s Degree in Art History from Harvard and was preparing for his first teaching position at Vassar. The precocious youngster never published these observations, but he clearly had picked up on an interesting phenomenon – the intense interest in Wright in Germany and the Netherlands – at a time when he was hardly appreciated and without work at home, and despite the fact that much of Wright’s architecture stood in striking contrast to the emerging modern architecture in both countries.

This essay will briefly survey Wright’s early reception in Germany and the Netherlands,² accompanied by the emergence of a set of new critical tools in the process and finally the two monographs of 1926, which Hitchcock had mentioned. They were the first books on Wright since his famous Wasmuth publications of 1911.

First Impressions

Frank Lloyd Wright's European reception began in Berlin on 16 February 1910. He had arrived in the city five months earlier and negotiated with the publisher Ernst Wasmuth the printing of a lithograph edition of his drawings, which appeared in late 1910, and a separate, cheaper volume with an overview of his work, issued in 1911.³ By February 1910, Wright had moved on to Florence, where he worked on additional drawings and wrote the introduction, but enough material had remained with the publisher for editor and architect Bruno Möhring to organize a lecture at the local architects' association. Möhring was a prominent and influential figure, whose engineering structures, urban plans, and publications helped pave the way for Modern architecture in Germany. That winter evening at the Architektenhaus in Berlin's elegant government quarter, Möhring showed several plates of Wright's drawings, presumably exhibited on easels around the room. The Neo-Renaissance interiors of the 1875 building by Ende & Boeckmann, where the architects gathered, could hardly have provided a starker contrast to Wright's delicate renderings. Möhring had seen some of Wright's work in the United States when he traveled to the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. He praised the 'poetic power' of that work and described Wright as a 'non-academic' and a typical American 'self-made man'.⁴ Of course, it is tempting to speculate who was in the audience that night: Peter Behrens and his collaborator Walter Gropius were members of the association and might have attended. Le Corbusier was in Berlin in 1910 on two occasions, but not on the evening of the presentation, as Anthony Alofsin has shown.⁵ Mies van der Rohe was probably in Berlin, but not a member of the group.

The critic Walter Curt Behrendt's 1913 review of the Wasmuth publications presented Wright's work as the logical product of a 'country not burdened by the richness of traditions of the old world.' The author even suggested that Americans in general were predestined to become architects, due to their 'natural talent for organization'. Many important contributions, he claimed, were to be expected from them for the development and regeneration of architecture.⁶

Wright's influence would be noticeable in Walter Gropius' work a few years later, but at the time of Möhring's lecture Gropius was focused on a different kind of American architecture.⁷ Working with Adolf Meyer on his first major commission, the Fagus shoe last factory in Alfeld (1911-12), Gropius acquainted himself with its financial backer, the American United Shoe Machinery Corporation, whose main factory in Beverly, Massachusetts (1903-06), was designed by the engineer and pioneer in reinforced-concrete construction, Ernest Ransome, as a simple post-and-beam structure with floor to ceiling glazing. For Gropius the plant suggested the raw beauty of American industrial architecture. He also acquired images of

concrete grain elevators, coaling bunkers, and factories, showing them at his first public lecture, in January 1911.⁸ American ‘builders,’ he declared, had ‘retained a natural feeling for large compact forms’ just like the ‘ancient Egyptians’; and he saw a causal connection between their ‘primitive culture and the highest, purest [...] art form.’ The most essential American architecture, he suggested, was anonymous, unornamented, monumental – in many ways the opposite of Wright’s idiosyncratic, delicate renderings.

Dutch architect Hendrik Petrus Berlage was travelling in the United States that same year, lectured widely about his impressions and published them in a Swiss magazine and his book *Amerikaansche reisherinneringen* [American Travel Reminiscences] of 1913.⁹ But, of course, he could not meet Wright himself, who was travelling in Europe. Berlage praised Wright’s Unity Temple (1905-08) and Larkin Company Administration Building (1902-06) and was particularly taken with the beauty of the floor plans and interior organization of Wright’s houses. Discussing his observations with William Grey Purcell, who accompanied him, he wrote: ‘Americans like to keep the actual living rooms open towards each other, resulting in ‘the most beautiful views among the individual rooms and from the rooms towards the staircase, into the hallways etc.’ He used the term ‘plastic’ to characterize Wrights dynamic interior spaces, which seemed to him the result of three dimensional movement beneath the material.¹⁰

Paralleling Behrendt, Berlage considered Wright’s architecture, ‘originally American, as nothing similar could be found in Europe’ and predicted that Wright’s residential work would become paradigmatic for the American suburban house.¹¹ Instead, Wright’s architecture became a rather ubiquitous model in Dutch architecture. One of the first Dutch adopters of Wright’s architecture was Robert van ’t Hoff, who was so impressed by a German edition of Wright’s *Wasmuth Portfolio* which his father had given him in 1913,¹² that he decided to travel to the US to see Wright’s work and visit the master himself. They got along splendidly, even discussing a potential joint project.¹³ Nothing came of it, but van ’t Hoff’s subsequent houses reflect a long period of Dutch affection for the American master.

In particular, both the Expressionist Amsterdam School of Michel de Klerk and Piet Kramer and the modernist De Stijl group (of which van ’t Hoff was a member) with Gerrit Rietveld, Theo van Doesburg, and J.J.P. Oud used Wright to define their differences.

After World War I, the Germans and the Dutch found themselves in vastly different positions. While the Netherlands had stayed neutral during the conflict and continued to build, most notably ambitious social housing projects, Germany

had tumbled into the horrors of war and experienced five years of economic crisis afterwards. Little was built and architectural debates were somewhat muted. Nevertheless, debates about Wright continued in astonishing simultaneity in both countries.

Thanks to Van 't Hoff, the members of De Stijl, who favored unornamented, simple geometries, initially embraced Wright but, just like their modernist German colleagues shortly afterward, avoided commenting on the lavish ornamentation of Wright's Prairie style by focusing attention on his floor plans and their functionality. In 1918 J.J.P. Oud praised Wright's Robie house (1908-10) in the *De Stijl* as 'a new departure from architectural design as we have previously known it,' since the 'practical function of the house – its purpose – is the basis of the plan.'¹⁴ Three years later, Jan Wils wrote: 'In the ground plan lies the true modernity of Wright's architecture' – a result of America's democracy and self-respect.¹⁵

Movement and Space

The most exciting new tropes in architectural criticism in central Europe were movement, space, and, eventually, time. 'Dynamics', 'penetration', 'breaking through walls'— such notions had assumed a central position in deliberations about Modern architecture by the early 1920s, in particular in Dutch and German architectural circles. The ground had been prepared for this new way of reading architecture in the late nineteenth century through art historians such as Heinrich Wölfflin, who had identified the key difference between the static Renaissance and the vibrant, as the difference between 'linear and voluminous', 'flat and spatial', 'calm and moving'. Italian Baroque architecture suggested 'the impression of continuous movement' and 'spatial infinity'.¹⁶ Wölfflin's cohort, August Schmarsow, emphasized the central importance of the 'kinesthetic sensations' of our spatial experience, in other words the need for the viewer to move in and around a building in order to comprehend it.¹⁷ In the Netherlands, Berlage picked up on this new vocabulary, declaring in 1908: 'The art of architecture lies in the creation of spaces, not in the design of facades.'¹⁸ Wölfflin's student Paul Frankl, in his *Die Entwicklungsphasen der neueren Baukunst* developed these ideas further when he noted that on occasion a building can contain such 'a great flood of movement that [it] urges us round and through'.¹⁹ Similar to his teacher, he observed a 'smooth flow of space' in Baroque architecture in contrast to the compartmentalization of the Renaissance.²⁰ The poetic metaphor 'flow of space' was used here for the first time. Critics began to use notions of movement in different ways to describe architecture – be it the spatial flow in continuously connected rooms, be it that

forms, planes, masses and rooms, despite being static, implied movement or had presumably been achieved by sliding elements during the design process.

Wright seems to have been the first contemporary architect whose work was seen through this new lens. It was Oud in the above quoted essay in *De Stijl* who observed in 1918 that Wright had created a new ‘plastic’ architecture by ‘achieving movement of the planes [...] his masses slide back and forth and left and right; there are plastic effects in all directions. This movement, which one finds in his work, opens up entirely new aesthetic possibilities for architecture.’²¹ In 1923, German critic Adolf Behne followed suit. Wright’s ‘rooms are not inserted next to one another but set in motion – as asymmetrically as life itself.’ The aesthetic composition of Wright’s houses, he continued, stems ‘from the basic elements of accelerated horizontal movement, subtly and strikingly stopped verticals, and textured walls that never appear as supporting but always as supported parts.’²² Shortly thereafter, notions of movement and flowing space were also applied to Mies van der Rohe’s designs, in particular the open floor plans of his Brick Country House design of 1924 and the Barcelona Pavilion of 1929, both being, in the eyes of many critics, greatly indebted by Wright’s work.²³ In fact, Mies had written to Berlage in 1924 (just before designing the Brick Country House), asking him for material on Wright for a potential exhibition.²⁴ When designing the Barcelona Pavilion, apparently a copy of *Wendingen* with Wright’s Coonley House was open on his desk.²⁵ [1,2]

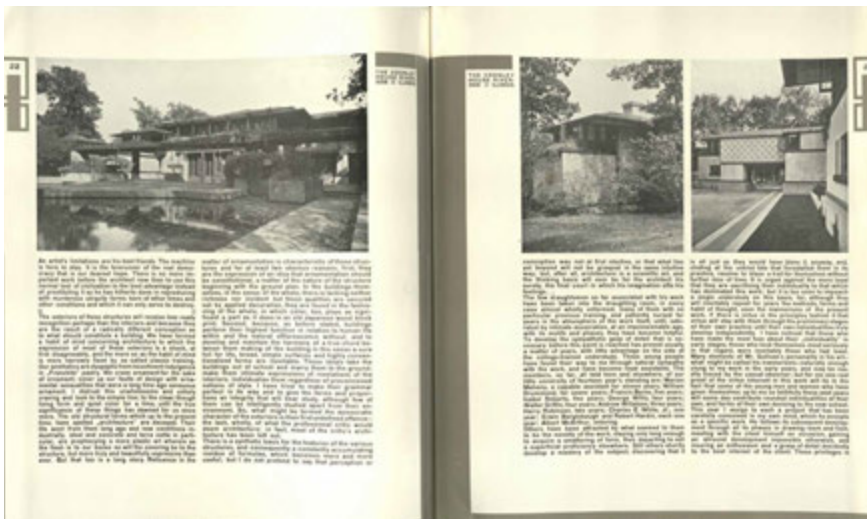


FIG. 1 *Wendingen*, Volume 7, Nr. 1, October 1925



FIG. 2 Mies van der Rohe, Barcelona Pavillion, 1929; view of principle facade and approach, with German flags

What accounts for the easy transfer of such metaphors from the curved lines in church interiors by Francesco Borromini or Balthasar Neumann to the straight lines of Wright or Mies? It might have helped that this vocabulary reached the mainstream just when modern architecture emerged and British astronomers found proof for Albert Einstein's theorem of gravity's impact on light's movement through space in 1919. Einstein received the Nobel Prize three years later.²⁶ While the details of his work were hardly accessible to the public, it was generally understood that time and space were intricately connected, and time's 'fourth dimension' complemented three-dimensional space.²⁷ The recent observation by architectural theorists such as August Schmarsow that spatial sequences reveal themselves in motion could seem to a naive observer a demonstration of Einstein's theorem of an indelible connection of space and time. After all, as several architects pointed out, movement through space needed time. Hamburg's chief planning director Fritz Schumacher, for instance, observed: 'As a result of our movement the notion of space is joined by the notion of time [...]. The essence of architectural impact reaches into the fourth dimension, now commonplace thanks to the theory of relativity, which draws its scientific conclusions from the fact that all observations and events are bound by time.'²⁸ Dutch painter and theorist Theo van Doesburg similarly declared: 'The new architecture calculates not only with space but also with time as an architectural value. The unity of space and time will give architectural form a new and completely plastic aspect, that is, a four-dimensional, plastic space-time aspect.'²⁹ He titled several of his colorful axonometrics 'Space-Time Constructions'³⁰ [3] It did not take long before the Barcelona Pavilion was, in all seriousness, presented as a demonstration of Einstein's theorem.³¹



FIG. 3 Theo van Doesburg, *Contra-construction*, July-October 1925, gouache on blueprint, 57 x 57 cm [Het Nieuwe Instituut]

Apparently, Wright followed these discussions attentively and skeptically. Even though his designs had been positively analyzed within this framework, he pointedly avoided any use of the terms that had become *en vogue* in Europe, such as movement, flowing space, or the element of time in architecture.³² He did not see the need for a new dimension: 'We have heard of the fourth dimension frequently, of late, to meet this need. Why a fourth dimension, when we so little understand the possibilities of what we already use as the three dimensions?'³³ Wright explained that the third dimension, which, in his eyes, simply stood for structural depth and expansion, was sufficient to include 'the new conception of architecture as interior space, finding utilization and enclosure,' as part of the 'integral concept of building for which I have pleaded.'³⁴ Space (Wright used the term for the first time in 1928), thus, was an integral part of his deliberate, three-dimensional planning of the building's fabric, rather than an end in itself.

After a currency reform ended Germany's postwar economic crisis, traveling became easier, and contacts with the U.S. intensified. In 1924, Werner Moser from Zürich had started working for Wright and later that year, Richard Neutra accepted Wright's offer of employment. Neutra arranged for the visit of Erich Mendelsohn for whom he had worked in Berlin, in early November that same year. Mendelsohn had long been fascinated with Wright. Stationed on the eastern front near Riga during the war, he had a copy of the 1911 Wasmuth publication delivered to him in the trenches.³⁵

Mendelsohn's letters to his wife Luise reveal how deeply emotional the encounter was for him. Despite their twenty-year age difference and a considerable language barrier, Mendelsohn felt an immediate kinship, both men 'enchanted in space, joining hands [...] the same path, the same goal, the same life.' Mendelsohn delivered, 'greetings of the entire young movement of Europe to Wright, to the father and fighter'. Wright complimented Mendelsohn's work as 'original, powerful – future'. While Mendelsohn mentioned the international group of architects surrounding Wright that evening – 'Kanada, Switzerland, Japan, Austria and Armenia' – Wright pointedly emphasized his regional roots. For a walk after lunch, he made Mendelsohn change into something 'vaguely native American', a button-less frock and raffia shoes and handed him a long walking stick, gloves and a tomahawk to carry along.³⁶ Apparently, Wright was at work, as he put it later, 'quietly Americanizing Europe while American architects Europeanized America'.³⁷

One could hardly imagine a greater contrast than that between Mendelsohn's urbane, streamlined additions to the Rudolf Mosse publishing house in Berlin (1920-22) or his expressionistic Einstein Tower in Potsdam (1920-22) and Wright's Prairie style. The current work in Wright's studio, however, such as the dynamic Sugarloaf Mountain Automobile Observatory or the reinforced concrete skyscraper for the National Life Insurance Company had more affinity to Mendelsohn's work, and showed how closely Wright watched the European developments.

Thanks to massive American investments through the Dawes Plan, Germany began to recover from the war and its devastating economic crisis. The time around 1925 saw a flood of new publications, several of them discussing Wright.³⁸ Gropius published the first of his Bauhaus Bücher, about his famous 1923 exhibition *Internationale Architektur* in Weimar and demonstrated that an 'essential approach to building is evolving simultaneously in all civilized countries'. Wright was represented twice, firmly embedded into Gropius' narrative of the modernity of American industrial buildings and the internationalism of Modern architecture: a photograph of the Larkin Building was paired with the corn silo of the Washburn Crosby Company in Minneapolis, the Robie house faced the model of Mies's Concrete Country House (1923).³⁹ The Swiss magazine *Werk* published a special

number on American architecture in May 1925. Werner Moser, still at Taliesin, told its readers: 'The work of the architect Frank Lloyd Wright has little in common with that of the other American architects.' In contrast to the materialism and historicism in U.S. architecture, Wright was presented as a genuine seeker for honest, natural forms in response to materials and functions. Moser stressed the connection between exterior and interior in Wright's houses and their spatial continuity and recommended his principles as a model to follow.⁴⁰

Heinrich de Fries, a pupil of Peter Behrens and a moderately modern architect and critic, became one of Wright's most important advocates in Germany. He was an editor at Wasmuth, Wright's former publisher in Berlin. Early on, he had noted Wright's increasing influence in Europe.⁴¹ De Fries decided to publish a book on Wright and contacted J.J.P. Oud in the spring of 1923 regarding photographs of Wright's work.⁴² He was completing a large book on international residential architecture at the time which appeared in 1924. De Fries included some American examples, but left out Wright entirely. He probably did not want to steal the thunder of his own planned publication, but teasingly mentioned Wright in his introduction as 'the greatest living architect of our time'.⁴³

De Fries vs. Wijdeveld

After leaving Wasmuth later that year, De Fries became the editor of the journal *Baugilde* and intensified his search for material on Wright, contacting him in the fall of 1924. Neutra facilitated the interaction and translated. A package from Wright arrived late December 1924, containing color drawings of his latest Californian projects – the Doheny Ranch in Beverly Hills (1923), the Lake Tahoe Resort in California (1923-24), and the Millard House in Pasadena (1923-24), as well as texts and photographs, and de Fries began working on his book.

Just as the discovery of Wright had unfolded simultaneously in Germany and the Netherlands around 1911, now the production of the first monographs on his work after the *Wasmuth* portfolio proceeded at the same time in both countries. We can only imagine De Fries' disappointment when the Dutch journal *Wendingen* announced an ambitious publishing project on Wright in October 1925.⁴⁴ The next seven numbers of the magazine (twenty-four pages each) would be devoted to Wright and published as a bound volume afterward. The project was led by former editor Hendrik Theodore Wijdeveld, who wrote the introduction and included 'many articles by famous European Architects and American writers' (there were essays by Wright, Mendelsohn, Oud, Berlage, Mallet-Stevens, Sullivan, and Mumford). *Wendingen*, arguably the most elegant and luxurious architecture journal of its time,

was generally aligned with the more conservative Expressionists of the Amsterdam School (and financed through the architect's group *Architectura et Amicitia*), but it also embraced other views. The essay by Oud, 'The Influence of Frank Lloyd Wright on the Architecture of Europe', which appeared in February 1926, became the only piece that did not join the laudatory choir Wijdeveld had assembled. Wright was clearly 'one of the very greatest', Oud conceded, and his work truly 'a revelation'. For emphasis, Oud even rephrased and modernized his argument of 1918 about the embedded movement in Wright's work: 'So firm of structure for all their movability were the piled up masses growing as it were out of the soil, so natural was the interlacing of the elements shifting as on a cinematographic screen'. No wonder, then, Oud declared, that Wright 'was glorified unintentionally through imitation of his work' in Europe. Oud's initial enthusiasm for Wright had cooled off, however, as he noticed the extent to which Wright-inspired buildings were springing up all over the Netherlands and exerted their 'pernicious' influence. Dutch architects were just imitating Wright's formal mannerisms, he explained, such as 'the shifting of planes, the projecting penthouse-roofs, the repeatedly interrupted and again continued masses, the predominantly horizontal development,' without the understanding the reasoning behind them. What European architecture needed instead of American 'luxurious growth', 'plastic exuberance', and 'sensuous abundance', Oud pointed out, was the opposite, namely: 'abstraction', 'puritanic asceticism and mental abstinence', in other words the Cubism of *De Stijl*. 'Imitating a modern master', according to Oud, was worse than designing historicizing architecture.⁴⁵

Mumford's essay in the *Wendingen* publication tackled the often-asked question of Wright's cultural identity head-on: 'Finally, to what extent is Mr. Wright's architecture "American"? Those in Europe who admire Mr. Wright's work are particularly distressed by the fact that it has scarcely achieved a wide recognition in our own country.'⁴⁶ Mumford found an explanation in the notion of regionalism that had occupied him for a number of years. Wright had 'created a true regional form,' he noted, as his 'low-lying houses, with their flat roofs, which seem about to dissolve into the landscape are an expression of the prairie.' This conditioned their Dutch and German acceptance: 'it is no accident that these forms have been so readily appreciated in the Netherlands and on the plains of Prussia.'⁴⁷

The hardcover book edition finally appeared during the early fall of 1926 in the magazine's large square format (13" x 13") on heavier, folded paper stock. Its 164 pages contained Wright's best-known work – including the Larkin Building, Unity Temple, and the Willits house (1902-03) – in excellent, often full-page, black-and-white photographs and large reproductions of his plans, all framed by Wijdeveld's elaborate border designs. To this day, the volume is one of the most luxurious books on Wright ever published. [4]

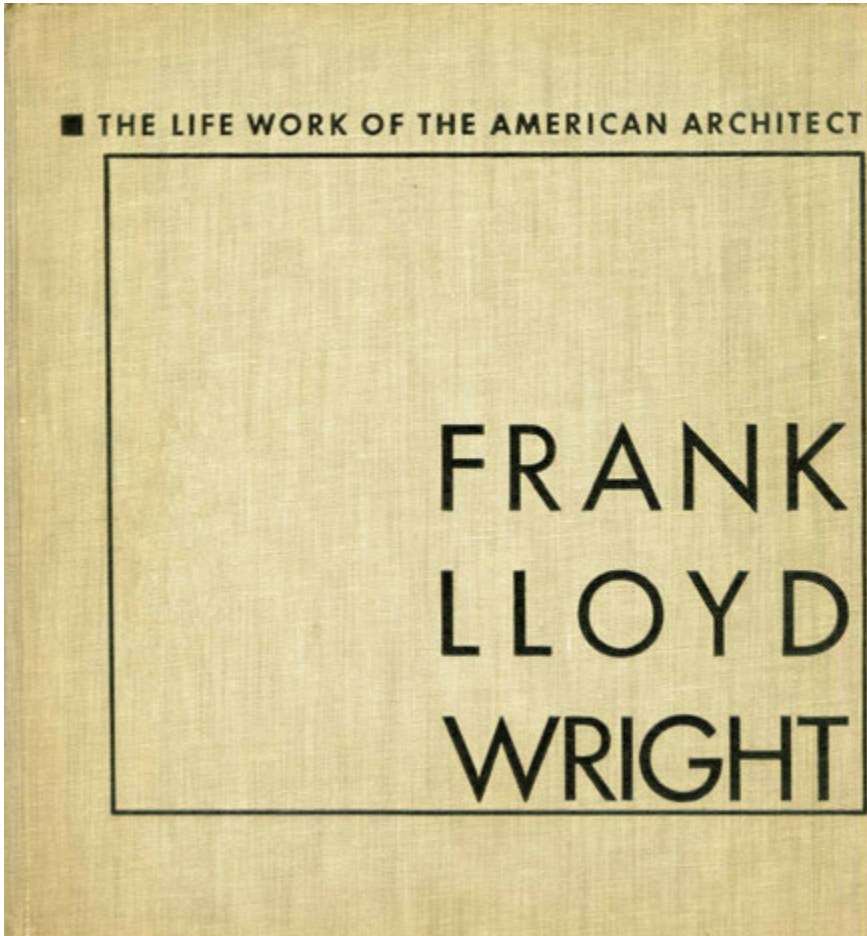


FIG. 4 Hardcover book edition of the seven *Wendingen*-issues

The production of de Fries' German book on Wright had also dragged on, until September 1926, long delayed by his search for an appropriate printer for color reproductions – still a rarity at that time. The young publisher Ernst Pollak, having produced only one book so far, finally took on the task of printing 3.000 copies (after de Fries invested considerable funds of his own). De Fries' publication was markedly smaller than Wijdeveld's, with a format of 9" x 11½" and only eighty pages. Furthermore, the book suffered from a rather slapdash layout that was no match to the careful composition of its Dutch counterpart. What set the volume apart were the nine color plates for the three recent Californian projects, the Doheny Ranch, Lake Tahoe Resort, and the Millard house. In addition, there were well-known photographs of the Larkin Building, Unity Temple, the Imperial

Hotel in Tokyo (1913-23), and the Dana (1902-04) and Martin (1903-04) houses in Springfield, Illinois, and Buffalo, respectively. The book also contained a number of amateur photographs of concrete-block houses under construction, of the Robie and Barnsdall (1918-21) houses and Taliesin (begun 1911). Some came from the *Schweizerische Bauzeitung*, others from the Swiss architect Max Haefeli, de Fries' father-in-law, who had recently traveled to the U.S.⁴⁸ As if to demonstrate Wright's modernity and contemporary relevance, the book's cover simply carried Wright's name in a sans serif font and his trademark red square on an unadorned lemon yellow background, making it one of the most resolutely minimalist designs of its genre produced in the Weimar Republic. [5]

De Fries noted in his introduction that the 'culturally immature American', still preferred historicizing modes of expression, and thus: 'Wright appears to us as the most un-American imaginable.' Instead he was an internationalist, who 'has lived for many years in China [sic]' and 'among his collaborators and students are Europeans, Americans and Asians.'⁴⁹ De Fries had apparently mixed up Wright's recent sojourns to Japan with an extended stay in China, whose 'old architectural and cultural landscape' was Wright's 'spiritual home', he declared.⁵⁰

Richard Neutra contributed to De Fries' book an essay about concrete-block houses in Los Angeles. Wright's new essay on the 'Third Dimension', as part of his revived 'In the Cause of Architecture' series, appeared in both the *Wendingen* edition and De Fries' book. Berlage's essay of 1911 also was reprinted in both. In a separate chapter, De Fries analyzed the evolution of Wright's open floor plans, that he considered among the greatest achievements in the entire history of architecture. With eight examples from Wright's residential work, he demonstrated how rooms increasingly reached beyond an initial rectangular container to bring the inhabitants in closer contact with nature and provide interlacing spaces.

In the end, both Wijdeveld and De Fries were disappointed with their respective publications and confided in Wright. De Fries mentioned several times how much of his personal funds he had invested, while, he added, apparently the *Wendingen* volume had enjoyed some financial support from Wright. Thanks to his financial sacrifice, De Fries wrote, his book ended up being affordable and was therefore going to 'make your work truly available to the European architects'. The luxurious Dutch edition, in contrast, which cost four times as much, would only be acquired by wealthy architects, who, he maintained, were usually mere businessmen rather than creative artists and surely not the type Wright tried to reach.⁵¹ Wijdeveld, on the other hand, bemoaned the fact that his publication was not the exclusive and complete first book on Wright that he had hoped: 'I heard that you gave a set of the latest designs to a commercial publisher in Germany [...] I can't help being

disappointed about the publication which de Fries made in Germany. Now, nothing can be done anymore.⁵² While Wright expressed his delight with Wijdeveld's sumptuous *Wendingen* edition, he never once thanked De Fries for his parallel efforts on the more affordable German publication.⁵³ Wijdeveld visited Wright in 1931 and again in 1948, where he lectured to the Taliesin Fellows. Wright, then more prominent than ever, was instrumental in getting Wijdeveld invitations to lecture and teach at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, and at NC State College's School of Design between 1948 and 1950.⁵⁴

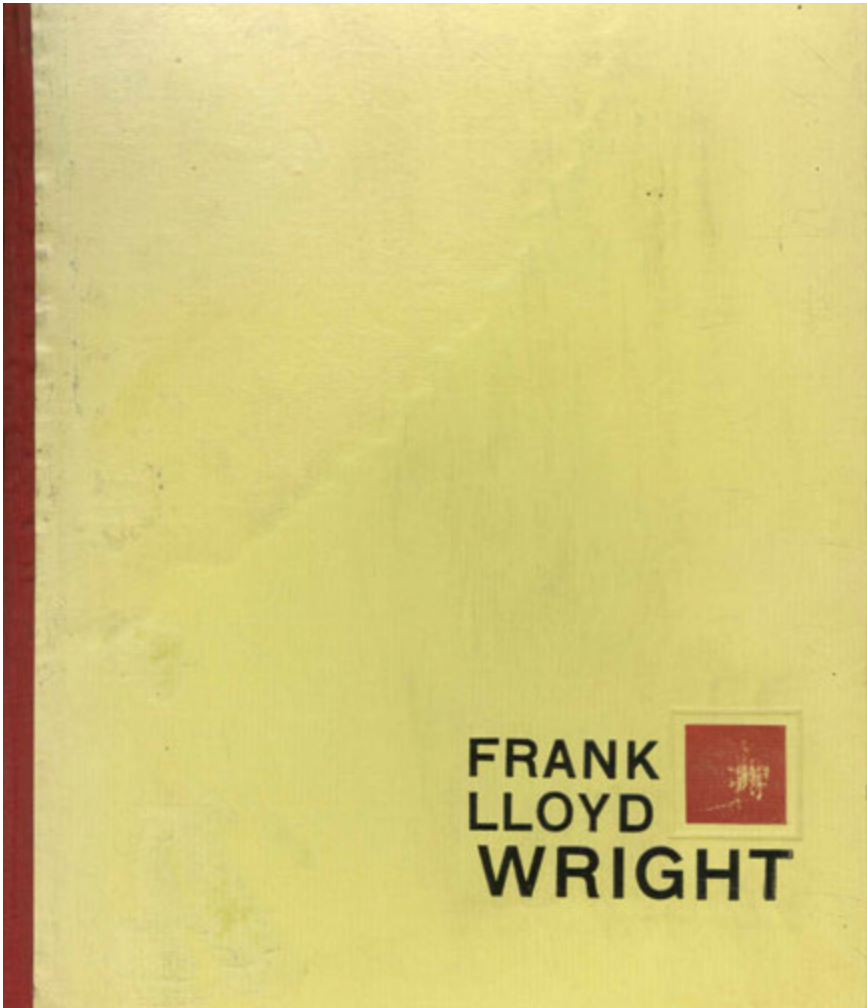


FIG. 5 Cover of Heinrich de Fries, *Frank Lloyd Wright*, Berlin 1926

An overlooked text by Frank Lloyd Wright

Ultimately, the two publications were as much complementary as they were competitive. Both contained letters by Wright to his European colleagues. In Wijdeveld's case, the text, which had initially appeared in the final number of the *Wendingen* series, in April 1926, was titled 'To my European Co-Workers'. Addressing an audience of likeminded architects, such as Wijdeveld and his fellow expressionists of the Amsterdam School ('we all seem to desire much the same thing'), Wright presented a rhapsodic praise of the creative process: 'As seed in the earth responds to light in expanding to realization of life-principle, so we respond to this life-light within us and give birth to "Forms"'⁵⁵

In De Fries' book, the essay by Wright, translated into German, presumably by Richard Neutra or Werner Moser, was called 'An die europäischen Kollegen'. This title sounded deceptively similar to the one in *Wendingen* ('To my European Co-Workers'). Scholars have, therefore, always assumed that the German piece was simply a translation of the one in *Wendingen*. As a result, it has, until now, never been published in English.⁵⁶ [See Annex, page 263-264]

In reality, the much earlier text in De Fries' book is entirely different and historically quite significant. If the stated date of 3 January 1925 is correct (Wright was certainly not immune to the temptation of pre-dating his work) it was thus written shortly after De Fries had contacted Wright for the first time, and roughly around the time when Mendelsohn was visiting him at Taliesin. It was also prepared long before the *Wendingen* series began, and hence before Oud's critical essay on Wright appeared in February 1926, to which it otherwise seemed a perfect response.

Despite their title, neither one of Wright's essays had addressed 'Europeans' in general, but rather specific audiences. The Dutch architects of the Amsterdam school, as represented by Wijdeveld and *Wendingen*, are addressed as 'Co-Workers', suggesting a common goal, while the Germans were coolly called 'Colleagues'.⁵⁷ This short essay is Wright's first direct response to modernist tendencies and stylistic preferences in Europe, which would become an often-repeated trope for him in the coming years.⁵⁸ Wright must have been well informed about sentiments among progressive and conservative German architects through Werner Moser, Richard Neutra and Erich Mendelsohn, as there are relatively few critical voices to be found in print about Wright before 1925.

Wright wrote that he felt misunderstood by his European critics, claiming that they had missed the most valuable elements of his work. Distracted by his rich ornaments, they overlooked the straight lines of mechanical production underneath.

In his own early works (Wright was likely thinking of the Larkin Building and Unity Temple), such straight lines and flat surfaces of machine-made materials had been a concession to the mechanistic method or the machine as a tool, he explained. But Wright found that the human element was missing. Mankind had a right to 'poetics of form', which lend 'eloquence and emotion' to the raw, straight outline. This, he said, 'is the art of architecture, different from the scientific aspect of an achievement in engineering. But both are not separate spheres, they hang together in the production of the whole.' Wright mocked the 'affectation of simplicity' among European modernists as just 'another form of old fashioned artistic pretentiousness' and 'a new kind of showing off', which had just 'as little right to be considered architecture as copying the forms of antiquity.' In addition, executing this simplicity required even more effort and falsehood than imitating the classical orders, 'since the architect still starts from the outside and tries to work his way to the interior.'⁵⁹

Wright's text was timely, as just when De Fries' book appeared, a more pronounced critique of his work had emerged from a group of conservative architects and writers, led by critic and urban planner Werner Hegemann. As editor of the magazine *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst*, Hegemann often humorously exposed architectural pretentiousness, ideologies, and fashions, and he took issue with the blind, almost religious devotion of some of his fellow architects to Wright. He dismissed Wright's abundant ornamentations, his 'stark [...] exoticisms' as misappropriations from foreign cultures, and as not American.⁶⁰ His recent *Amerikanische Architektur und Stadtbaukunst* (1925) had, therefore, deliberately omitted Wright (giving plenty of space to McKim Mead and White), which led to consternation among modernist, such as Adolf Rading, who declared Hegemann's Wright-less volume so offensive that it should be publicly burned.⁶¹

When Hegemann mischievously asked Erich Mendelsohn to let him publish his rather elegiac piece on Sullivan and Wright ('A great artist whom we adore. A great man whom we love') that had appeared in *Wendingen* in March 1926,⁶² Mendelsohn, flattered but weary, agreed under the condition that Hegemann refrain from commenting. Hegemann complied, but let his friend, the architect and critic Leo Adler, ridicule the piece in the next issue in a letter to the editor - Mendelsohn was furious...⁶³

Henry-Russell Hitchcock before the canon

As mentioned above, 1927 was the year when the young Henry-Russell Hitchcock traveled in Germany, the Netherlands and France, taking notes for a future book. He surely picked up on different opinions about Wright when he declared

his reception in Europe as central to an understanding of Modern architecture. Wright's influence, he opined, was part of a long tradition, since 'in a wide sense all truly Modern architecture in Europe is American.'⁶⁴ A case in point was Berlage, who had been influenced by Henry Hobson Richardson and greatly admired Wright, and thus encouraged Hitchcock to call the 'architecture of the first quarter of the twentieth century "American" despite the triumphs of the Dutch.' He identified the 'principle of the new architecture' as 'aesthetically conscious engineering. [...] I need hardly remark how American this program is.' At the 1927 Weissenhof Exhibition in Stuttgart, he had witnessed the structural experiments and found that 'We do that better in America'. In short, Modern architecture is 'waiting for American genius to achieve its masterpieces'.⁶⁵

Hitchcock's concept for his book evolved in the next few months. He presented his key ideas of the 'New Tradition' and the 'New Pioneers' via a *tour d'horizon* of recent European architecture in two essays in *Architectural Record* in the spring of 1928. While Wright was mentioned only briefly as a member of the 'New Tradition', with Behrens, Josef Hoffmann, and Berlage, he was still lauded as a 'complete "modernist"' and as no 'follower of European fashions', but rather as 'the founder of a tradition much followed in Europe' and a 'far greater architect than even Auguste Perret'.⁶⁶

Later that same year, however, in a slim book on Wright published by the magazine *Cahiers d'Art* in Paris, Hitchcock's tone had markedly changed. [6] His cocky proclamations were clearly influenced by the misgivings that some German and Dutch modernists had voiced. Theo van Doesburg, for example, had written 'Wright was the first to realize daring constructions in concrete in architecture, but now he has fallen into the most barbaric decorativism (Midway Restaurant, Chicago; Maison Millard, Pasadena, California etc. etc.) and archaism, with no significance whatsoever for the elementarist architecture of our time. The 'first are not always the "last", and still less frequently the lasting ones.'⁶⁷ Hitchcock presented the same division, praising the Larkin Building and Unity Temple for their clear lines and lack of ornamentation, but showing little patience with the Prairie style and Wright's interiors, which 'had never been really good', and had since become worse. The outsized ornaments were sometimes interesting, but even then they destroyed, at least in part, "those qualities of pure architecture in which he had shown an unequal mastery." After scolding Wright for his 'anti-architectural [...] picturesqueness', he turned his sights to the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo: 'No conventional architecture has ever produced reception halls that are more mediocre [...]. And those who think highly of Wright's work regret that this monument, thanks to the engineering talent of its creator, was spared by various earthquakes.'⁶⁸

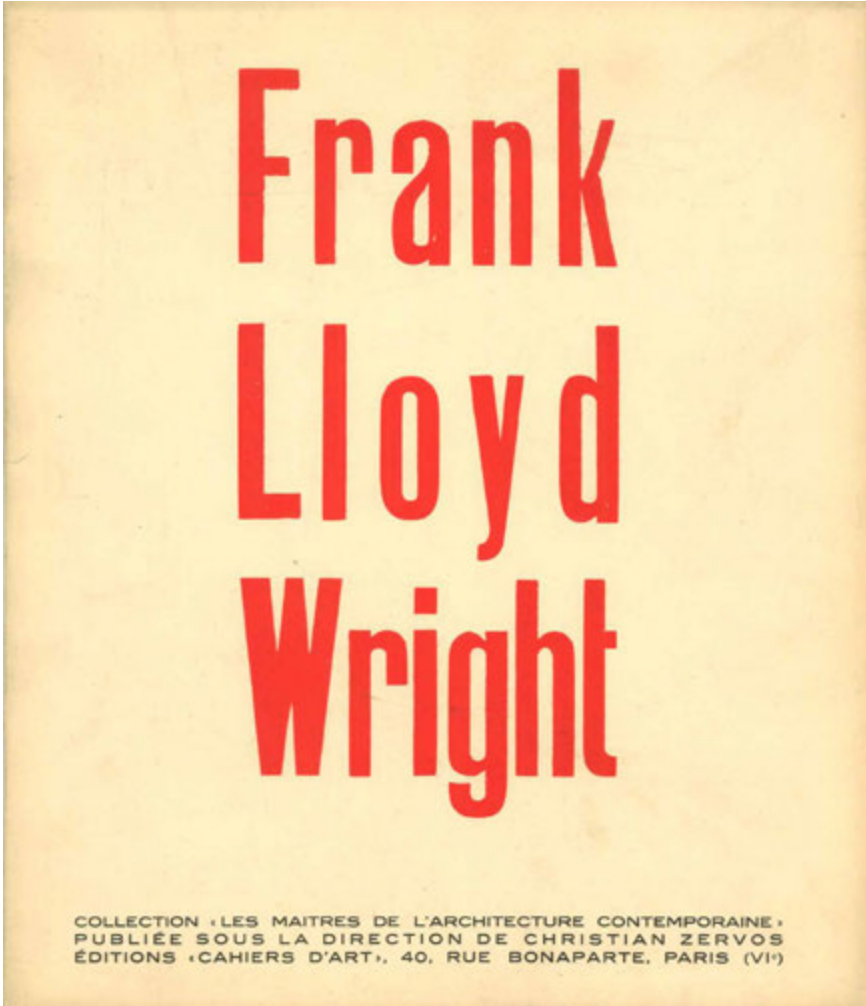


FIG. 6 Cover of Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Frank Lloyd Wright*, Paris 1928

Hitchcock's book *Modern Architecture. Romanticism and Reintegration* appeared in 1929 and included Wright as a member of the 'New Tradition' just like Berlage, Behrens, and Otto Wagner, as opposed to the 'New Pioneers' – notably Mies, Le Corbusier, Gropius, and Oud. Hitchcock had dropped his earlier conjecture of a strong American influence on modern architecture, and Wright's central influence. Continuing the approach he had put forth in his French publication of the previous year, the twenty-six-year-old historian delivered a series of rather cranky verdicts. Wright owed 'a great deal' to architects before him, he pointed out, in particular to Richardson, who 'was surely as great an architect as Wright', and Sullivan, who

had more talent than Wright for the design of ornament.⁶⁹ A case in point was the Coonley house in Riverside, Illinois (1906-09), the ornamentation of which was 'out of keeping with the dignity of the whole'. Midway Gardens in Chicago (1913-14), while 'one of his greatest works', did not fare much better: 'regrettably the interior was not up to the exterior and the ornament in detail was of a peculiarly awkward and ill-understood Cubism.' Hitchcock did not subscribe to Oud's and Behne's observations at the beginning of the decade about the dynamics and spatial flow in Wright's houses. Instead, he declared Wright's "interiors [...] never worthy of his exteriors [...]. His rooms were dark, uncomfortable and generally at once cluttered and monotonous. His efforts to make them light and playful only increased their self-conscious fussiness and their self-righteous stodginess.' The Barnsdall house was 'one of his least successful buildings'. Wright's ideas were 'curiously incomplete and even in part contradictory'. After all this, Hitchcock's final note, while sounding conciliatory, was a rather damning judgment on recent American architecture: Wright was 'the greatest American architect of the first quarter of the twentieth century'.⁷⁰

In 1931, a long expected exhibition about Wright was shown in Amsterdam and then in Berlin. Not surprisingly, Wijdeveld was deeply involved in the organization in the Netherlands and De Fries in Germany. In his review, the well-known art historian Max Osborn followed a now well-established pattern, when he singled out Wright's work before 1910 (his early houses, the Luxfer Prism skyscraper (1895), and the Larkin Building), which he considered 'the first, already admirably sure and self-confident appearance of modern architecture'. He then harshly dismissed what came afterwards, 'as if Wright had suffered a relapse into American conventions'. Perhaps it was some 'modern confection which lured him into its dangerous embrace with the help of Japanese, English, Scottisch [sic] ingredients, in the style of Mackintosh, but weaker, oriental, exotic elements were mixed in, sometimes one thinks of Vienna, also of Art Nouveau [...] a big mess - in short it became horrible [...]. Wright lost his way [...]. American Luxury, Hollywood taste drove this superbly talented man all the way into kitsch.' But Osborn saw a recent turn around, the Steel Cathedral project of 1925 and that for St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery Tower in New York of 1928-30. He 'sighed with relief' that the genial architect was again developing ideas and experiments in the spirit of his time. Wright's twenty years of 'splashing around in shallow waters' should be forgotten, Osborn opined.⁷¹ Progressive critic Paul F. Schmidt argued similarly in an essay on 'Greatness and Decline of a Groundbreaking Modern Architect'.⁷²

Wright's collaborator Heinrich Klumb had overseen the installation of the exhibition in Berlin, and sent him a scrapbook with critiques. The famously thin-skinned architect drafted a rebuttal 'To my critics in the Land of the Danube and

the Rhine', which appeared 'in many German newspapers' in July 1931.⁷³ Wright made clear who the audience was – he named all his critics at the beginning - and then addressed German modern architects. Wright conceded that '[a]ppreciation from you is not lacking, nor generosity, my Germans [...] I am not ungrateful. But [...] I have noticed of late years, in Germany, a concentration upon an appearance that does not grow outward into manifold richness of expression but that does tend to concentrate on the barren bands and box outlines of a calculated style.' In other words: 'the straight line and the flat plane – the necessary basis of forms for our machine-age have been capitalized as something by, for and in themselves.' Wright had refined his argument in De Fries' book of 1925 and now termed the absence of ornament: 'negation'. 'Negation is good, for a time. But affirmation of more than the negation is needed if human life is going beyond its own machinery. So this friendly warning and brotherly protest against the protestant who protests the human riches involved in creative endeavor of all kinds.'

Apart from German critics and architects, there was, perhaps, another recipient on Wright's mind, namely Hitchcock, who had recently invited him to participate in an exhibition about *Modern Architecture*, planned with Philip Johnson at the Museum of Modern Art in New York for February 1932. 'An International Style is a horrible nightmare,' Wright declared (cognizant of the term about to be introduced on that occasion), ' [...] the sensibilities and potencies of human life imprisoned by the narrow vision and impotence of small men.' He made his own position clear vis-à-vis that of Hitchcock and Johnson: 'I have seen and used the straight line and flat plane only as humble and new means to a greater end. But that end is not an "International Style" nor any style at all. All that I have shown you is aimed at greater individuality by way of greater imagination.'⁷⁴

In the following months Wright was just as difficult to deal with in the run-up to the *Modern Architecture Exhibition* as was to be expected – on three different occasions threatening to withdraw his participation. He was clearly bothered by the amount of attention given to the European modernists and their American followers, as well as his own sidelining as a romantic individualist and only a forerunner of the Modern movement. Wright had promised a new design and model for the show, which did not come until the last minute – Hitchcock and Johnson held an empty spot in the exhibition and a space in the catalogue. When it finally arrived, the 'House on the Mesa' turned out to be magnificent – a large, expansive residential structure of concrete block shell walls with protruding reinforced concrete slabs, spatially rich inside and devoid of ornament. [7] Wright had returned to some structural strategies of his earlier work and presented the project as a better alternative to the International Style, in particular to Mies' *Barcelona Pavilion* - a perfect example, he told Mies years later, of architectural 'negation.'⁷⁵

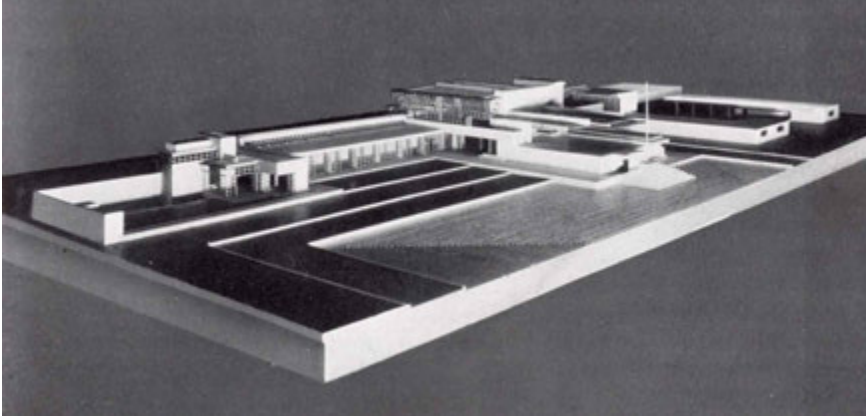


FIG. 7 Frank Lloyd Wright, House on the Mesa, 1932

In contrast, the House on the Mesa, Wright claimed said, provided ‘organic simplicity’, ‘where style arises from the nature of construction’, and ‘machine age luxury might compare with that of the Greeks or Goths’.⁷⁶ The House on the Mesa was the first in a string of masterpieces in the following years. Thanks to his encounters with De Fries and Wijdeveld and their respective circles, Wright had found a middle ground between the purist positions of German and Dutch modernists and the Romantic Expressionism of the Amsterdam School, and alignments between his earlier work and international modernism. This tension remained palpable in his work for the rest of his life.

Notes

- 1 Hitchcock’s papers at the Archives of American Art in Washington contain four somewhat similar versions of this early manuscript. Two versions are called ‘American Architecture in Europe’, an outline is titled ‘Modern Architecture: History and Criticism’, another manuscript is called ‘Modern Architecture and after: History and Criticism’. The above quote is from the fourth version of the manuscript ‘History and Criticism of Modern Architecture’ and dated 24 September-1 October [Washington D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Art, Henry-Russell Hitchcock Papers, 1919-1987, mss. ‘Modern Architecture’].
- 2 Herman van Bergeijk’s research was foundational to this essay, as he wrote much about the Dutch response to Wright, which has so far received more attention than his German reception. See, for example: Mariëtte van Stralen, ‘Kindred Spirits: Holland, Wright and Wijdeveld’, in Anthony Alofsin (ed.), *Frank Lloyd Wright. Europe and Beyond*, Berkeley 1999, 45-75. Herman van Bergeijk (ed.), *Amerikaanse Dromen. Frank Lloyd Wright en Nederland*, Rotterdam 2008. For the German reception, see Anthony Alofsin, ‘Wright, Influence and the World at Large’, in Alofsin, *Frank Lloyd Wright. Europe and Beyond*, 1-23; and Donald Longmead & Donald Leslie Johnson, *Architectural Excursions. Frank Lloyd Wright, Holland and Europe*, Westport, Conn. 2000.
- 3 These two publications are known as *Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe von Frank Lloyd Wright* (1910), and 8. *Sonderheft der Architektur des XX. Jahrhunderts. Frank Lloyd Wright Chicago* (1911). On Wright and Europe, see: Anthony Alofsin, *Frank Lloyd Wright. The Lost Years, 1910-1922, A Study of Influence*, Chicago

1993. Two photographs of Wright's work made it into another Wasmuth publication in 1910 (albeit without any mentioning in the text and with misspelt attributions), the W.H. Winslow House of 1893 and the Chauncey L. Williams House of 1895, both in River Forest, Ill. [R. Rudolf Vogel, *Das Amerikanische Haus*, Berlin 1910, 221].

4 'Beilage für Vereine. Berichte über Versammlungen und Besichtigungen. Vereinigung Berliner Architekten', *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 44 (1 October 1910), 641.

5 Alofsin, Frank Lloyd Wright. *The Lost Years*, 34. A separate article about the relationship between Wright and Mies van der Rohe by this author will appear in a book about Wright at 150 edited by Neil Levine and Richard Longstreth for University of Virginia Press. It will reference some of the material in this essay.

6 Walter Curt Behrendt, 'Frank Lloyd Wright, Chicago', *Kunst und Künstler* 11 (1913), 487.

7 In particular, his design for the office building at the 1914 Cologne Werkbund Exhibition, apparently taking some inspiration from the Park Inn Hotel in Mason City, Iowa (1909-10), and his Sommerfeld house in Berlin of 1920, which bears a certain resemblance to the Winslow house, in River Forest, Illinois (1893-94).

8 Gropius lectured on 'Monumentale Kunst und Industriebau' on 29 January 1911 at the Folkwang Museum in Hagen. His lecture notes have survived in the Bauhaus Archive, Berlin. His 1913 essay in the *Werkbund Jahrbuch* followed the same lines [Walter Gropius, 'Die Entwicklung Moderner Industriebaukunst', *Die Kunst in Industrie und Handel* (1913), 17-22].

9 See: H.P. Berlage, 'Neuere amerikanische Architektur. Reiseeindrücke', *Schweizerische Bauzeitung* 60 (1912) 11, 148-150 and pls. 33-36; 60 (1912) 12, 165-167 and pls. 37-40; 60 (1912) 13, 178 and pls. 41-44. Berlage's essay was based on a slide lecture he had given at the Architects and Engineers Association in Zürich on 30 March 1912.

10 Iain Boyd Whyte, 'Introduction', in Hendrik Petrus Berlage, *Thoughts on Style, 1886-1909*, Santa Monica 1996, 1-91.

11 Berlage, 'Neuere amerikanische Architektur', 150.

12 Carsten-Peter Warncke, *The Ideal as Art. De Stijl, 1917-1931*, Cologne 1991, 208.

13 Longmead & Johnson, *Architectural Excursions*, 22-23.

14 J.J.P. Oud, 'Architectonische beschouwing bij Bijlage VIII', *De Stijl* 1 (1917-18) 4 (February 1918), 39-41; reprinted in H. Allen Brooks (ed.), *Writings on Wright. Selected Comment on Frank Lloyd Wright*, Cambridge 1983, 135-137. 'Bijlage VIII' was a photo of the south side of the Robie House.

15 Jan Wils, 'Frank Lloyd Wright', *Elsevier's Geïllustreerd Maandschrift* 61 (1921) 4, 217-227, reprinted in Brooks, *Writings on Wright*, 139-148.

16 Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock. Eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien*, München 1888, 18, 40, 52.

17 August Schmarsow, *Das Wesen der architektonischen Schöpfung*, Leipzig 1894, translated into English in Harry Francis Mallgrave & Eleftherios Ikonomou (ed.), *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*, Santa Monica 1994, 291, 292.

18 'The Foundations and Development of Architecture', in Berlage, *Thoughts on Style 1886-1909*, 249.

19 Paul Frankl, *Die Entwicklungsphasen der neueren Baukunst*, Leipzig 1914; English edition *Principles of Architectural History* (trans. J. F. O'Gorman), Cambridge 1968, 148.

20 Frankl, *Principles of Architectural History*, 46.

21 Brooks, *Writings on Wright*, 135-137.

22 Adolf Behne, *The Modern Functional Building*, Santa Monica 1996, 99. Translated from *Moderne Zweckbau* (1926).

23 Gustav Adolf Platz, *Die Baukunst der neuesten Zeit*, 2nd edition, Berlin 1930, 80-81.

24 Letter Mies van der Rohe to Hendrik Berlage, 13 December 1923 [Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Mies Papers, Personal Correspondence 1923-40]. The original letter is in the Berlage papers of the Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam. I would like to thank Herman Bergeijk for alerting me to this letter.

25 Günther Kühne, 'Der Skelettbau ist keine Teigware. Sergius Ruegenberg berichtet von Mies van der Rohes Berliner Zeit', *Bauwelt* 11 (28 February 1986), 347-348.

26 Arthur Stanley Eddington, *Raum, Zeit und Schwere*, Braunschweig 1923, 114-125.

27 The mathematician Hermann Minkowski had first published this idea in his 1908 lecture 'Space and Time', which provided the basis for the General Theory of Relativity of his former pupil Albert Einstein in 1915. In an attempt to explain his complex model to the general public, Minkowski wrote in *Raum und Zeit* (1908): 'Henceforth space by itself, and time by itself, are doomed to fade away into mere shadows,

and only a kind of union of the two will preserve an independent reality [...]. No one has ever noticed a place unless at a certain time, neither a time without a distinct place.' [H.A. Lorentz, Albert Einstein, Hermann Minkowski a.o., *Das Relativitätsprinzip. Eine Sammlung von Abhandlungen*, Leipzig 1913, 57].

28 Fritz Schumacher, 'Die Zeitgebundenheit der Architektur', *Deutsches Bauwesen* 5 (1929) 16, 238-243. See also Paul Zucker, 'Der Begriff der Zeit in der Architektur', *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 44 (1924), 237-245, reprinted in Andreas Denk, Uwe Schröder & Rainer Schützeichel (ed.), *Architektur. Raum. Theorie. Eine kommentierte Anthologie*, Tübingen 2016, 301-311.

29 Theo van Doesburg, 'Towards Plastic Architecture' (1924), in Joost Baljeu, Theo van Doesburg, New York 1974, 144. See also: John G. Hatch, 'Some Adaptations of Relativity in the 1920s and the Birth of Abstract Architecture', *Nexus Network Journal* 12 (2010), 131-147 (published online 9 February 2010); and Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art*, Cambridge 2013.

30 Els Hoek a.o. (ed.), *Theo van Doesburg. Oeuvre Catalogue*, Utrecht/Otterlo 2000, Nr. 702.

31 Walter Riezler, 'Das neue Raumgefühl in bildender Kunst und Musik', lecture at Fourth Congress for Aesthetics and General Science of Art, Hamburg, 7-9 October 1930, *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* No. 1 (1931), 179-216. George Howe, 'Abstract Design in Modern Architecture', lecture at the Annual Meeting of the College Art Association, *Parnassus* 8 (1936) 5 (October), 29-31.

32 In his essay on the Third Dimension for the *Wendingen* volume, Wright wrote: 'A sense of the third dimension in the use of the "box" and the "slab" – and a sense of the room within as the thing to be expressed in arranging them are what made Unity Temple.' [Frank Lloyd Wright, 'In the Cause of Architecture: The Third Dimension', in Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (ed.), *Frank Lloyd Wright. Collected Writings. Vol. 1, 1894-1930*, New York 1992, 212].

33 Frank Lloyd Wright, 'In the Cause of Architecture IX. The Terms', *Architectural Record* 64 (December 1928), 509.

34 Wright, 'In the Cause of Architecture IX', 510.

35 Letter Erich Mendelsohn to his wife Luise, 31 October 1917 [Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstbibliothek, Erich Mendelsohn Archiv; online at: <http://ema.smb.museum/de/briefe/?id=553>].

36 Mendelsohn published the text of this letter to his wife almost verbatim two years later [Erich Mendelsohn, 'Besuch bei Wright', *Baukunst* 2 (February 1926), 56].

37 Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography*, New York 1943, 260.

38 Architect and critic Hermann Sörgel mocked the flood of new architecture books as an escapism from the contemporary malaise and lack of work. Eighty percent of them were superfluous, he claimed [Hermann Sörgel, 'Bücherschreiben und Verlegerverantwortung', *Baukunst* 2 (1926), 70].

39 Walter Gropius, *Internationale Architektur*, Munich 1925, 44-45, 68-69.

40 Werner Moser, 'Frank Lloyd Wright und Amerikanische Architektur', *Werk* 12 (1925) 5, 129-142. Moser's essay was followed by Richard Neutra's brief comments on 'Architekten und Bauwesen in Chicago', 143-144, which sketched out a lineage from Burnham & Root to Sullivan and Wright.

41 Roland Jaeger, *Heinrich de Fries und sein Beitrag zur Architekturpublizistik der Zwanziger Jahre*, Berlin 2001, 101. Heinrich de Fries, 'Junge Baukunst', *Städtebau* 16 (1920), 17.

42 Jaeger, *Heinrich de Fries*, 102.

43 Heinrich de Fries, *Moderne Villen und Landhäuser*, Berlin 1924, VII.

44 It is important to note that the 1925 volume (seventh series) of *Wendingen* appeared with much delay between May 1925 and September 1926, the seven Wright issues between October 1925 and April 1926 (all still labeled seventh series, 1925). Because of the delay and editorial disagreements about the exorbitant costs (not the least of the Wright project), there was no 1926 series, and series eight started only in June 1927. Wijdeveld had presented the project to the editorial board in the meeting on 13 February 1925 [Martijn F. Le Coultre, *Wendingen. A Journal for the Arts 1918-1932*, New York 2001, 14, 164-168].

45 J.J.P. Oud, 'The Influence of Frank Lloyd Wright on the Architecture of Europe', *Wendingen* 7 (1925) 6 (June [February 1926]), 85-89. To his credit, Wijdeveld gave room to Oud's critical essay in both his magazine *Wendingen* and in the subsequent book. The essay also appeared in J.J.P. Oud, *Holländische Architektur* (1926); reprint ed., Mainz and Berlin 1976, 77-83.

46 In his then recent history of American architecture, Lewis Mumford had given rather short shrift to Wright. His 'pleasure pavilions and hotels do not resemble either factories or garages or grain elevators', but rather reject the 'whole world of engineering', and instead respond to 'human purposes' and the

American prairie [Lewis Mumford, *Sticks and Stones*, New York 1924, 181-82]. It appeared in German under the title *Vom Blockhaus zum Wolkenkratzer*, Berlin 1925.

47 Levis [sic] Mumford, 'The social back ground of Frank Lloyd Wright', *Wendingen* 7 (1925) 5 (May [January 1926]), 65-75; 6 (June [February 1926]), 78-79.

48 Jaeger, *Heinrich de Fries*, 110.

49 'Zu den Arbeiten des Architekten Frank Lloyd Wright', in Heinrich de Fries, *Frank Lloyd Wright*, Berlin 1926, 29-31. De Fries had published the essay previously in the journal *Baugilde*, which he edited.

50 Heinrich de Fries, 'Reisebilder aus Holland', *Baugilde* 6 (1924), 272. De Fries also made his claim about Wright's China connection in the introduction to his book *Moderne Villen und Landhäuser*, Berlin 1924, VII.

51 Letter De Fries to Wright, 11 August 1926, quoted from Jaeger, *Heinrich de Fries*, 108.

52 In fairness, Wright had actually told Wijdeveld in January 1925 about 'two recent projects', given to De Fries, 'for reproductions in color [...] which could not possibly be got into *Wendingen* and are not executed', material De Fries 'had anxiously awaited long since.' Letter Wijdeveld to Wright, 25 April 1926 [New York, Columbia University, Avery Library, Frank Lloyd Wright Archives, quoted from Anthony Alofsin, 'Frank Lloyd Wright and the Dutch Connection', in Van Bergeijk, *Amerikaanse dromen*, 30]. See also, a letter from Wright to Wijdeveld, 7 January 1925, telling him about the reproductions that he had sent to De Fries: 'I think, the *Wendingen* should be pushed so as not to be behind these things of DeFries if possible!' [Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (ed.), *Letters to Architects: Frank Lloyd Wright*, Fresno 1984), 56-57].

53 Jaeger, *Heinrich de Fries*, 114.

54 Van Stralen, 'Kindred Spirits: Holland, Wright and Wijdeveld', 45-75.

55 Frank Lloyd Wright, 'To my European Co-Workers', *Wendingen* 7 (1925) 9 (September [April 1926]), 162.

56 See for instance Alofsin, 'Frank Lloyd Wright and the Dutch Connection', 33, n. 11; and Jaeger, *Heinrich de Fries*, 110. The essay is neither included in Donald Langmead, *Frank Lloyd Wright. A Bio-Bibliography*, Westport, Conn. 2003), nor Pfeiffer (ed.), *Frank Lloyd Wright: Collected Writings*. Langmead does mention the later publication of that same essay in the Swiss journal *Werk* 13 (1926), 375, 377-80 – presumably also under the impression that it was the German version of Wright's *Wendingen* piece.

57 Two versions of the *Wendingen* manuscript have survived in the Frank Lloyd Wright Archives at Avery Library, MSS 2401.024 To My European Colleagues. Here he uses the two titles interchangeably. The English original of the German text in De Fries' book is still unaccounted for.

58 See Neil Levine, 'Abstraction and Representation in Modern Architecture: The International Style and Frank Lloyd Wright', *AA Files* 11 (Spring 1986), 3-21.

59 Frank Lloyd Wright, 'An die europäischen Kollegen', in De Fries, *Frank Lloyd Wright*, 43-44.

60 Werner Hegemann, 'Beispiele und Gegenbeispiele' and 'Holland, Wright, Breslau', *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst* 10 (1926) 6, 216 and 9 (1925) 4, 165-167, respectively.

61 Adolf Rading, 'Buchbesprechung: Amerikanische Architektur und Stadtbaukunst', *Baugilde* 7 (1925) 1, 37. Hegemann's response and Rading's rejoinder: *Baugilde* 7 (1925) 4, 206-207, 208-210, respectively. Not surprisingly, Rading heaped exuberant praise on de Fries' book when it appeared the next year ('one of the most essential publications of our time') [Adolf Rading, 'Frank Lloyd Wright. Herausgegeben von Architekt H. de Fries', *Die Form* 2 (1927), 127-128. About Werner Hegemann and his opinion on Frank Lloyd Wright, see Christiane Crasemann Collins, *Werner Hegemann and the Search for Universal Urbanism*, New York 2005, 157-67. I would like to thank Sjoerd van Faassen for this reference.

62 Erich Mendelsohn 'Frank Lloyd Wright', *Wendingen* 7 (1925) 7, 96-100. The issue appeared in March 1926.

63 Erich Mendelsohn, 'Frank Lloyd Wright', *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst* 10 (1926) 6, 244-246. Leo Adler, 'F. L. Wright's Neue Baukunst und Mendelsohn's Neue Logik', *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst* 10 (1926) 7, 308-309. See also: Craseman Collins, *Werner Hegemann and the Search for Universal Urbanism*, 197-198.

64 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, 'American Architecture in Europe', ms, ca. 1927, 6 [Henry-Russell Hitchcock Papers, Outline and Introduction. Several drafts, all 1927].

65 Hitchcock, 'American Architecture in Europe', 32.

66 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, 'Modern Architecture. I, The Traditionalists and the New Tradition', *Architectural Record* 63 (April 1928), 340, 347; 'Modern Architecture. II, The New Pioneers', *Architectural Record* 63 (May 1928), 452-60.

- 67 Theo van Doesburg, 'Kunst- en architectuurvernieuwing in Italië en Spanje', *Het Bouwbedrijf* 6 (1929) 20 (27 September), 401-404; quoted from Theo van Doesburg, *On European Architecture*, Basel 1990, 260-263.
- 68 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Frank Lloyd Wright*, Paris 1928, n.p.
- 69 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Modern Architecture: Romanticism and Reintegration*, New York 1929, 155.
- 70 Hitchcock, *Modern Architecture*, 104, 115, 116-17, 118.
- 71 Max Osborn, 'Frank Lloyd Wright', *Vossische Zeitung* 17 June 1931. Wilhelm Lotz defended Wright against Osborn's critique in the *Werkbund* journal: W.L.[Lotz], 'Unter der Lupe. Frank Lloyd Wright und die Kritik', *Die Form* 6 (1931) 9, 357-358.
- 72 Paul. F. Schmidt, 'Grösse und Niedergang eines Bahnbrechers der modernen Architektur', *Baukunst* 7 (August 1931), 278-279.
- 73 Lotz, 'Unter der Lupe'.
- 74 Frank Lloyd Wright, 'To My Critics in the Land of the Danube and the Rhine', in Pfeiffer (ed.), *Collected Writings*. Vol. 3, 1931-1939, New York 1993, 18-20.
- 75 Letter from Frank Lloyd Wright to Mies van der Rohe, October 25, 1947; letter from Mies to Wright, November 25 1947 [MoMa, Mies van der Rohe Papers].
- 76 Carbon copy of letter from Wright to Johnson, 26 February 1932 [Avery Library, Frank Lloyd Wright Archives, fiche #M029B03].

Annex

AN DIE EUROPÄISCHEN KOLLEGEN

Was mir selbst das Wertvollste an meiner Arbeit ist, entging meinen Kritikern in der alten Welt; so kam es mir gelegentlich vor.

Diese meine Bauten sind in Blüte ausgeschlagen mit solcher Mannigfaltigkeit und manches Mal mit solcher Vollendung, daß sie die darunter lagernde geradlinige Basis der modernen mechanistischen Produktion verbergen: so scheint es wenigstens. Diese Basis ist stets vorhanden — aber wie bei allem organischen Wachstum: das natürliche Blüten mag manchmal Stiel und Stengel verdecken.

Es ist leicht, die geradlinige Basis streng für sich stehen zu lassen und manchmal ist es auch recht, so zu tun. Aber die Maschine verlangt nach der lebendigen Einbildungskraft, damit sie das überspinnt und belebt und bedeutsam macht, was die geradlinige Formenbasis ist: diese bleibt dabei eine Grundbedingung moderner Maschinenarbeit.

Es ist nicht wahr, daß eine mechanistische Aera die Aufgaben der Einbildungskraft mehr verleugnen sollte, wo es sich um Musterung handelt, als im Entwurfsschema oder in der Grundidee. Denn das Ornament ist die Poesie der Form und kann einer rohen Darstellung Beredsamkeit und gefühlmäßige Betonung geben, wo anders Beziehungen zum lebendigen und mitfühlenden Menschenwesen fehlen möchten.

Auf diese Qualitäten von Leben und Gefühlseinklang haben menschliche Wesen noch immer ihr unverlierbares Anrecht, auch da wo sie sich dem unentbehrlichen Werkzeug anvertrauen, das wir die Maschine der mechanistischen Aera nennen. Tatsächlich haben die modernen Materialien, wie sie heute zumeist benutzt werden, Beton, Terrakotta, Eisen kein anderes Leben an sich als die Textur und somit das Leben, das ihnen die menschliche Einbildungskraft ausdrückt und verleiht.

Je weiter die Maschine vorrückt, desto mehr sind die Bauwerke in ihrem Leben abhängig von der menschlichen Einbildungskraft und sie haben einen legitimen Anspruch darauf.

Es ist für ein Bauwerk nicht vonnöten, daß es zu kraft damit prahlt, ein Produkt der mechanistischen Aera zu sein. Es muß das sein, — aber ein Künstler nimmt diese Bedingungen in seine Hände und macht aus den harten Tatsachen der Struktur nicht geringere Tatsachen, aber wahrhaftigere dem Leben gegenüber; er bringt das Ganze zum Blühen auf Stiel und Stengel, so natürlich, wie Blumen tun, — und so selbstverständlich!

Die Maschine bedeutet nicht den Tod der Blüte und ihres Prinzips; und so den Tod der Frucht. Nein, sie bedeutet mehr Blüten als jemals und so: mehr Frucht, solange Einbildungskraft Menschen differenziert und ihre Göttlichkeit ist. Und darin findet sich eine neue Schönheit, zusammenfließend mit neuer Nutzbarkeit und von ihr kommend in natürlicher Weise. Die schöne Gerade und die freie Rebe darum gerankt!

Die Schönheit eines Akkordes, stark durch höchst gesetzmäßige Massen und Formen, zusammen mit Hügeln, Bäumen und Blüten und Wolken. Die Tugend der Wiederholung, die in jedem Rhythmus pulst. Das Gefühl eines Pulses, der in jedem menschlichen Erlebnis schlägt. Sie alle liegen als schwangere Möglichkeiten in diesen neuartigen Beziehungen — im Gebrauch dieses neuen Werkzeuges.

Es ist ebenso leicht, die Effekte des innerlichen Ideals moderner Maschinenform zu imitieren, wie man die plastischen Maße der Antike imitieren konnte — manchmal kann das geschehen, indem man einfach das Element des Ornamentes aus dem Spiel läßt. Am leichtesten ist es, so zu handeln, wenn man ein echtes Gefühl für eine gewisse saubere Einfachheit und jene Selbstverleugung besitzt, die die Maschine da diktiert, wo Einbildungskraft nicht hingelangt mit ihrer gefühlsmäßigen Harmonie für menschliches Bedürfnis und menschlichen Maßstab. Aber die Affektation der Einfachheit mag nur eine Form von Künstleranmaßung alter Sorte sein! Eine neue Sorte von Großtueri sicherlich manches Mal! Sie mag nicht eines Effekts entbehren und doch nicht mehr Anspruch darauf haben, für Architektur angesehen zu werden, als eine Kopie nach der Antike.

Jene Affektation der Einfachheit mag tatsächlich bei der Ausführung mehr Mühe und Fälschungen kosten, als die klassischen Ordnungen, wenn man sie imitieren wollte, weil der Architekt noch immer von draußen beginnt und versucht, nach einwärts zu arbeiten.

In den Arbeiten meiner früheren Tage war die Wirkung der geraden Linie zusammen mit den frei gehaltenen Oberflächen einfach maschinengearbeiteter Materialien ein Zugeständnis an die mechanistische Methode — oder an die Maschine als Werkzeug. Um das Möbel komfortabel zu machen, hatte ich das menschliche Element dazu zu fügen. Es war die für sich abgetrennte Einheit der Polsterung, — getragen von dem architektonischen Element. Und gleicherweise bei den Bauwerken: Das geradlinige Element — ein stilistisches an sich, — muß auf mannigfaltigen Wegen benutzt werden, damit die Einbildungskraft es formal menschlichem Bedürfnis und Gefühl zueignet. Das, wie ich es auffasse, ist die Kunst des Bauens, unterschieden von dem wissenschaftlichen Aspekt einer ingenieurmäßigen Leistung. Aber das sind nicht zwei getrennte Materien. Sie hängen zusammen in der Hervorbringung des Ganzen.

Es ist diese homogene Eigenschaft bei den Bauten, dieser Wille der Natur zum Natürlichen und aus dem Natürlichen heraus, was den geheimnisvollen Anspruch aufstellt, daß ihre Eigenart von Dauer sein soll. Kein Trick ist da, kein Schlenkerkniff aus dem Handgelenk, kein persönlicher Stilwitz, den diese Bauten überhaupt brauchen könnten. — Wenn sie das auch haben: gut und schön; doch das ist nichts, was des Studiums wert ist.

Aber hier ist Arbeit, die organische Vollständigkeit besitzt; es ist grundsätzlich belanglos, wie äußere Erscheinungen sich verschwören mögen, um sie vor Ihnen zu verbergen. Noch, so hoffe ich, werden Sie gestatten, daß äußere Mienen Sie dazu verlocken, die wesentliche Unberührtheit der maschinengefertigten geradlinigen Basis zu vergessen, auf der das Ganze ruht, und um die allein es sich handelt — bei irgend einem Urteilsspruch, den ich gelten ließe.

Taliesin, 3. Januar 1925.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

Arthur Staal, notes on the Greek landscape

In 1944 amidst the Nazi occupation, a book on Greece circulated in the Netherlands, was quickly sold-out and circulated again in 1946 and 1951. Its title was *Hellas. Een reis door Griekenland* [Hellas. A journey through Greece] and its author was Arthur Staal (1907-1993), a young architect who found himself in the epicenter of the developments of Dutch modernism, and whose achievements in the drawing board were paralleled with his ventures in faraway countries of the Middle East and the Mediterranean. The country of Greece, and its landscape were of particular importance to him and the development of his architectural thinking.¹

On and around Greece

Through a national competition in 1935, Staal was awarded the prestigious Prix de Rome of the Rijksacademie [Academy of Visual Arts] in Amsterdam. An occasion that started the long trajectory of his acquaintance with Greece. The award included the funding of a three-year study on the arts and architecture of ancient civilizations. Seizing the opportunity, Staal undertook two long journeys between 1935 and 1939 and recorded his memoirs in two books, one of which dealt exclusively with Greece.² As the Dutch academy designated,³ Staal's first journey took him southwards crossing France and the coasts of Spain to reach Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. From there, Staal shipped to Greece and focused on the study of the archaeological sites of Olympia, Delphi, Athens, Corinth, Delos and Santorini. It was in this first journey that Staal decided to return again in Greece on a second trip of his own initiative for a wider survey of the land and its people.

Indeed, four years later, in 1939, Staal ventured again from the Netherlands, and toured the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean: Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Jordania and Cyprus.⁴ He finally reached Greece on the 27th of August. He stayed there for the next four and a half months that became essentially the main subject of his *Hellas* book.

Arthur Staal, architect

Staal came from a family with a long tradition in architecture. His father, J.F. Staal, was the co-founder of one of the most renowned partnerships of early 20th century Netherlands: the Staal-Kroopholler office where Arthur also came to work. From 1928 Arthur also maintained his own office that attracted important commissions including the laboratories and administrative tower of the Shell Corporation in Amsterdam (1971). Educated and experienced in practice, Staal Junior was also active in intellectual matters as an editor, designer and founder of several architectural organizations and periodicals: *Architectura et Amicitia*, *Groep 32*, *De 8 en Opbouw*, *Forum* and *Bouwkundig Weekblad*. In these activities, travelling played an integral part as both in terms of the content of his writings as well of the means of inspiration for his designs. For Staal, Modernism was much more than the application of functionalism and industrial design. Willing to expand Modernism towards nature and history and engage in a dialectic opening to the world, Staal fixed his gaze towards Greece.

Hellas. Een reis door Griekenland, 1944

As described in his book, Staal's journey started with the exploration of Athens and the surrounding area of Attica with a lingering emphasis on the sites of Classical Greece: Acropolis, Sounion, Marathon, Eleusis and Megara. His journey continued with the islands of Crete and the Cyclades where he encountered the 'symphony' of small-scale towns with the Aegean sea. And then, in his exploration of the Peloponnese, Thessaly, Epirus and Macedonia he noted woodlands, rivers, mountainous landscapes and the presence of Roman-Byzantine and Ottoman history that till then had escaped him. Finally, back in Attica, Staal reinvigorated his experiences of Greece and put them into perspective with his Dutch background. On the 6th of January 1940, he inevitably broke off his journey due to the outbreak of the Second World War.

Travelling equipment and modes of transportation

In these travels, Staal carried in his luggage design tools as well as a Leica photographic camera that he used to produce more than a hundred black and white photographs and hundreds of sketches of the Greek landscapes and its people. More importantly, Staal was equipped with an FN motorcycle that gave him freedom to travel in rudimentary or difficult routes. Due to this mode of transportation, any change in the climate and the landscape was directly affecting

the traveling architect, whose strong sentiments are imprinted in the romantic style of his writing, sketches and photographs. In-between the destinations of his trips, he would often stop to recover in remote places that captured his focus and slowly gained primacy over the historic sites that he set out to explore and became the opportunity for interaction with locals and other travelers. The Greek countryside of Staal's sketches is often framed, or accentuated by turning roads, paths and city streets captured from the side, or even from the middle of them.

On one special occasion, Staal travelled on an airplane (Junkers 52 type) crossing 'just like Icarus' and spectated the Cyclades islands 'as a combined whole' rather than singular units. But mostly, Staal travelled on ships from the decks of which he produced a series of panoramas of coastal towns and their landscapes. These sketches, despite their clean outline often feature a layered narrative. For example, Staal's sketch of the city of Heraklion subtly shows the mountaintop of the Jukta as the resting 'face of Zeus'.⁵ In Paros, a pattern of horizontal lines depicts in a simple way the dry stone walls of the islands' fertile fields while the unique volcanic landscape of Santorini is shown in a section that cuts the whole island! Those of Peiraieus, Thessaloniki and Nafplion on the other hand are carefully detailing the every-day life of the more lively urban setting.



FIG. 1 On the road towards the Mediterranean [Het Nieuwe Instituut, STAA t22.80]



FIG. 2 The landscape of Santorini as seen from Mountain of Profitis Ilias with the volcanic Kaldera in its center [Het Nieuwe Instituut, STAA a46]

Naturally, in several cases throughout his stay, Staal is left with no transportation and goes about on foot. In these cases, fatigue and the physical experience of walking disrupts his analytical descriptions. In Santorini for example, he is left hopeless by the warm, dry and steep terrain of the island that makes his encounter with the sea ecstatic: ‘All this light, all this heat and dryness define one riveting desire: with leaps I abandon the stone ground and cross the sand to the sea.’⁶

Towns, villages, landscapes and people

In Staal’s account, changes from small to large scale, from landscapes to people and from conceptual to factual and experiential are constantly alternating. Especially the parallel between land and people is a recurrent motif. The mountains of Crete, he says, impose a lonely lifestyle to the Cretan people and define their plain and straightforward speech and wisdom ‘that you see in their eyes and marks their eyebrows’. In another instance, attending a marriage festivity of an Attican village Staal remarks that the vineyards that cover the surrounding landscape is both cause and effect of the ‘Dionysian’ and vivid characters of the villagers. In Syros island and the town of Ermoupolis which climbs vertically on steep ground, Staal combines in his description the topography, the built environment and the everyday life of the locals: ‘I envy modern Greeks, their simplicity and innate feeling for proportionality [...] As an architect and artist, I completely give in to this town. Following its narrow streets we turn uphill to meet a church that welcomes us with doors wide open. In there, there is sanctity and tranquility, and from a side-window a view opens over the island. Early in the morning we move downwards towards the central street. Men and children go about their job in the market with big baskets on their heads and backs. Women stay off in this. They talk with each

other joyously around ponds, washing clothes or feeding their babies while sitting in sunny terraces.' (162).

On a larger scale, when in Rethymnon, he writes of the appeal of the medieval city's dense urban fabric and the experience one has when exiting its boundaries and confronts the surrounding landscape. An issue that he contrasts with contemporary planning models: 'The city rarely crosses its 16th c. borders, and has thus sustained an enviable separation from the countryside that surrounds it. One of the most challenging issues in modern planning is undoubtedly the fact that the city expands like an octopus to all surrounding areas. This expanded periphery, this gradual transition, is both curse and blessing for city and nature. Who hasn't felt the alluring power of a small walled city?' (73).

On a smaller scale, Staal's descriptions range even down to food, that he intricates to the flora and fauna of each region and underlines as a basic catalyst for the culture and characteristics of the local population.

The presence of the past

The archaeological sites that provided the initial opportunity for Staal's travels to Greece were the point of departure for tracing the presence of time on the Greek landscape, natural or man-made. The link between place and time is a central theme of his watercolors. The town of Naxos is framed by ancient gates, featured in the foreground and in Olympia, a fallen column's capital mirrors the shape of a hill behind it. Similarly, on the plateau of Acropolis, fallen fragments of marble stone on the ground find their parallels in the clusters of clouds on the sky above. The Lycabetus hill seen in the distance is mirrored in a ruined pillar's base. Correspondingly, the tile roofs of Sparta echo the slopes of Taygetus mountain around them. Another recurring motive is the depiction of remote churches and monasteries emerging from the mountainous and rocky settings, contrasting the antithesis of their pure forms and pale colors, with the sculptural volumes of the topography. As for the urban setting, Staal's gaze is captured by the narrow cobbled streets of the island towns and arched walkways that frame glimpses of their surroundings, while important monuments such as the Roman Rotunda of Thessaloniki or the Kapnikarea church of Athens are shown as central elements in wider perspectives of the urban fabric. The multiple temporal layers that Staal explores in his drawings and photos lead him to thoughts on the Greek everyday life that takes place in what he calls 'fragments'. His drawings are rigorously romantic in their portrayal of the landscape⁷ while the photographs more realistically capture the timelessness of characteristic activities of Greek people such as sailing, fishing or sea bathing and drinking from amphorae.⁸ [4]



FIG. 3 At the ancient ruins of Corinth [HNI, STAA, t22.82]



FIG. 4 'Timeless activities' at Santorini [HNI, STAA, f209-74a]

Athens, Acropolis and greater Attica

Almost a third of Staal's book on Greece concerns Athens, which becomes the testing ground of his theories and questioning of modernism's validity in comparison with the ancient monuments of Classical Greece: 'The balance and harmony of these magnificent volumes of marble, the play of horizontal and vertical lines is unsurpassed by any other architecture. How happy I feel to stand here once again, after having longed for it so much!'

The contemporary setting of the urbanized Greek capital is used to transition a comparison between past and present and later on between Greece and the Netherlands: 'The landscape trembles in the heat. The regularly built city lies now in an apathetic stillness. No towers, no factory chimneys break the restful horizontal lines of this picture. The houses are cubes of an equal size, cream-colored and light. Thin white clouds hang unmoving about t. The mountains, which have become an integral part of this architectural composition, bake in the sun. A dry, not to be defied perfume is everywhere. I stroke the fluting of the columns, which feels warm and sensual as if alive, and which air burned by the sun to a golden color, like healthy bodies.' (42).



FIG. 5 Acropolis [HNI, STAA, f209-4a]



FIG. 6 Lycabettus [HNI, STAA, f201-1]

Netherlands/Greece

The comparison of Greece with his home country is in the end unavoidable. Characteristically, he notes that Greece is the ‘spiritual cradle’ of Europe mostly because its architecture does not emanate from the “soil” but from the “soul.” (42-43). For Staal, the gothic cathedrals and the traditional architecture and planning of Saxon countries traditionally emphasize the ‘shadows and mysticism’ of the ground element while the ancient Greek temples are ‘light itself’. A city like Rotenberg appears to have evolved ‘in and from’ the landscape, in contrast to a ‘mathematical’ city such as Peiraeus (43). Being independent from the ground element, Greek architecture is based in Staal’s optics on the elements of the sea, air and light. The connection with nature is still there, but the human spirit dominates. In one segment, after having described shortly the developments of modern architecture in the Netherlands and the directions of Berlage, Granpré Molière and the experimentalisms of the Delft School that promote brick-construction, he proposes that like the Greeks, modern Dutch architects need to build with ‘spirit’ not ‘ground’. He says that both cultures are best represented by ‘bright architecture’ and ‘open windows to the sea and the horizon’ and that both are constricted from their landscape to an architecture of small scale. Therefore, he concludes that the Dutch need to shed off the cultural remnants of the Roman ‘colossal hyper-monumentality’, the English ‘picturesque’, or the German ‘Rustique’.

Conclusion

Staal did not belong to the group of early 20th century modernists that understood construction as the basic fundamental of architecture. For him, architecture is a cultural issue that demands from the architect to be open to the world, willing to understand it through his own experiences and assert his knowledge to a larger 'whole'. In that respect the experience of traveling contributes to his thinking. And the landscape occurs in and out of focus. What seems to be of more importance is the point of departure and the point of return of an endless wandering. Architecture and landscape are defined by their contrast to each other, and through Staal's first-person narrative, the reader is invited to feel – not understand – his surroundings. By and large, Staal's project is not a radical one, neither does it attempt to disrupt the status quo of architectural practice. Instead, it is an intellectual project of making amends, contrary to modernism's absolutisms.

Apropos of the Greek landscape, Staal found a place both different and similar to his own background that made it easy to draw comparisons. As a man whose nation survives 'despite' nature and 'against' its elements, he is happy to have found a nation whose landscape has marked its culture for millennia. The explanation is not handed over easily. It is not transmitted in words but through the touch of the human body against the cold stone. With feet on the ground and head in the sky: 'Why are these Greek landscapes so much prettier than so many equivalent ones in other countries? There are many that we could compare them with, with Italy or South of France for instance. Still, why are they surpassing them? Because of the light probably. Because of the unparalleled clearness of the sky, because of this penetrating light. The air! And then... its History! The pines are so green as if they were created just now. The sky is blue, a light blue with light clouds hovering. The land has the red-brown color of terracotta, the rocks all the shades of yellow to grey and still, transparent.' (15)

Notes

- 1 This paper first appeared in the 2018 Docomomo Greece Conference in Chania, Greece and was published in the 2020 collection *Το μοντέρνο βλέμμα στο Ελληνικό τοπίο* [Modernism's gaze over the Greek landscape], ed. K. Tsiambaos and A. Kotsaki.
- 2 The Arthur Staal papers are housed in Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam. There is also kept the common archive of his parents Jan Frederik Staal and Margaret Staal-Kroopholler.
- 3 More specifically, the Academy opposed the passing of Staal through Italy due to the hostile relations between the Netherlands, and the Italian fascist regime.
- 4 About his second trip, Staal published a book that preceded *Hellas*, titled *Onder de gouden zon van het morgenland*.
- 5 Staal, *Hellas*, 79.

- 6 Staal, *Hellas*, 118. The pagination of the other quotations is given in brackets after the text. The translation to English is by the author. Both books *Hellas* and *Onder de gouden zon* have only been published in Dutch.
- 7 Naturally, he also submitted a number of technical drawings of archaeological sites according to the guidelines set by the Prix de Rome committee.
- 8 Staal, *Hellas*, 93.

Mr Pick and Mr Holden go to Holland

Between late June and early July 1930 – just over 90 years ago at the time of writing – three Englishmen (the two named in the title, plus Mr. W.P.N. Edwards) took ship and toured Holland, Germany, Denmark and Sweden to help them decide how the next generation of stations on the London Underground should look.¹ Their report under Edwards’ name, a pamphlet bound in striking orange paper, is a document much written about but probably less actually read.² [1]

The text mostly consists of notes on different places visited and critical opinions on what was seen, but it is prefaced by a summary of ‘the new architecture’, typical of its time, based on the conviction that new materials were now the principal determinant of form, and an accompanying idea of efficiency. If one wanted a short entry on Modernism for an extension of Flaubert’s *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, it could hardly do better. Yet it is interesting as an attempt by two men (if one discounts Edwards’ role as simply secretarial), an architect and his client in their fifties with a decade of collaboration behind them, to relate to a European context at a time of revolutionary change, like so much literature of its time, it reveals Modernism almost entirely as a negative quantity – an argument for omission rather than inclusion.

As Michael Saler has explained, Frank Pick (1878-1941) approached Modernism with a combination of enthusiasm and caution which was well-matched to the architectural position he found in 1930 in the Nordic countries and in the Netherlands, but felt to be lacking in Germany.³ Saler emphasises the significance of Pick’s origins in the north of England, and the social motivation arising from his religious ‘chapel’ upbringing. Rather than leading towards the conservatism normal in the visual arts at the turn of the century, this combination, Saler argues, meant that ‘the English avant-garde [...] associated modernism with a social democratic order. [...] Like the continental avant-garde, they linked art with politics – but the English avant-garde promoted a very “English” gradualist vision of social change, in which art, allied to commerce, would permeate life, subtly transforming society into an organic and harmonious community.’⁴ This was the English version of the European search for *Gemeinschaft* or *gemeenschap*, which Auke van der Woud associates in the Netherlands with the influence of John Ruskin.⁵ With this

deference to at least a notion of public acceptance, English architects divided the Modernisms that came their way by criteria of common sense, efficiency and good manners, a concept through which they tried to escape from the excesses of eclecticism and consolidate the reputation of their profession.

Charles Holden (1875-1960) is difficult to pigeonhole even in the very diverse categories of architect before 1914. With the decline of the more radical wing of the Arts and Crafts Movement, from which Holden emerged, he adopted a Classicism that bears an accidental resemblance to certain pieces by Peter Behrens or Adolf Loos, of which he was certainly not aware. In the 1890s, he worked briefly for C.R. Ashbee, the only English architect of his generation to make contact with Frank Lloyd Wright. Given the later Dutch connection to Wright, there is a fascinating counterfactual hovering over the possibility that Holden knew about Wright at this early date, but Ashbee publicised nothing about his encounter at the time, although they were to meet again in 1939 during Wright's first visit to England. In terms of Modernist credentials, Holden may not have wholly 'broken free' from historic styles, but he had showed that he controlled them rather than the reverse, and had the distinction of giving the sculptor Jacob Epstein his first public commissions in London on the headquarters of the British Medical Association in the Strand in 1907, and bearing the burden of outrage cooked up by the press concerning them. [2]

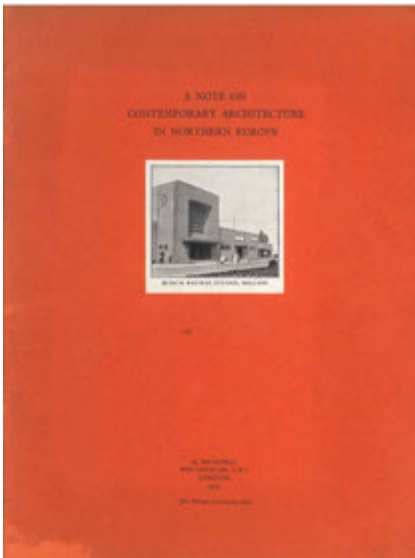


FIG. 1 W.P.N. Edwards, *A Note on Contemporary Architecture in Northern Europe*, [London] 1931. Courtesy TFL Archives. Showing Naarden-Bussum Station, by H. G. Schelling, 1926



FIG. 2 Charles Holden, British Medical Association (now Zimbabwe House), Strand, London, 1907. Courtesy Morley von Sternberg



FIG. 3 H. P. Berlage, Holland House, Bury Street, London, 1914-16. Photo author

In the period 1880-1920, British architects were strangely incurious about new architecture in Europe, although the opposite was not true. The exception was the doctrines of the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, which were valued for their conservatism as well as the disciplined methods of planning and construction that they implied – again often a question of what to leave out in terms of picturesque embellishment. In July 1914, however, with the revolver shots of Sarajevo echoing across the continent, a small group of design reformers, among them the architect Cecil Brewer and the Leicester manufacturer Harry Peach, went to Cologne to visit the *Deutsche Werkbund's* big exhibition. Neither Pick nor Holden were in the party, but Pick was soon drawn into the Design and Industries Association (DIA) that they

founded in 1915 as an equivalent to the Werkbund. The creation of the DIA, following an exhibition drawing attention to German and Austrian manufactured goods, was pointedly an internationalist gesture, but its members still seemingly failed to notice a remarkable building from the office of the Netherlands' father of Modernism, H.P. Berlage, arising for the Wm.H. Müller & Co shipping line which was doing good business as a neutral country in Bury Street in the City of London at this time. [3]

During the 1920s, Holden was engaged by Pick to show London Underground's salaried architectural staff 'a new architectural idiom'.⁶ As Pick wrote in a letter to Peach informing him about the Northern Line stations, 'We are going to represent the DIA gone mad,' adding 'and in order that I may go mad in good company I have got Holden to see that we do it properly.'⁷ The results must have seemed to justify this description, but in steering away from the temptations of French Art Deco, they chose a standard solution that was classical in its simplicity if not in a literal sense. In a strange linguistic paradox, mad as Pick's intentions and Holden's realisations may have seemed in breaching convention, they were intended to embody the opposite quality of sanity, one of the words of approval most frequently used in DIA circles. In this reversal of meanings lies much of the muddle attendant on the discourse of modernism in relation to aligning propriety and logic in design.

The chief channel for the rhetoric of modernism was Le Corbusier, whose ideas were conveniently expressed in the one foreign language that a greater number of English people knew than any other, so that while the translations by Frederick Etchells were helpful, those who read the originals could be seduced by the exotic flavour of their expression. As a young man in Bolton, Lancashire, Holden had contact with a group of admirers of Walt Whitman, as was Wright, and even published a pastiche of Whitman, anonymously in the *The Architectural Review* in 1905.⁸ This text hints at a more expressive and urgent character that accords with Epstein's sculpture, although less so with Holden's architecture which showed restraint combined with a mastery of abstract form even when clothed in Tudor or Classical imagery. 'Architects, where is your Vortex?' inquired the painter Percy Wyndham Lewis in 1919.⁹ Holden should have been there to answer, but there was no architecture in Britain from him or anyone else to match the Vorticist movement, the vivid if short-lived flaming of an English avant-garde before 1914.

Instead, Holden seems increasingly to have suffered from a form of creeping paralysis as a designer. In his manifesto, *Blast*, 1913, Lewis blamed the Gulf Stream, 'A 1000 MILE LONG, 2 KILOMETER Deep BODY OF WATER, even, is pushed against us from the Floridas, TO MAKE US MILD', an assertion borne out in the way that, in order to expunge the excesses of late Victorian eclecticism, English architects had adopted moderation as their watchword.¹⁰



FIG. 4 Scott, Chesterton and Shepherd, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1932. Author collection.

In 1927, an anonymous commentator in the *DIA Quarterly Journal* (probably the editor, Noel Carrington) found municipal architecture in Amsterdam ‘perhaps the most adventurous city in the world’ and asked ‘can one imagine a County Council conducting such an experiment in England?’¹¹ An imagined version Amsterdam School in Britain, picking up the rarely-exposed anarchic side of Arts and Crafts in the Edwardian years, represents a significant road not taken, and maybe Holden, along with another Lancastrian, Edgar Wood, should have been on it. The Amsterdam School itself only had a brief flowering before a more severe regime of Modernism overtook it. In Britain, anything resembling Expressionism is hard to find, although the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon by Scott, Chesterton and Shepherd, 1932, is a remarkable exception in the form of a nationally-significant project whose appearance failed to win approval at the time when the concept, if not the reality, of Modernism was being increasingly monopolised by the Le Corbusier look. [4]

If anyone wanted to bring back into damp mild England any of the Savageness that Ruskin required in *The Nature of Gothic*, then the resurgent architecture of northern Europe became, in the 1920s and 30s, the place to seek it. Before 1914, British awareness of architecture ‘abroad’, was limited chiefly to France but it

became a commonplace for English writers to declare how they felt at home in Holland, often the point of embarkation for an architectural tour, while Sweden and Denmark offered a similar magic mirror for a better alternative self. However, there was always a strong compulsion to soften and smooth what was encountered. The architect and prolific commentator, Howard Robertson wrote in 1928 of the growing synthesis of opposite trends in nascent Modernism and the cultivation of appropriateness, claiming ‘Holland, at least, is on the way towards some sort of unity in its modern architecture.’¹²

1928 was also the year of a DIA tour covering Amsterdam, Hilversum and the Hague, written up by an ‘advertising man’, M.H. Barton. [5] The cleanliness of the streets was remarked on with wonder in contrast to the casual litter of London. Visual clutter was also diminished by a small number of posters, while neon signs were attached to lamp posts. Dudok’s work at Hilversum gained the admiration normal among British visitors, but for this group, especially his kindergartens, so that ‘the party, whose slogan was “fitness for purpose and pleasantness in use” went away, like the first crusaders from Antioch after the discovery of the sacred lance, fired with fresh zeal.’¹³ They were particularly impressed by the way colour was used indoors, creating beauty at no extra cost. The extension of the designer’s hand into every aspect of the visible civic realm had always been a DIA concern, that at this time was exercised through the provocative ‘Cautionary Guides’ series shaming different cities for their chaos of outdoor advertisements and vulgar shopfronts.

During 1930, the large exhibition at Stockholm temporarily drew attention to Sweden, but Pick and Holden found that of all the countries visited on their tour, Holland validated a selective use of the past and emphasised continuity in the midst of change. ‘The best modern Dutch buildings,’ wrote Edwards in the report, ‘are, then, a blending of the old and new, in which, however, the new is usually the predominant influence. The railway station at Bussum, for instance [...] must certainly be classified as a product of the new architecture and not under any of the headings of the traditional styles. Yet, in its main emphasis upon proportion and line and in the interior decoration with its stained-glass windows between a row of straight buttresses, it retains a distinct flavour of traditional elements of design, even if it has not directly borrowed anything from them.’¹⁴

This railway station at Naarden-Bussum, by H. G. Schelling, 1926, appealed to them for its resolution of the vertical-horizontal dilemma. Its volumetric simplicity with its ‘primitive’ suggestion of carving into a solid block to discover form corresponded closely to an emergent theme in Holden’s own work on the Northern Line, prefigured in the small-scale but powerful gateways at his Corbie

Communal Cemetery on the battlefield of the Somme, 1921-22. There must be special significance in this design in that it featured as an illustration on the cover of the 1931 report.

The general discussion of the need for a form of Modern architecture in the report proceeds to examine two compositional strategies adopted in the absence of the familiar stylistic repertoire – the emphasis of the vertical in some buildings and the horizontal in others. Reductionist as this may be, it cuts away much of the pretentiousness in the rhetoric of Modernism, past or present. The English propensity for compromise informs the conclusion that both modes, if taken to extreme, cease to be ‘legitimate’, especially where ‘freak construction’ has been used to create effects such as the illusion of a continuous horizontal band of windows that are neither ‘honest’ nor ‘functional’.¹⁵ This was critical language common in the DIA as those, like Holden, with a background in the moralism of the Arts and Crafts movement, tried to find a basis on which to assess the architecture of Europe. Excluding largely the other counties on this occasion for the sake of brevity, what did our three musketeers make of Holland on their tour, and how did this play into a broader dialogue with a country that had so recently emerged on the Englishman’s map of architecture?



FIG. 5 Illustration to ‘A Week-End in Holland’,
DIA Quarterly Journal, July 1928



FIG. 6 Burnet, Tait & Lorne, Burlington Danes
School, London, 1937. Courtesy Morley von
Sternberg

The report attributes the success of Dutch work in contrast to Germany in part to 'that beautiful Dutch brick, which is at one so delicate and so flexible and does not seem materially to have changed its character since the days when Pieter de Hooch began to portray it in his pictures', suggesting that it provided some rooted quality of the kind that Arts and Crafts architects aspired to achieve.

Almost all modern buildings in Holland are constructed of this same brick, and one result of this is that they still look intensely Dutch, whereas the new buildings in Germany and France seem for the most part to have assumed an almost cosmopolitan uniformity.¹⁶ In English architectural discourse, as Raphael Samuel pointed out in the 1990s, brick holds a pivotal position in the moralising of building surfaces, able to signify both past and future.¹⁷ This legacy of the muscular Gothic Revival and the feminised Queen Anne Movement in the nineteenth century remained alive in the early twentieth, more than Samuel recognised. Not only were architects pleased with the warmth of tone and variety of colouring available to them, but saw in brick a welcome sense of continuity with the past, celebrating the craftsmanship of the bricklayer as well as the brick maker. The use of brick was the most obvious difference between Holden's 1920s stations in stone, and those of the 1930s, in the process setting the definitive tone for the Underground corporate identity, but there was also a crucial difference at the skyline, for where the stone stations stepped back to emphasise their cubic mass, the brick ones included a deep concrete overhang, emphasising not only horizontality but a sheltering welcome.

Willem Marinus Dudok (1884-1974) is given especial praise in the report, the single Dutch architect of his generation who, in 1930, was well on the way to a recognition given him by his British peers that far surpassed his reputation at home. 'The general impression created by Hilversum is one of orderly planning, which, however, has nowhere been permitted to become mechanical and dehumanised', wrote Edwards in the report, once again searching for a middle way.¹⁸ We recognise his influence in a certain way of composing asymmetrical masses the originated with Wright, and which served well for town halls with towers where the client and architect wished to be modern but not to excess. The towers at certain stations by Holden and his assistant, Charles Hutton such as Osterley and Boston Manor (a variant of the narrow illuminated fin of Jan Buijs's building De Volharding of 1927-8).

An architect similarly smitten with this compositional technique was Thomas Tait (1882-1954) whose work is less well documented. [6] If he occasionally stole ideas directly from Dudok (such as a long projecting beam supported on a sphere at the entrance to a building), Tait used his borrowings with more panache than Holden. It would have been interesting had he been among the small group of architects apart from Holden commissioned to work on Underground stations.



FIG. 7 Charles Holden, Arnos Grove Underground Station, London 1932. Courtesy Morley von Sternberg



FIG. 8 Charles Holden, University of London Senate House, 1931.36. Photo author

The status of Holden's 'classic' stations, such as Sudbury Town (1931), Arnos Grove (1932), and Southgate (1933), is unquestioned. [7] They are not transcripts of anything seen by him and Pick on their travels, but it has been assumed that they were reminded while abroad of the potential of brick, and used it to good purpose in combination with concrete. Holden was exceptional in his generation in both keeping up to date and achieving that elusive quality of timelessness. However, we can see that it was a balancing act between the purity and simplicity that were at the core of his and Pick's beliefs, and the seduction of fashion and display, aspects of which they encountered on their tour.

In Holden's major public buildings in London (55 Broadway, 1929, the headquarters of the London Underground, and the London University Senate House, 1931-6) the balance tips into restraint that comes across as emotionally cold through their application of Portland stone, in contrast to the warmth of colour and the measurable scale of the stations with their courses of mottled brick, exposed inside as well as out. But it is not only a question of materials. [8] As John Summerson cruelly but perceptively put it, the Senate House building 'is bare of ornament and seems to symbolise only the bleakest aspects of University life [...] the interiors are severe without being grand, and there is a lack of any of the qualities which we noticed in the architect's earlier work.'¹⁹ The cheerfulness of Holland had been lost in the mildness of the Gulf Stream.

In the report, a photograph of 55 Broadway was juxtaposed with one of Mendelsohn's Einstein Tower, a building as well known in Britain in the 1920s as it was misunderstood and taken as a warning against untrammelled modernism. What strikes us chiefly, perhaps, about the report at this distance of time is that the British observers felt they were watching a game without playing it, waiting for 'finality in the evolution of a new style'.²⁰ So attached were they to an evolutionary model of architectural development, that they never seem to have questioned this as an outcome. History has shown us otherwise.

Notes

- 1 Edwards was the Secretary to the Chairman on London Passenger Transport Board, Lord Ashfield. The standard biography of Frank Pick is Christian Barman, *The Man Who Built London Transport*, Newton Abbott 1979. For Holden, Eitan Karol, *Charles Holden. Architect*, Donnington 2007. On the London Underground's design in relation to German Modernism, see Ulrike Weber, *Modernism in England. Londoner U-Bahnhöfe und der Deutsch-Englische Architekturtransfer vor 1933*, Berlin 2016.
- 2 W.P.N. Edwards, *A Note on Contemporary Architecture in Northern Europe*, [London] 1931.
- 3 Michael T. Saler, *The Avant-Garde in Interwar England. Medieval Modernism and the London Underground*, New York 1999.
- 4 Saler, *The Avant-Garde in Interwar England*, 9.
- 5 Auke van der Woud, *The Art of Building, From Classicism to Modernity. The Dutch Architectural Debate 1840-1900*, Aldershot 2001, 214.
- 6 In *The Man Who Built London Transport*, 115, Barman quotes Holden's memory of these words that Pick used to brief him at the start of the job.
- 7 Letter Pick to H. H. Peach, cited in Karol, *Charles Holden*, 286.
- 8 'If Whitman had been an architect', *The Architectural Review* June 1905, 258. Quoted in full in Karol *Charles Holden*, 167-173. It was followed by 'Thoughts for the Strong', July 1905, 27
- 9 The phrase occurs as the subtitle of Lewis's collection of writings, *The Caliph's Design*, London 1919.
- 10 P. Wyndham Lewis, *BLAST* No.1 (1914), 11
- 11 'Among the Periodicals', *DIA Quarterly Journal*, New Series No. 1, September 1927, p.14
- 12 H. Robertson, 'The Modern Movement in Holland', *Architect and Building News* 6, 13, & 20 April 1928, reprinted in *Travels in Modern Architecture 1925-1930: Howard Robertson and F. R. Yerbury* London 1989, 65.
- 13 M. H. Barton, 'A Week-End in Holland', *DIA Quarterly Journal*, New Series No. 4, July 1928, 9
- 14 Edwards, *A Note on Contemporary Architecture in Northern Europe*, 12.
- 15 Edwards, *A Note on Contemporary Architecture in Northern Europe*, 14.
- 16 Edwards, *A Note on Contemporary Architecture in Northern Europe*, 15.
- 17 Raphael Samuel, 'The Return to Brick', in Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, London/New York 1990.
- 18 Edwards, *A Note on Contemporary Architecture in Northern Europe*, 15.
- 19 John Summerson, 'Architecture', in Boris Ford (ed.), *The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain (8), The Edwardian Age and the Inter-War Years*, Cambridge 1989, 226.
- 20 Edwards, *A Note on Contemporary Architecture in Northern Europe*, 16.

De Stijl and ‘Dutch identity’

The 1960s were a period of cultural upheaval in the Netherlands. As in many other western countries, an urge for freedom arose that railed against industrialization and consumerism and expressed itself through individualist youth cultures like Provo and the hippies. At the same time, there was a powerful trend towards modernization, which actually championed the systematic and technological development of things like state institutions and industries, transport and agriculture and the implementation of the ‘Delta Plan’. An abstract-geometric design arose as part of this process that had certain elements in common with modern art while also drawing on a socially motivated approach to engineering. A striking feature of this cultural development was the way it harked back to the avant-garde art of the 1920s and 30s, although it can only be fully understood with reference to the Second World War.¹

Legitimization was sought in the post-1945 period through a debate in which artists and designers adopted the interwar avant-garde – especially De Stijl – as their great example. One upshot of this was the merging of a carefully conceived Dutch identity with the movement’s avant-garde ideas. The imagining of the modern Netherlands by means of a visual language that was clearly rooted between the wars and particularly in the art of De Stijl was intensively promoted by the Dutch government in a process that has yet to play itself out entirely.

The role of De Stijl

It was already plain in the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s that some young artists and designers were turning their backs on the established Expressionism of the Cobra movement. Artist-designers like Joost Baljeu (1925–91) and the design duo Jan Slothouber (1918–2007) and William Graatsma (1925–2017) oriented themselves instead towards the pre-war avant-garde of Constructivism and the Bauhaus, while the new modernism was clearly coloured – certainly in the Netherlands – by a reassessment of De Stijl. Baljeu, for example, became a champion of the ideas and art of De Stijl’s leading figure, Theo van Doesburg (1883–1931), at a time when that artist, who had died young, risked being forgotten. De Stijl was held out as a source of inspiration and legitimization for the interdisciplinary

character of the modern art and design that emerged in the course of the 1960s. All manner of designers and artists – including Gijs Bakker (1942) and Aldo van den Nieuwelaar (1944–2010) in product design, Bob Bonies (1937), Ad Dekkers (1938–74) and André Volten (1925–2002) in the visual arts, Kho Liang Ie (1927–75) in interior design, Frans Molenaar (1940–2015) in fashion, Hans van Manen (1932) in dance, Total Design (founded 1963) in graphic design and Carel Weeber (1937) in architecture – shared a predilection for abstraction, objectivity and geometry.

This visual idiom was soon being deployed as the corporate identity of the modern Netherlands, whose government put the finishing touches in the 1960s to a comprehensive social welfare system with the introduction of the National Assistance Act (1963) and the Disability Act (1966). State-owned enterprises and government agencies were provided with a clear, modern business style, while some of them, such as the PTT (Post, Telephone, Telegraph), with its Aesthetic Design Department (DEV), played an important role in the cultural life of the nation.² The modern government as client, complete with a fertile cultural subsidy system, was an important precondition for the new modernism that shaped the face of the Netherlands, culturally and more widely, in the 1970s and 80s. A characteristic feature of the period was an active infrastructure of institutions, clients, design agencies, publishers, magazines and subsidies, which combined to deliver socially relevant design.

Institutional design: the PTT

The Netherlands, like other countries, lacked a central design institute to pursue uniformity through rules and manuals. There was a *Rijksbouwmeester* or government architect, but this was primarily an administrative role, certainly until the period that Wim Quist (1930) held the post in 1975–79. A more or less like-minded modern cultural ambition developed within certain large state-owned enterprises, including the PTT, as well as Netherlands Railways, the state publisher and a few ministries. The influence that modernist advisers exerted on these enterprises through subsidy funds, committees and competition juries – and sometimes at a personal level on administrators and politicians – was highly significant in this regard. The designer Benno Premsele (1920–97) and the art historian Hein van Haaren (1930–2014), for instance, were involved throughout their lives in the selection of designers and artists in the public domain. The PTT in particular developed a high degree of visibility and combined insights from modern marketing with contemporary visual art. The organization's various activities were recognizable throughout the Netherlands, with the colour red used for mail, green for telecoms and blue for the Girobank. The PTT's DEV advised on virtually all of



FIG. 1 Colour design for Logistics Centre PTT Groningen, collage, design Bob Bonies, 1976. Collection Bob Bonies, The Hague

the enterprise's visual expression, including post office architecture and interiors, but also the graphic design of official forms. The most striking element of the department's role, however, was undoubtedly its art and design commissions. It established an art collection for the PTT, which could be seen at many locations across the organization. The most prestigious cultural commission, perhaps, was the design of postage stamps: the department called for stamp designs several times a year to commemorate recent or past events and individuals. Somewhat ironically, the PTT pursued its postage stamp policy for strictly commercial purposes, chiefly targeting the collector's market. All the same, the key goal was to disseminate art widely among the population, including the issue of what were occasionally highly abstract stamps.

The logistics centre that the PTT built in Groningen in 1976 became a major modernist *Gesamtkunstwerk*, for which the artist and designer Bob Bonies combined a lucid house style with abstract visual art. In doing so, he created a form of 'colour expression' and total art that coalesced with everyday life, closely resembling what the artists of De Stijl had once aimed for. Bonies later said of the project: 'My choice of form and colour isn't based on a scientific theory, but on the personal experience I've gained by confronting form and colour. I don't want to express a particular chance mood or situation in my work. I make what is immediately recognizable, and avoid ambiguity.'³

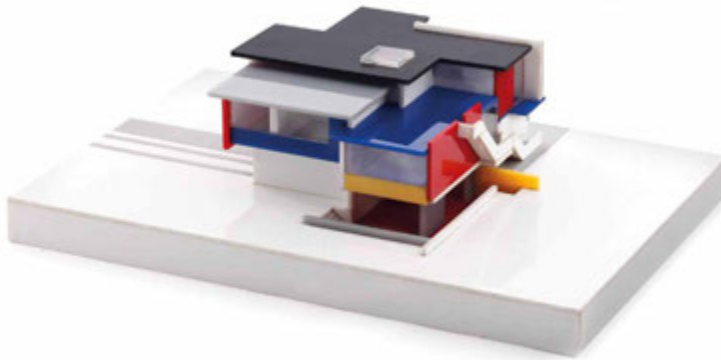


FIG. 2 Synthesist Construction A IV, 1969, design Joost Baljeu. Courtesy Christie's, London

Museums and De Stijl: the Dutch contribution to modern art

Several museums made an important contribution to establishing De Stijl as a forerunner and pioneer of a truly Dutch modern culture. The Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam featured prominently in the design debate waged in the 1960s and 70s, due substantially to the legacy of its charismatic director Wil Sandberg (1897–1984). It was also during Sandberg’s directorship (from 1945 to 1963) that the curator and deputy director Hans Jaffé (1915–84) emerged as a champion of De Stijl – the subject of his doctorate – which he declared to be the only significant Dutch contribution to modern art.⁴ Sandberg himself was a graphic designer and was firmly convinced of the potential of the museum in raising awareness of design as a subject of societal importance. Just like his model – the Museum of Modern Art in New York – he set out to present ethically good design in exhibitions with an explicitly informative and civilizing effect, and not infrequently with a pronounced anti-fascist undertone (interestingly, both Sandberg and Jaffé had shown themselves to be committed anti-Nazi activists during the German occupation of the Netherlands). This political agenda was continued in the second half of the 1960s and 70s by director Edy de Wilde (1919–2005) and his curators, the interior designer Wil Bertheux (1916–2004) and Liesbeth Crommelin (1936). The Stedelijk was increasingly becoming a museum for and by artists at that time and its design exhibitions likewise depended in part on the efforts of a group of progressive modern designers and critics. An important role was played in this by the graphic designer Wim Crouwel (1928–2019), who provided the museum’s graphic design and its exhibition catalogues and posters during De Wilde’s directorship. The almost propagandist character of the applied art collection and the exhibition themes were directly dependent at the time on the design background of museum people like Bertheux, who made no effort to present a broad view of developments in the design field: they used their exhibitions instead as an element of their modernist conviction as designers and as a contribution to the museum’s civilizing campaign. The history of design came in for similar treatment at the Stedelijk and the prominent presence of historical and even nineteenth-century themes in the exhibition programme – furniture by the Shakers, for instance, and by Thonet – offered a historical legitimization of modern design practice.

From activism to legitimization

An even more activist stance than that of the staff at the Stedelijk was struck by the young architect Jean Leering (1934–2005), who served as director between 1964 and 1974 of the regional Van Abbe Museum in Eindhoven, which he transformed during that period into one of the world’s most important modern art galleries.⁵



FIG. 3 Cafe-restaurant De Unie, design J.J.P. Oud, 1925, redesign Carel Weeber; 1986. Photo Wikimedia Commons

He achieved this in part through a re-evaluation of the interwar avant-garde. No doubt inspired by his background in architecture, Leering had a strong interest in the multidisciplinary artist-designers Theo van Doesburg and El Lissitzky (1890–1941). To his mind, it was Van Doesburg rather than the painter Mondrian, and El Lissitzky rather than the fine artist Malevich, who showed the way towards a socially significant role for art. Leering's Building 20/40 exhibition (1971) highlighted the societal role played by avant-garde architecture in the interwar period, which he explicitly presented as an example for the visual arts. As he himself put it: 'It's no longer enough for the museum to be a forum for contemporary art, because it must enable visitors to become aware of their cultural position in a dynamic society. This also means making clear the social relevance of art.'

It is interesting that exhibitions devoted to De Stijl at the Stedelijk Museum – including Rietveld in 1959 – were still presented very much in terms of their exemplary value: to introduce visitors to a modernist lifestyle in general and to the world of design in particular by means of good examples. Leering's exhibitions were far more activist and also sought to address the importance of art in a changing society. The attention paid to De Stijl in Dutch museums gradually shifted in character in the course of the 1970s. Having initially been presented still as contemporary design, it was now deployed as a component of the museum's modernist DNA and as a historical compass for the design world. In other words, De Stijl was no longer utilized as an example but as legitimization. One such exhibition was De Stijl 1917–1931, held in 1982, which was firmly historical in character.⁶

This shift from inspirational model to a legitimization frequently treated as self-evident can also be found in the 1980s in Dutch architecture. A good illustration is the preservation of modernist monuments in Rotterdam, where substantial efforts had been made in the 1980s and 90s to thoroughly restore or even reconstruct De Stijl buildings, many of which had been destroyed. The best example, perhaps, is the rebuilding in 1986 of Café De Unie after a 1925 design by J.J.P. Oud. The project was led by the architect Carel Weeber and took the form of a facade built on a different site to the original.

De Stijl in retrospective

In the course of the 1970s and 80s, the organization of exhibitions and growing body of publications devoted to De Stijl, as well as the restoration of the movement's architecture, were deployed increasingly explicitly as self-evident proof of what was supposed to be the only source of Dutch modernist design and architecture. Yet it all amounted to a post-hoc reconstruction that failed to do

justice to De Stijl's true history and reception. Sad though it may seem, De Stijl had very little to do with the Netherlands or its supposed 'national spirit'. The movement's two most important artists, Piet Mondrian (1872–1944) and Theo van Doesburg, developed their art with great conviction in an international context alongside a like-minded avant-garde from all over Europe. Van Doesburg might have founded De Stijl in Leiden, but soon preferred to pass his time in Weimar or Paris. For his part, Mondrian spent virtually the whole of his professional life doing his utmost to escape his native country in favour of those places where, in his opinion, things truly were happening. The number of serious De Stijl buildings to be executed, meanwhile, can be counted literally on the fingers of one hand – as can the quantity of red and blue chairs that Gerrit Rietveld sold in the first few decades of his career. It might well be retorted that any avant-garde worth its salt is supposed to be misunderstood at first. Yet what kind of distinctive national spirit is it that was manifested in just a handful of art works, which the majority of Dutch people at the time barely recognized as part of their culture and which they viewed, at best, as the follies of a few ultramodern poseurs?

What was then the exception has now apparently become the collective imagination of our entire nation. This is very odd, given that modern Dutch people in the 1920s and 30s were not at all fond of straight lines or primary colours in art. They preferred work that was expressive, with plenty of purple, orange and green, and preferably with a few decorative edges in silver or gold. Luxurious Utrecht velvet rather than plywood and artful brickwork rather than austere stucco or concrete. Very few Dutch people ever laid eyes on a building by De Stijl in the 1920s, while the most visible examples like Café De Unie in Rotterdam were mocked and in some cases swiftly repainted or otherwise disfigured. Many a provincial town, by contrast, boasted a post office, school or church built in a lukewarm, Amsterdam School style, with bricks, roof tiles, stained glass and wrought iron that all harked back firmly to a historical Holland.

Intriguing reversal

Public appreciation of Mondrian and De Stijl only picked up after the Second World War and, as we have already seen, even then only gradually and among a cultural elite. The German occupation served as the benchmark for what was good and bad in art and design too: in the 1950s, craft and tradition were suspect ingredients that smacked of *Blut und Boden*. De Stijl was now held out retrospectively as the source of everything good about the Netherlands, or everything we were so eager for it to be: democratic, progressive and tolerant – a home-grown modern art, in short, as an antidote to fascism. To achieve this, De Stijl and the international modernism



FIG. 4 Poster Mondria(a)n to Dutch design 1917-2017, ontwerp Ivo de Boer en Peter van Dorst, 2017

that sprang from it underwent an intriguing reversal precisely at this time. Near-identical glass office buildings, concrete apartment blocks and abstract art were on the rise all over the world, yet precisely this international modern design was considered in our country to be typically Dutch. A connection was swiftly identified between business-like architecture and our sober national character, and was clinched with reference to the clear, geometric design of the polders and bulb fields, the Dutch flag and the new Schiphol Airport.

While modernist architects and other design gurus held out modern living as something universally uplifting, most Dutch people were not keen on De Stijl's brand of modernism. As late as the most recent Mondrian retrospective but one, held in 1995, the staff of the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague were disappointed at the low number of visitors who turned up to what they had expected to be a blockbuster.

At the same time, De Stijl was being deployed by the Dutch government as a kind of national 'corporate identity': there were Mondrian postage stamps, images of the Rietveld Schröder House in Utrecht were included in Dutch passports and a train in De Stijl livery ran on the line to Germany. The centenary of De Stijl, marked in 2017 by *Mondrian to Dutch Design*, appears to have been the final stage in this process for the time being. In one last attempt to reconcile the population at large with the historical avant-garde, Mondrian was linked to Dutch Design, even though the latter's crowd-pleasing urge for romance and homely craftsmanship is pretty much the opposite of what De Stijl set out to achieve. For the whole of that year, the entire country celebrated De Stijl with special exhibitions accompanied by Mondrian pastries and a flower parade in the style of Rietveld. The upshot was that we could all cheerfully pretend to be cultural fellow travellers of the De Stijl avant-garde and fool ourselves that we are progressive and that our modernist DNA is to be found everywhere from Amersfoort to Winterswijk.

Stinker and horse manure

De Stijl's exceptional art now serves merely as a visual token of our nation, having been stripped of any trace of its oppositional, avant-garde character. In order to be a success, De Stijl has been rendered toothless, its manifestations now merely a decorative example of cultural correctness. De Stijl's abstract endpoint has, in this way, been linked all too eagerly to a static national identity, the reference point for which is the Netherlands of the 1950s and 60s with its native-born, white population. This despite the fact that the movement's essence lay precisely in the dissection of social modernization, to which its artists sought consistently to formulate a

response. De Stijl was, after all, the art of change: it actually rejected what only recently had been considered inspiring and modern. Mondrian, for example, distanced himself from the Symbolist work of Jan Toorop (1858–1928) and the Cubism of Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) and Georges Braque (1882–1963), while also changing his own art the moment he arrived in Paris or, later, in New York. For his part, Van Doesburg rejected turn-of-the-century modern architecture, sarcastically commenting in the small art Dadaist magazine *Mécano* that the worthy design of Berlage’s Gemeentemuseum in The Hague was an ‘architectonic stinker [...] consisting of horse manure combined to create a petrified Dutch cheese facade’.⁷ It is telling that he used his alter ego I.K. Bonset to do so, thereby stressing his right to hold different ideas about the world and art. Now that ‘De Stijl Year’ is behind us, you should visit the Kunstmuseum in The Hague once again, where it is no longer necessary to understand Mondrian’s fantastic art in terms of a patriotically staged quest for unchanging abstraction. The heart of Mondrian, Van Doesburg and Rietveld’s artistic practice consisted, after all, of continually accepting afresh a modernity subject to ceaseless change. Culture, by its nature, never stops evolving, and so our identity is fluid by definition. The idea that De Stijl offers us examples of how to respond to such changes rather than a lilywhite celebration of a supposed, eternally fixed national spirit is surely a much more attractive message.

Notes

- 1 James Kennedy, *Nieuw Babylon in aanbouw. Nederland in de jaren zestig*, Amsterdam, 2016³.
- 2 Arno Witte/Esther Cleven (ed.), *Design is geen vrijblijvende zaak. Organisatie, imago en context van de PTT-vormgeving tussen 1906 en 2002*, Rotterdam 2006.
- 3 Bob Bonies, (undated).
- 4 H.L.C. Jaffe, *De Stijl 1917–1931. The Dutch Contribution to Modern Art*, Amsterdam 1956.
- 5 Paul Kempers, ‘Het gaat om heel eenvoudige dingen’. *Jean Leering en de kunst*, Amsterdam 2018
- 6 The exhibition *De Stijl 1917–1931* was organized as part of the celebrations to mark two centuries of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Netherlands. The large-scale retrospective of the Dutch art movement was shown in the United States at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington. Back in the Netherlands, the exhibition was split between the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo, which focused on the period 1923–31.
- 7 I.K. Bonset, ‘Architektonica’, *Mécano* No. [2] Bleu, Blauw, Blau, Blue ([June] 1922), not paginated.

Architecture at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

The Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam is an art museum. It was established as an art museum in 1849 and it has remained an art museum. The museum's collection has always included arts and crafts – design as we now call it – but there has not been space for architecture. The only 'building' in the collection is Matti Suuronen's 1968 *Futuro*. [1] And perhaps we should add the *Toilet Unit* and the *Womb House* by Joep van Lieshout, as well as five models of Rotterdam's *Nieuwe Bouwen* architecture, made for an exhibition of 1982.¹ Nevertheless, the ties between the museum and the world of architecture have been close ones for almost a century. This contribution will consider the ways in which architecture and the work of architects are present in the museum and how museum policy concerning their presence has evolved.

The museum building

That the Museum Boymans – as the museum was called until the acquisition of the collection of harbour baron D.G. van Beuningen in 1958 – was located for the first ninety years of its existence in the Schielandshuis, designed by the famous seventeenth-century architect Pieter Post, is interesting to know, but not actually relevant: the Schielandshuis was built for the water control board (Hoogheemraadschap) of Schieland and the Krimpenerwaard, and the museum was only housed there two centuries later. Contacts between the Museum Boymans and the Dutch architectural world only became apparent in the late 1920s, when director Dirk Hannema developed his plans for a completely new building.² An interesting detail is that the immediate reason for this was a large donation of pottery, porcelain, glass and silver objects from the furniture manufacturer J.P. van der Schilden. Ad van der Steur, the Rotterdam Public Works architect, was chosen to design this new building since H.P. Berlage was unavailable – he was already working on the new museum in The Hague – Alexander Kropholler was rejected by the municipality on account of the expectation of high costs, and J.J.P. Oud was disqualified by them as 'too extreme'.³ The collaboration between Hannema and Van der Steur worked out well in the end and the two new museums of 1935, in The Hague and Rotterdam, were compared in the press to Rotterdam's advantage.⁴



FIG. 1 Matti Suuronen, *Futuro*, 1968

The expanding collection of modern art in the 1960s required more exhibition space and, now especially, a different kind of exhibition space. The municipality and the director at the time, Coert Ebbing Wubben, on this occasion chose Alexander Bodon.⁵ In 1963, Bodon drew the design realised in 1972 in a style characterised as post-war modernism.⁶ For its interior, Bodon worked together with Hein Salomonson. Unfortunately, none of his furniture for the restaurant has survived; his museum benches, however, were still in use until very recently. [2]

Subsequently, in the late 1980s, under the directorship of Wim Crowel, Hubert-Jan Henket was recruited to design a suitable space for H.J.E. van Beuningen's huge collection of pre-industrial utensils, which had recently been acquired. The result was a pavilion of glass and metal, virtually detached from the rest of the museum. The below-ground level was reserved for the pre-industrial objects of the Van Beuningen-De Vriese study collection. An interesting experiment took place on the top floor of the pavilion in the 1990s. Between 1996 and 1999, five renowned architects (John Pawson, Wytze Patijn, Winy Maas, Charles Vandenhove and Hubert-Jan Henket) designed an experimental exhibition space, with the support of a subsidy from the Grant Programme for Architecture (Stimuleringsfonds voor de Architectuur).⁷ [3]



FIG. 2 Hein Salomonson, restaurant in the new Bodon wing, ca 1975

In the meantime, plans for another expansion were being made. In the late 1990s, the director of the museum at the time, the Belgian Chris Dercon, promoted the architectural firm of his compatriots Robbrecht and Daem, which provided the Bodon wing with an ‘extra shell’. It was not very positively received. Many regretted the loss of the Bodon wing, while the quality of the new exhibition rooms left much to be desired.

Shortly after his appointment as new director, Sjarel Ex had the museum’s entrance area renewed. Although this was done under the umbrella of Molenaar & Van Winden architects, the various parts of the project were designed by designers and artists rather than architects. That was when the *Merry-Go-Round Coat Rack* of Wieki Somers became a popular part of the museum. [5]

During the past decade, the museum has fought for the construction of a large, open depot, next to the Van der Steur building. The design of Winy Maas (of the firm MVRDV) could be called spectacular to say the least, and is now nearing its completion. And in the meantime, Francine Houben (of the firm Mecanoo) has also started work on restoring the monumental Van der Steur building to its original state. One does not have to be a clairvoyant to predict this will soon provoke the usual debate in the world of architecture.



FIG. 3 The exhibition Martin Margiela at the Henket Pavilion, 1997



FIG. 4 A.W.N. Pugin, casket, circa 1850, after a 15th-century Gothic example owned by his father

Architects in the collection

Architects are not only associated with the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen as designers of its buildings; despite the fact that there is no architecture collection, the names of architects can indeed be found amongst the inventory of the museum's collection. I count at least fifty, considering someone an architect if he or she holds a degree in architecture and/or has at least three buildings to his or her name.

The earliest architects are to be found in an unexpected place: the digital file box of seventeenth-century painting. At the time, it was not unusual for painters to be active in architecture too, and vice versa; consider, for example, Michelangelo, Peter Paul Rubens and Jacob van Campen. The museum owns a drawing and prints by Michelangelo, as well as paintings by Rubens, while other painters represented in the collection, like Adriaen van der Werff and Salomon and Jan de Bray also worked as architects.

The names of most architects are found, however, in the design category, although this mostly applies to the last hundred and fifty years. Before that, it was not at all common for architects to design products. Until well into the nineteenth century, prestigious decorative and art objects were exclusively designed by artists and specialised craftsmen. Not a single architect was involved in the creation of Delft pottery, decorative and utility objects of silver or porcelain, engraved glassware and *façon-de-venise* glass, painted German glass beer mugs or even the decorative cabinets in our collection. There is one exception however: drawings by the architect Hans Vredeman de Vries were used for the refined marquetry of one of the seventeenth-century cabinets.



FIG. 5 Studio Wieki Somers, Merry-Go-Round Coat Rack, 2008



FIG. 6 Adolf Le Comte, coffee set, 1900

In the nineteenth century, a few influential architects began thinking more fundamentally about how and in what style they should design, emphasising meanwhile that beauty and functionality follow naturally from one another; the distinction, then, between architecture and design was made less and less often. Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Gottfried Semper, Eugène Viollet-le-Duc and A.W.N. Pugin – and in the Netherlands, Pierre Cuypers – to name a few important examples, frequently designed furniture and other objects in addition to buildings. The museum has acquired a cast iron garden chair in classicist idiom by Schinkel and two neo-Gothic caskets and a commemorative plaque by Pugin. [5] Nothing by Cuypers is to be found in the collection.

At the Polytechnic School in Delft, the leading school of architecture in the Netherlands in the nineteenth century, the German professor E. Gugel was the one who encouraged thinking about style, even if he himself never designed a piece of furniture or an ornamental object. His students, Jan de Kruyff, Adolf le Comte and Bram Gips among them, were, however, active in this field affiliated with architecture. De Kruyff was the organiser of the much-discussed exhibition *Kunst Toegepast op Nijverheid* in 1877, one of the first manifestations of applied art as an extension of architecture. He later became director of the *Rijksschool voor Kunstnijverheid* (national academy for applied art) at the *Rijksmuseum*, the first design school in the Netherlands.⁸ Gugel was succeeded in Delft by his pupil Le Comte, who also started working as a designer at the [pottery factory the] *Porceleyne Fles*, also in Delft, in 1880.⁹ Several pieces of Le Comte's innovative experiments with pottery carried out there are included in the Boijmans collection. [6] Gips opened a well-known decoration studio in Delft. A beautiful silver tea set from 1900 designed by him can be found in the Boijmans collection. [7]



FIG. 7 Bram Gips (executed by C.J. Begeer, Utrecht), silver tea set, 1900



FIG. 8 Charlotte Perriand (executed by Thonet), armchair, 1927

There are not many examples in the collection of the work of the various architects active around 1900 for whom the concept of the Total Work of Art (*Gemeinschaftskunst*) was becoming increasingly important and who therefore also paid attention to interior design. From the English Arts and Crafts architects, the museum holds only a single piece by William Morris and Charles Robert Ashbee. The Scottish Charles [Rennie] Mackintosh has to make do with three teaspoons. From Austria, the architects Otto Wagner, Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser are represented with furniture and glassware. Peter Behrens is the only German architect from this period whose work can be found in the museum's collection. The museum holds many works by Belgian Art Nouveau architects; by Henry Van de Velde, for example, even though most objects designed by him were actually made in Germany.

As far as Dutch architects around 1900 are concerned, I ought to start by mentioning Theodoor Colenbrander.¹⁰ With his innovative designs for ceramics and carpets, he is considered the Nestor of reform in the Netherlands. That he, too, was originally an architect is probably only known to insiders. The museum owns dozens of ceramic objects by Colenbrander. Of the work of Berlage, the Boijmans can only exhibit two pieces of furniture, one of which, a chair, is on long-term loan from the Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE). The museum does, however, have a lot of his glassware, not merely what he designed for Glass factory Leerdam, but also the much earlier designs for the Baccarat factory near Paris and some pieces of painted tableware from the Fayence en Tegelfabriek (faience and tile factory) in Utrecht as well. We have little to show by other Amsterdam architects from the



FIG. 9 Ad van der Steur, unrealised plan for the museum's extension, 1943.

beginning of the twentieth century, such as the members of *Architectura et Amicitiae*, for whom architecture and interior design were also branches of the same field. Examples are a table by Mathieu Lauweriks, again on loan from the RCE, and glassware by Karel de Bazel, and a large quantity of printed matter by both of them.¹¹

Twentieth century

Of the typical Amsterdam School architects, who started designing furniture mainly due to a shortages in the construction market during the First World War, there is not much work in the Boijmans collection either, except for the almost complete series of the periodical *Wendingen* and a beautiful table and accompanying chair by Michiel de Klerk for the *Scheepvaarthuis*, on loan from the RCE. The museum recently acquired a large number of objects from an interior by Piet Kramer from 1921.¹²

The architects of the *Nieuwe Bouwen*, on the other hand, are well represented, both Dutch and foreign. Over the years, tubular steel furniture by Mart Stam,

Gerrit Rietveld, Oud, Marcel Breuer, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Sybold van Ravesteyn, Huib Hoste, Le Corbusier, Charlotte Perriand and also modernist items made of wood by Rietveld, Breuer, Alvar Aalto and Erich Dieckmann have been acquired. [8] The museum owns a tea set and a set of doorknobs by Walter Gropius; the design for a board of directors' table and two of the models by Leen van der Vlugt mentioned earlier; and the telephone booth Van der Vlugt designed together with Michiel Brinkman, with lettering by Willem Gispen. If Gispen can also be regarded as an architect - he studied in Delft for some time - the number of modernist works by architects in the collection is many times larger.

Of the traditionalist architects from the interwar period, Boijmans holds some work by Kropholler and some early designs by Louis Kalff for Philips. We have a large number of folders with drawings by Van der Steur in store, including the spectacular designs from the 1940s for the extension of the museum, which was never realised. [9]

From the Dutch post-war period, we can show furniture by the architect Johan Niegeman and by the pre-war modernists mentioned earlier. Some famous international architects' names from the fifties and sixties in our 'card files' are Charles and Ray Eames, Marco Zanuso, Joe Colombo, Gio Ponti, Aldo Rossi, Afra Scarpa, Max Bill, Hans Gugelot, Verner Panton, Eero Saarinen, Arne Jacobson and Hans Wegner. To these architects, the postmodernists of the seventies and eighties, such as the Italians Ettore Sottsass, Andrea Branzi, Alessandro Mendini, Gaetano Pesce as well as the Canadian Frank O. Gehry, might be added. The silver coffee and tea sets produced by the Italian firm Alessi in cooperation with Mendini, Hans Hollein and Michael Graves, among others, as well as individual teapots by Richard Sapper and Sottsass also come from the postmodern quarter. The museum owns many glass objects by the Czech architect Bořek Šípek; Mart van Schijndel, with his triangular glass vase, may be mentioned as a postmodern architect from the Netherlands. In addition, some experimental designs by the architectural team Slothouber & Graatsma date from the 1970s, as well as a surprising lamp for the firm Raak by Ton Alberts, who would later produce anthroposophical building designs. A special case is Dom Hans van der Laan, of whom the museum owns six pieces of furniture and some glassware.

Finally, from the more recent period, we have a modest collection of doorknobs launched by Post & Eger in 2011, in collaboration with the Dutch architects Cees Dam, Hans van Heeswijk, Erick van Egeraat and Janjaap Ruysenaars. [10]



FIG. 10 Production: Post & Eger, doorknobs, 2011



FIG. 11 The exhibition *Nederland Bouwt in Baksteen*, damaged by fire resulting from the allied bombing on 3 October 1941

Changing policies

This list of architects is undoubtedly incomplete, but it does give an indication of the quantity and variety of their work in the museum's collection. Perhaps the question of when and why this interest in designs by architects arose for the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is more compelling.

As long as a museum's first priority is to collect art so visitors may enjoy seeing them, it is not surprising that the work of architects is seldom purchased. After all, architects usually give functionality a higher priority than the enjoyment of art. The few times when the work of an ornamental artist with architectural training ended up in the collection before the war, such as the decorative vases Le Comte designed for the Porceleyne Fles, were a result more of coincidence than policy.¹³ The more significant work of his contemporary Colenbrander was only acquired in the 1960s.

Purely functional designs were certainly not welcome in the museum's collection in the first half of the century. Around 1924, the young, newly appointed director Hannema commissioned the design of a new cabinet by the Rotterdam city architect Oud, then the rising star of modernism. The cabinet was even exhibited at the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs & Industriels* held in Paris the following year. In 1933, furthermore, Hannema had Oud design his private office.¹⁴ This was, however, not reason enough for him to include Oud's furniture in the Boymans collection.¹⁵ Nor did the highly successful 1941 exhibition *Nederland Bouwt in Baksteen* persuade Hannema to acquire furniture by the architects represented there for the collection.¹⁶ [11]

In the meantime, the decorative arts department was expanding at an accelerated pace, first, with the pottery collection of Jaap Bastert, who, moreover, became the museum's first curator of arts and crafts.¹⁷ His collection, comprising hundreds of ceramic objects, consisted of precious and unique pieces, but also everyday products, such as tiles. Apparently, an object no longer had to be luxurious or finely decorated in order for it to be included in the museum's collection. Other aspects of products now received attention as well: their form in itself, their function, and even the somewhat rough and rustic nature of many old earthenware products was positively appreciated. A product could still be a work of art, but it need not be, per se. From the 1950s onwards, for example, the museum became interested in contemporary ceramic art and studio glass, and also, very cautiously, in utility ceramics and glassware produced in series.¹⁸ Around 1955, the architect Frits Eschauzier designed new showcases for the growing collection of applied art.¹⁹

In 1956, the presentation and acquisition of A.J.G. Verster's tin collection marked another milestone in the development of the decorative arts collection. This one was emphatically centered on simple and unadorned utility tin. By means of this exhibition, moreover, contact was established with H.J.E. van Beuningen - nephew of D.G. van Beuningen - whose activity as a collector also focused on everyday utensils. After years of negotiation, his collection of pre-industrial utensils was acquired for the museum by the then museum director Wim Beeren. Beeren's barely hidden agenda in this transaction was to gain approval from the municipality to start building up an industrial design collection.²⁰

In other museums, too, the boundary between (modern) design and art was gradually becoming less distinct, while at the same time attention given to architecture was increasing. At the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, this had already been the case for quite some time; in this respect, it was way ahead of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. In 1975, the various disciplines were simultaneously presented at four exhibitions on Dutch architecture and design between 1880 and 1930.²¹ The high-profile exhibitions *Tendenzen der zwanziger Jahre* in Berlin in 1977 and five exhibitions on the *Nieuwe Bouwen* between 1981 and 1983 also clearly demonstrated this phenomenon.²² As far as Boijmans is concerned, the 1981 exhibition of the architect-designer Jean Prouvé might also be mentioned in this context.



FIG. 12 Gio Ponti in collaboration with Piero Fornasetti, *Trumeau Architettura*, 1960-65



FIG. 13 Marcel Breuer, *Lattenstuhl*, 1923

This shifting focus is reflected in the museum's acquisition policy. For example, important donations of the work of Arne Jacobsen and Tapio Wirkkala, both trained as architects, were accepted in Rotterdam as early as 1979 and 1982. In the 1980s, Frederike Huygen, the first curator of industrial design, was only able to retrospectively purchase works by Breuer, Rietveld, Mies van der Rohe, Hoffmann, Wagner, Behrens, Le Corbusier, Aalto and Pantoni, to mention only the architects among her acquisitions. She immediately welcomed the Italian architects who had more recently become famous in design practice as well. The collection was soon supplemented with designs by, among others, Ponti, Sottsass, Zanuso, Colombo and Bellini and also, very soon after, by those of outspoken postmodern architects like Mendini, Branzi and Sipek, who was active in the Netherlands. [12]

Over the past decades, an effort has been made to complement the collection with designs by missing and less obvious architect-designers, and to look further into the past. This has not always been done very systematically. Unexpected donations and the organisation of certain exhibitions are often at odds with official policy. The acquisition of various pieces of furniture by Bauhaus architects [13] and also by Piet Kramer, Dom Hans van der Laan and by some architects involved in the *Goed Wonen* exhibition are examples of this.²³

The number of objects in the museum produced by architect-designers has grown hugely in the past forty years. The boundaries separating the various disciplines in the museum are unmistakably fading. It is striking that – in addition to furniture – Boijmans holds many glass objects produced by architects. We can also conclude that the speed with which the museum building has changed and expanded has contributed to closer ties between the museum and the world of architects.

Notes

- 1 The models were made in 1982 at the Technische Hogeschool Delft (now, Delft University of Technology) for the exhibition *Het Nieuwe Bouwen in Rotterdam 1920-1960* in 1982-83.
- 2 Wessel Krul, *Hannema museumdirecteur. Over kunst en illusie*, Amsterdam 2018, 147-171.
- 3 Krul, *Hannema museumdirecteur*, 152-153.
- 4 Krul, *Hannema museumdirecteur*, 202-207.
- 5 Ad van der Steur's architectural firm merged with Bodon's firm soon after Van der Steur's death in 1953.
- 6 Patricia van Ulzen, *J.C. Ebbinge Wubben. Museumdirecteur met een missie 1945-1978*, Rotterdam 2016, 71-87.
- 7 John Pawson (*Martin Smith*, 1996), Wytze Patijn (*stoelen*, 1997), Hubert Jan Henket (*Margiela*, 1997), Charles Vandenhove (*Egyptomania*, 1998), Winy Maas/MVRDV (*Rotterdam Designprijs*, 1999).
- 8 Mienke Simon Thomas, *De Leer van het Ornament. Versieren volgens voorschrift*, Amsterdam 1996, 56-59.
- 9 Jos Hilkhuijsen, *Delftse Art Nouveau. Onderwijs en ontwerp van Adolf le Comte (1850-1921), Karel Sluyterman (1863-1931) en Bram Gips (1961-1943)*, Zwolle 2001.
- 10 Arno Weltens, *Theo Colenbrander 1841-1930*, Zwolle 2014.

- 11 This printed matter, consisting of hundreds of woodcuts from around 1900, were purchased from the
 12 collection of type designer S.H. de Roos in 1944.
- 13 This concerns objects from a 1921 furnishing from the collection of former professor at the Department
 14 of Architecture of TU Delft Lex Haak, who died in 2018.
- 15 The work of Adolf le Comte was included in the collection of J.P. van der Schilden, which was bequeathed
 16 to the museum in 1925.
- 17 Ed Taverne, Cor Wagenaar & Martien de Vletter, *J.J.P. Oud 1890-1963. Poëtisch functionalist. Compleet
 18 werk*, Rotterdam 2001, 373 and 386-388.
- 19 In 1951, in collaboration with the Bouwcentrum, a first exhibition on the architecture of J.J.P. Oud was
 20 organised in Boijmans; a presentation of his furniture designs followed in 1990.
- 21 Suzy Leemans & Jan Molema, 'Men stookt en raast tegen het Bauhaus', in *nederland ⇔ bauhaus. pioniers
 22 van een nieuwe wereld*, Rotterdam (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen) 2019, 163; Ariëtte Dekker,
 23 *Omstreden verleden. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen en de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Rotterdam 2018, 81-82.
- Mienke Simon Thomas, 'Jaap Bastert', in *150 jaar Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen*, Rotterdam 1999, 390-
 411.
- The first exhibition of ceramic art in 1953 showed contemporary works by Bert Nienhuis, Harm
 Kamerlingh Onnes, Piet Wiegman, Frans Wildenhain and Dirk Hubers. Initially, mainly glassware by
 Chris Lebeau and Andries Copier was acquired.
- Proof that Eschauzier was the designer of the ever-popular cross-legged display cases in Boijmans has yet
 to be provided, but he drew almost the same display cases for the Gemeentemuseum in Arnhem as early
 as 1952. [Jouke van der Werf, F.A. Eschauzier. *Een orde voor de zintuigen*, Rotterdam 1999, 103]. The ties
 between Eschauzier and the museum's network in Rotterdam were close ones. In 1938-40, he built the
 house of his brother-in-law D.G. van Beuningen and in 1956-58, the Willem van der Vorm Museum.
- Collectie Van Beuningen-De Vriese*, report presented to the Mayor and Aldermen of Rotterdam on 17 April
 1981 by the Advisory Committee of the museum chaired by Wim Beeren.
- De Amsterdamse School 1910-1930* (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam), *Architectura. Nederlandse Architectuur
 1893-1918* (Architectuur Museum, Amsterdam), *Americana. Nederlandse Architectuur 1880-1930* (Kröller-
 Müller, Otterlo), *H.P. Berlage: bouwmeester, 1856-1935* (Gemeentemuseum Den Haag)
- Het Nieuwe Bouwen. Voorgeschiedenis* (Nederlands Dokumentatiecentrum voor de Bouwkunst,
 Amsterdam), *Het Nieuwe Bouwen in Rotterdam 1920-1960* (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen,
 Rotterdam) *Het Nieuwe Bouwen. Amsterdam 1920-1960* (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam), *Het Nieuwe
 Bouwen. De Nieuwe Beelding in de Architectuur. De Stijl* (Haags Gemeentemuseum) en *Het Nieuwe Bouwen
 Internationaal. CIAM. Volkshuisvesting, Stedebouw* (Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo).
- Pieces of furniture by Breuer and Dieckmann were acquired for the purpose of the exhibition
nederland ⇔ bauhaus. pioniers van een nieuwe wereld (2019). The furniture by Van der Laan was offered
 to us by members of the architect's family and the furniture of Goed Wonen came from the estate of Cor
 de Wit.

Knud Lönberg-Holm and Cornelis van Eesteren and the concept of circular production

An interesting part of the companionship between Knud Lönberg-Holm (1895-1972) and Cornelis van Eesteren's (1897-1988) could be their collaboration in the development of the concepts of Time Zoning and the Production Cycle. But how do you trace the development and distribution, or prove the ownership of something intangible as an idea or concept? I have for this purpose established an annotated timeline of correspondence and articles. Space limitations prevents me from including full length letters and articles, and I have therefore throughout used excerpts, reviews, or Holm's own summaries.

Knud Lönberg-Holm

The Danish-American architect Knud Lönberg-Holm is acknowledged for his pioneering work in architecture, photography, journalism and as an influential networker in the modern movement in Europe and USA. But he has not been fully recognised for his work with system theories or credited for the development of a several important current concepts.

His interpretation of the Space-Time concept in the 1920s was published by László Moholy-Nagy and Cornelis van Eesteren, and in 1929 Henry-Russell Hitchcock credited Holm for the term Time-Space Architecture. His concept of Invisible Architecture from 1929, was credited by Buckminster Fuller as the inspiration for his Geodesic Domes. The concept of Environmental Control, as a substitution for the concept of architecture, was introduced by Fuller and Holm in their magazine *Shelter* in 1932. Finally the concept of the Information Architecture was developed by Holm 1936-38, as research director at Sweet's Catalog Service. These concepts have in common that they are all holistic and circular system theories, or in another word: cybernetics.

In this context I will focus on Holm's development and distribution of two related concepts: Time Zoning 1933 and the Production Cycle 1934 – and trace their

emergence in the preparation of reports for two international organizations under Dutch leadership: International Congresses of Modern Architecture (CIAM) and International Industrial Relations Institute (IIRI).

Introduction

1932 was a busy year for Holm in New York. He had a newborn son and his position at *Architectural Record* changed from technical editor to the marginal role as research consultant, and then promoted to the Sweet's Catalog Service department in the F.W. Dodge Corporation to direct a new research department. In the spring of 1932 he co-edited three issues of the *Shelter* magazine with Buckminster Fuller, as co-founder of the CIAM affiliated group Structural Study Associates.

Holm had from 1929 shared the leadership of CIAM USA with Richard Neutra and in 1931 Holm also became the leader of the Housing Section in the Dutch organization IIRI. Both CIAM and IIRI was in 1932 under Dutch leadership, respectively by planner and architect Cornelis van Eesteren and industrialist Cornelis van der Leeuw. Holm and Van Eesteren had been in close contact since 1922, where they had been among the small group of architects that participated in the meetings of the avant-garde in Berlin. In 1931 Holm visited Europe, for the first time since his departure to the USA in 1923 and renewed his contacts in Bauhaus and with his Dutch friends J.J.P. Oud and Van Eesteren in Holland. In Amsterdam Holm participated in the IIRI's World Social Economic conference and was invited by Van der Leeuw to visit the Van Nelle Tobacco factory in Rotterdam and to join him on a sightseeing over Holland in Leeuw's private airplane.

In January 1932 all international CIAM groups were encouraged to prepare a comparative city survey. For this purpose they received a set of guidelines that included three maps of Amsterdam. The guidelines outlined the four functions of the city: work, housing, leisure and transport and had an additional list with 23 areas of particular interest for the congress: location, topography, climate, soil, history, metropolitan area, administration, population, health, industry, trade, port, transportation, public utilities, education, recreation, sanitation, shelter, real estate, growth and decay, banks, municipal finance and general statistics. The outlines were prepared by the Dutch CIAM group under the direction of Van Eesteren. In the US Neutra prepared a survey of Los Angeles and in New York; Holm initiated a survey of Detroit.



FIG. 1 Time Zoning as a Preventive of Blighted Area glued in as the last page in Lönnberg-Holm's Detroit, Michigan, USA report



FIG. 2 Architectural Record, November 1933. Time Zoning as a Preventive of Blighted Areas. That directly connects the concept with Detroit and the CIAM IV report

The Detroit survey

On 26 January 1932 Lönberg-Holm wrote to Cornelis van Eesteren: 'I have received the congress material and also heard from Neutra. Detroit more than any other city will reveal the influence of modern decentralised industry on a city structure. It may prove to be too big a task for the limited time – but I shall keep you advised on the matter.' [1]

Holm recruited a young visiting Swiss architect, Otto Senn, to participate in the preparations and persuaded him to spend two months in Detroit compiling statistical material, photographs and maps. While working with the survey Holm paid particular interest to the Growth and Decay section in van Eesteren's guidelines, and began working towards developing an analytic method that could incorporate the time aspect in city planning.

In a letter of 2 February Holm suggested Otto Senn: 'I suggest the following point is considered: The Amsterdam maps show present "functional" conditions and geographical growth in the past – but not the functional changes which occurred during this time interval for example the cycle: high class residential district – rooming house district – slum. These developments illustrate well the lack of synchronisation between the time factors: obsolescence and physical deterioration. A building is made to serve a number of unrelated purposes before it is finally scrapped. Buildings should be designed for a well defined longevity and I believe that a case study of this process would be valuable for the report and that a graphic presentation would better illustrate the functional development than the static presentation of existing conditions.'

After two months in Detroit Otto Senn continued his journey and Clifford Eriksen took over the task of compiling statistical material. In March 1933 Holm shared his progress towards a space-time planning procedure with Eriksen who replied on 26 March: 'Your idea for the proper city planning procedure is the only reasonable one I have heard of, and I shall keep it strictly confidential, as you request.'

Time Zoning as a preventive of blighted areas

In June 1933 Holm published his new space-time planning concept in the FW. Dodge publication, *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide* – just in time to be included in his Detroit survey report. His article 'Time Zoning as a Preventive of Blighted Areas' was published for a greater public in *Architectural Record* in November 1933. [2] In it he argued that the function and growth of a city are conditioned by the nature

of the control machinery with which private enterprise is limited and correlated. 'The existence of urban blight indicates failure to cope with changing conditions. The following comments diagnose blight as a factor of growth and evaluate relative efficacies of zoning measures as blight preventives. Space-Time Zoning is proposed as more effective than the present space zoning.'

Detroit News of 20 August 1933 reviewed the *Real Estate and Builders Guide* article: 'One consequence of Time Zoning would be the speeding up of the industrialisation of the building industry through the demand for flexible, light, mobile shelter units manufactured for and amortisable over a short predetermined life span. Shelters not only easily manufactured, assembled, operated and maintained, but equally important: easily moved, taken apart and set up elsewhere, modernised or scrapped, according to the form of obsolescence involved. Mobility and physical salvage value would be at a premium. The present waste in building construction expressed in idle dead load would carry its own penalty. Time Zoning would involve a license provision for the parking of any form of shelter for a given time on a given site, with the obligation for the erector-owner to remove the unit and clear the site when license expired. The license could be renewable until occupancy became a public nuisance or liability. The licensee should be required to post bond with the city to insure compliance with the terms of the license. One consequence of Time Zoning would be the speeding up of the industrialisation of the building industry through the demand for flexible, light, mobile shelters units manufactured, assembled, operated, maintained, but equally important; easily moved, taken apart and set up elsewhere, modernised, or scrapped according to the form of obsolescence involved. Mobility and physical salvage value would be at a premium. The present waste in building construction expressed in idle dead load would carry it own penalty. A limited life-span for buildings, as a control device to prevent the accumulation of obsolete structure and to promote optimum use of new designs.'

Time Zoning in the Detroit Survey

24 June 1933 Holm to Dutch architects Ben Merkelbach and Charles Karsten: 'Please insert this page in Detroit report as last page following conclusions. The suggested Time Zoning developed out of the Detroit study and constitutes an important suggestion for further city planning procedure.' Two days later he wrote Van Eesteren: 'I have mailed you under separate cover a copy of *The Real Estate Record and Guide* published by the F.W. Dodge Corp., which contains an article by me on Time Zoning in city planning. I have also sent a copy to be included in the Detroit report. The idea of Time Zoning was evolved through my work with the Detroit Survey and I am anxious to have the suggestion brought to the attention of the congress.'

The *Real Estate Record and Guide* article made it into the CIAM report glued in on the last page, following the conclusions.

The graphic representation of the Time Zoning concept

The *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide* article caught the attention of Lawrence Veiller, editor of *Housing, a Quarterly Journal of Housing Advance*. In a letter of 26 June 1933 to Veiller Holm outlined his report and his on-going work towards a graphic presentation of the suggestions outlined in his conclusions: 'The Detroit survey traced the morphology of an industrial boom city. The following list of contents will give you an idea of the scope of the survey: LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY, CLIMATE, SOIL, HISTORY, METROPOLITAN AREA – definition of functional entity. ADMINISTRATION – analysis of city and county governments. POPULATION – composition and activities. HEALTH – diseases, death and birth rates, delinquency, etc. related to housing conditions. INDUSTRY – development, breakdown of industrial activities, recent industrial trends, history of the automobile industry etc. TRADE – wholesale, retail, distribution of commodities. PORT. TRANSPORTATION – railways, buses, highway systems etc. PUBLIC UTILITIES. EDUCATION. RECREATION. SANITATION. SHELTER – housing, building activities, types of construction, rent ownership etc. REAL ESTATE – the story of a racket. GROWTH AND DECAY – the process of urban expansion, decentralisation. BANKS – why bank holidays? MUNICIPAL FINANCE – city revenue, operating cost, increasing funded debt, relief, paralysis. GENERAL STATISTICS. CONCLUSIONS. I am at present working on a graphic presentation of the suggestions outlined in the conclusions. The plan separates the two unrelated but commonly confused problems of slum clearance and housing. I shall be glad later on to let you have this material for whatever use you may want to make of it. I shall appreciate any comment on the subject in your publication.'

The Production Cycle

In the autumn of 1934 Holm had solved his problem with the graphic representation of the space-time planning concept by designing a circular diagram divided in six phases: research, design, fabrication, distribution, utilization, and liquidation. Holm named the diagram The Production Cycle and published it in November 1934 in his *Report of Housing Section, International Industrial Relations Institute*, which he prepared for IRI Regional Conference on Social Economic Planning, New York: 'In a planned economy all commodities, including every human enterprise, must pass through a characteristic cycle of performance, as indicated by the "Production cycle".^[3]

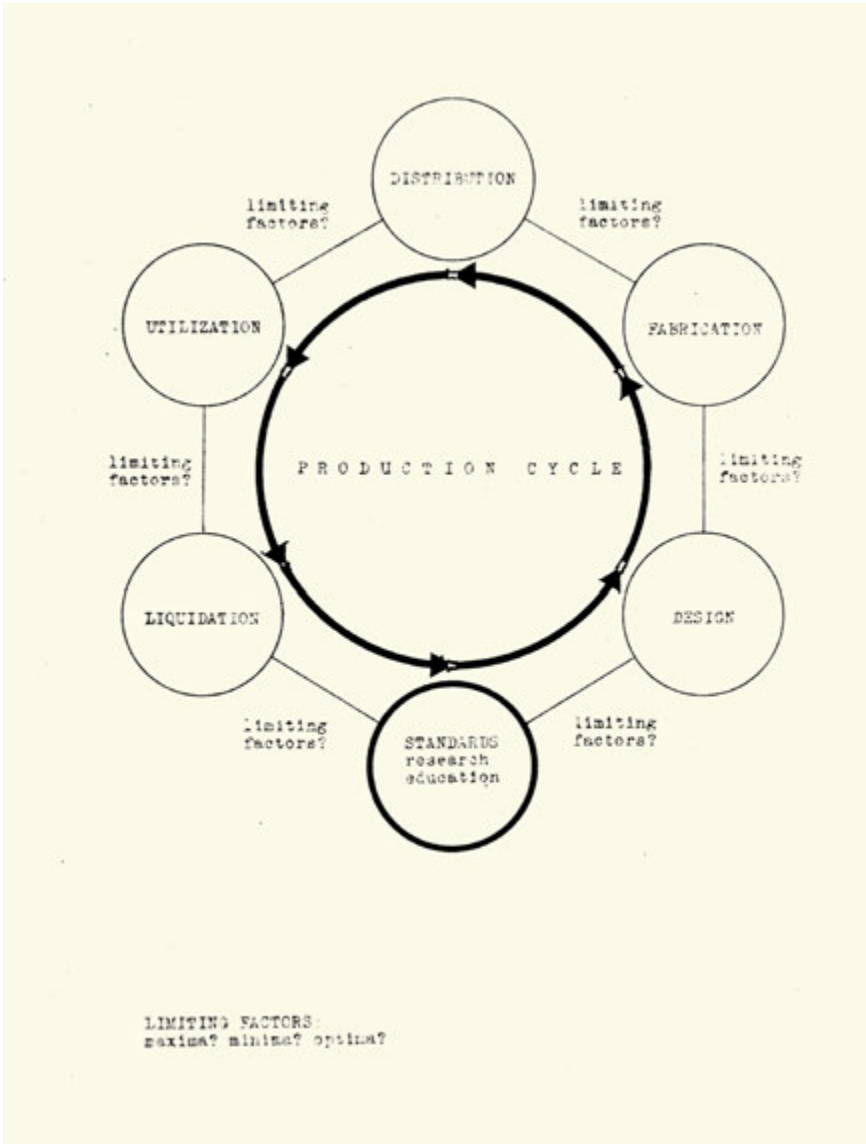


FIG. 3 The first edition of the Production Cycle diagram from 1934, counter clockwise

Each phase of this cycle – research, design, fabrication, distribution, utilization, and final liquidation – is subject to planning control. If such control is lacking, then friction is likely to occur with a breakdown of the whole production mechanism as the ultimate outcome unless adjustments are made. The primary planning task (beginning with the period of emergency) is to establish a *flow* of activity from

one phase to the next. To do this, it is necessary to establish points of contact (inventories of facts) between the successive phases and to determine the limiting factors, both maximum and minimum. The fabricator for example, should have information as to the designs which can be produced and as to their distribution after they are produced; the designs in turn may be preconditioned by the limiting factors of distribution, just as the methods of fabrication may be preconditioned by the limiting factor of distribution, and so on along the whole cycle. From such considerations an optimum set of conditions governing the entire production routine can be selected; these optimum factors will determine the speed of transition from one phase to the next.' This report was published unedited in *Architectural Record* three months later as 'Building Production and Standards. Timed production: Time-Zoning of Buildings'.

This *Architectural Record* article was then translated into Dutch, probably by Van Eesteren, and published as 'Bouwindustrie en Bouwnormen. Georganiseerde bouwproductie' in March 1935 in *De 8 en Opbouw*, a few months before the opening of *Functional City* exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, with Van der Leeuw as a member of the honorary committee. Three and a half years later, in October 1938, Holm and Larson's 'Industrialisatie van woningen' was published in *De 8 en Opbouw*. Young architect H.A. Maaskant provided a critical epilogue, in which he made an attempt to translate the findings in the article to the Dutch situation.

In 1936 Lönberg-Holm and Theodore Larson published in *Architectural Record* the Production Cycle concept in three different articles.

First in April 'Trends in Building Production. Liquidation of obsolete structures is needed' in which they wrote: 'The potential demand for new buildings increases with each advance made by science and industry. Power generation and new means of communication and transportation have merged city and country into production networks. The old neighbourhoods and districts have lost their economic advantages and become blighted. Electrification and achievements in sanitation and atmospheric control have raised desirable standards of living to the point where structures lacking these new essentials are considered obsolete and become unprofitable' and indicated as a implication: 'Prefabrication requires mass production, the economic advantages of which can be gained only through integration and control of the different phases of production (research, design, fabrication, distribution, use, liquidation). The big manufacturers who need a housing industry as an outlet for their products hesitate to take over these additional functions at the risk of antagonising their present business relationships.'

Next, in November 1936, 'Design for Environmental Control', in which they posited: 'New possibilities in structural design are opened up by modern industrial production. The full economic advantages of such production can be gained, however, only through complete integration of a characteristic cycle of performance: (1) research, (2) design, (3) fabrication, (4) distribution, (5) use, (6) liquidation. [...] Every structural design is conditioned by the limitations imposed by each phase of production, for all are interrelated and interacting: the production of a structure does not end until its final demolition. An integrated control of production is necessary for the development of structural designs which will represent the most advanced technical standards.'

And finally in December 'The Technician on the Cultural Front': 'The cultural front comprises all activities directed towards the expansion of social wealth. It is expressed in the continuous advancement of standards of productivity. The position of the technician (artist, architect, engineer) on this front can be defined only through an analysis of economic and technical forces.

[..] All production – products, enterprises, ideas – can be analysed to the phases of a characteristic cycle of performance: (1) research, (2) design, (3) fabrication, (4) distribution, (5) use, (6) liquidation. Each phase is subject to planning control, for all are related and interacting: a new design implies a liquidation of the old design. The continuity of this process is exemplified in the building field – the production of any structure does not end until its final demolition.'

In a report for the IIRI in 1940, *Planning for Productivity*, Holm and Larson expanded the concept of the Production Cycle into a Production Index and suggested the Production Cycle as a potential basis for a classification system for the filing of reference data, which could be continuously adapted to meet changing conditions: 'From the point of view of the International Industrial relations Institute – which has for its purpose the study and promotion of satisfactory human relations and conditions in all industry – this report is offered as a tool in the constructive task of increasing productivity for higher standards of living.'

After the closing of New York University's architect school in November 1940, a group of students and advisers (including Holm, Jose Sert, Ernst Weissmann and Larson), calling themselves The Building Industry Design Educational Group, held weekly meetings that produced the report *Design Training for the Building Industry* in June 1942 with an entirely new kind of design training based on the six phases of the Production Cycle: 'In order to analyze the changing requirements of designers who would be qualified to function in a rapidly changing building industry, it was necessary first to consider the implications of industrial development. Increasing

productivity for the benefit of man was taken as the true goal of industrialisation. This led to the use of “Planning for Productivity” as a tool for making detailed analysis of the building industry. By projecting an integrated pattern of industrial development, it then became possible to isolate the function of design and to analyze the problem of training in the building industry.’ In developing any new form for any field of production, the building industry required in the view of the group integration of its six phases – research, design, fabrication, distribution, utilization, elimination.

Josef Hudnut of the School of Design at Harvard reviewed the report in a letter to Holm: ‘You have made an important contribution to the solution of the very perplexing dilemma which we will confront the architect when the war is ended. President Conant has asked all the members of the Faculty not actually engaged in war work to use the present moment for a reassessment of all their educational methods and principles. We have taken this hint very seriously in our school and have been working, all through the present year, on a reexamination of our several curricula. In doing this we have made the assumption that nothing is sacrosanct and that a complete reorganisation is possible. The report which you have sent me will be of very real help to us in this work.’

In 1947 Holm and Larson founded the Architectural Research Laboratory at University of Michigan with the Production Cycle as a part of the curriculum: ‘The Development Cycle. Any new form or service, can be analyzed as a process containing these six interacting phases: research, design, production, distribution, utilization, elimination.’

In the 1950s, in the catalog for *Validity of Habitat*, the IXth CIAM conference which was held from 19-26 July 1953 in Aix-en-Provence, the Production Cycle was included, and again the main components were listed: ‘All production can be analyzed according to a characteristic cycle of productive phases: Research and design, Reproduction, Distribution, Utilization, Elimination.’

Two years later Holm and Larson prepared a new edition of *Planning for Productivity* for the University of Michigan, titled *The Development Index* and the Production cycle became in this connection renamed to the Development Cycle: ‘A development for the building industry was originally proposed by the authors in their publication, “Planning for Productivity”, issued in 1940 by the Industrial Relation Institute, New York. Recently this earlier work has been restudied and its central idea revised and refined – a task has been facilitated by advice and encouragement from Dean Wells I. Bennett and professor Walter B. Sanders, College of Architecture and Design, University of Michigan, and from Chauncey L. Williams, Vice President of the F.W. Dodge Corporation, New York.’

I b. Cycle de l'évolution

L'évolution d'une forme nouvelle ou d'un type nouveau d'activité peut être analysée comme une opération comprenant six phases caractéristiques à action réciproque :

1. Recherche (analyse)
2. Projet (synthèse)
3. Production (formation)
4. Distribution (dispersion)
5. Utilisation (fonctionnement)
6. Élimination (extinction)

Pour réaliser une continuité rythmée et équilibrée de l'évolution, il doit y avoir une élimination progressive du vieux en fonction de l'émergence du neuf. Une telle continuité réclame une corrélation intime entre les phases de recherche et d'élimination du cycle d'évolution.

Cette définition de l'évolution n'implique pas une destruction délibérée du vieux pour la seule raison qu'il est vieux, ou ne demande pas la création de quelque chose de neuf simplement pour l'amour de la nouveauté ou d'une transformation de la "mode".

Aussi longtemps que le vieux répond à un besoin il est clair qu'il doit continuer à servir. L'objectif à atteindre par le développement de formes nouvelles ou de types nouveaux est la satisfaction des besoins émergents de l'homme, et qui ne peuvent pas être convenablement satisfaits par les formes et les types existants.



FIG. 4 The Development Index was translated and published in France by Vladimir Bodiatsky, 1954

About Development Cycle it was said: 'The development of any new form or activity pattern can be analysed as a process comprising six characteristic and interacting phases: 1. research (analysis) 2. design (synthesis) 3. production (formation) 4. distribution (dispersion) 5. utilization (performance) 6. elimination (termination). To achieve a rhythmic and balanced continuity in development, there must be a progressive elimination of the old along with the emergence of the new. Such continuity requires a close correlation between research and elimination phases of the Development Cycle.' *The Development Index* would be translated to Japanese, Swedish and in France and published by the French engineer Vladimir V. Bodiatsky. And the new generation of CIAM architects adapted the Production Cycle concept too. [4]

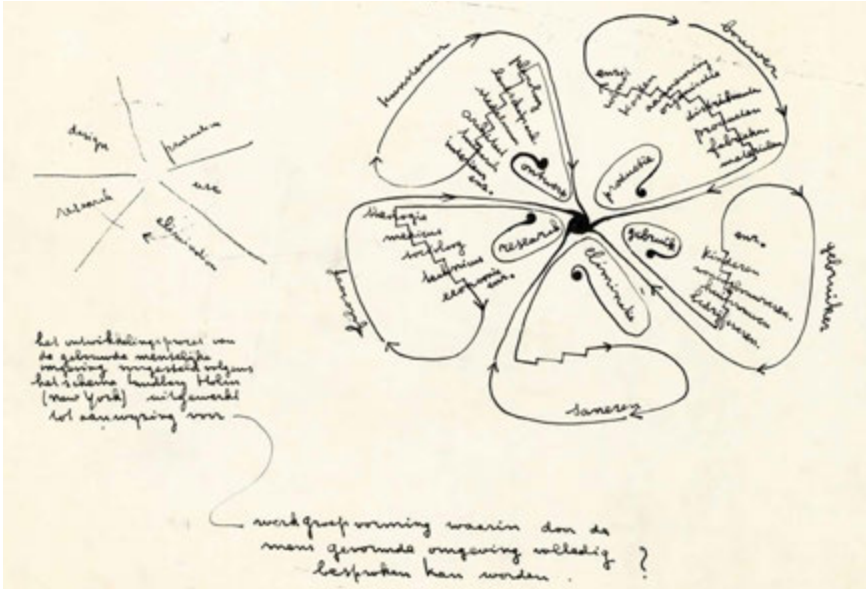


FIG. 5 'The development process of the built human environment, proposed according to the scheme Lönberg-Holm (New York)' by Jaap Bakema, 1964

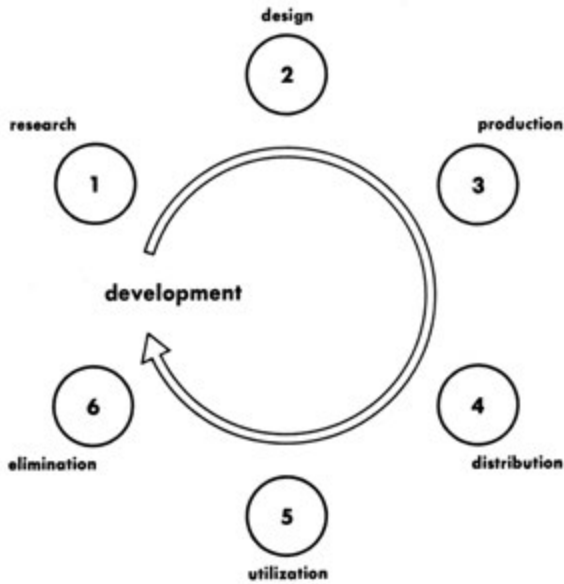


FIG. 6 Cycle of Development, 1934 [from *The Future is Tomorrow*, The Hague 1972]: 'The development of any new form or pattern of activity can be analyzed according to a cycle of six typical phases: (1) research or analysis, (2) design or synthesis, (3) production or formation, (4) distribution or dispersion, (5) utilization or performance, and (6) elimination or termination. Continuity in development requires close correlation between phases 1 and 6, but the flow of data from any field of activity must encompass the whole cycle.'

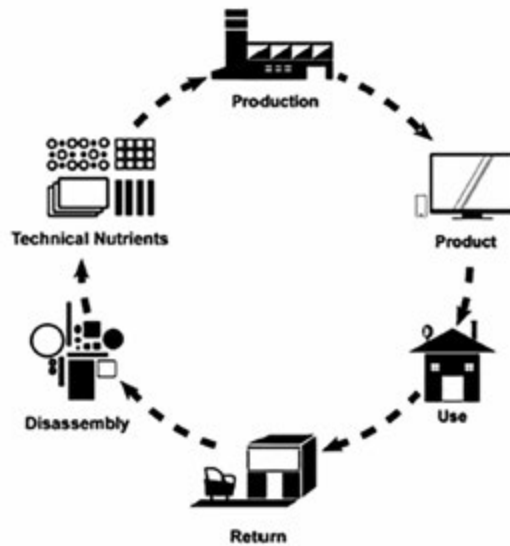


FIG. 7 Lifecycle Development, 1980s. By Walter R. Stahel & Michael Braungart. The Lifecycle Development diagram has a striking similarity to Lönberg-Holm's Development Cycle. Although their partner The Ellen Macarthur Foundation claims that: 'The circular economy concept has deep-rooted origins and cannot be traced back to one single date or author. Its practical applications to modern economic systems and industrial processes, however, have gained momentum since the late 1970s, led by a small number of academics, thought-leaders and businesses.' [From www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org]

A few months before Holm's retirement from F.W. Dodge his old college from *Architectural Record*, 1930, Douglas Haskel credited in the February issue of 1960 of *Architectural Forum* Holm for the Production Cycle concept: 'For many years, Mr. K. Lönberg-Holm, buried in the cavernous recesses of the F. W. Dodge Corporation, has been trying to put across the concept that buildings, like all organisms, are subject to a life cycle, as predictable and inevitable as the life cycle in Nature. [...] The building cycle involves research, design, construction, use and elimination - and repeat. One of Holm's chief contentions is that design which anticipates the cycle as a whole makes each succeeding step mere rational and easier.' [5]

Ladislav Sutnar who worked with Holm for 28 years at Sweet's Catalog Service also found it important to credit Holm for the Production Cycle, as he wrote on 16 December 1964 to Thomas M. Messer, the director of the Guggenheim Museum in New York: 'I was fortunate, that in the research department of Sweet's catalog Service, I worked with Lönberg-Holm. His ability for clear, to the point thinking and the precise use of words, is unique. The Production cycle (research, design, production, distribution, utilization, elimination) of which I spoke, is his idea. You may read more about it in his booklet, *Development Index*.' [6]

The last publication by Holm of the Production Cycle was fittingly for the Dutch publisher Martinus Nijhoff in The Hague, *The Role of Mass Media of Information and Communication* (1972): 'The development of any new form or pattern of activity can be analyzed according to a cycle of six typical phases: (1) research or analysis, (2) design or synthesis, (3) production or formation, (4) distribution or dispersion, (5) utilization or performance, and (6) elimination or termination. Continuity in development requires close correlation between phases 1 and 6, but the flow of data from any field of activity must encompass the whole cycle.' [7]

Consulted archives

Rotterdam, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Cornelis van Eesteren archive
Chicago, Knud Lönberg-Holm archive
Zürich, GTA, CIAM archive

Het esthetisch fundament van het Shell-gebouw (1938-42) van J.J.P. Oud

In de eerste decennia van de vorige eeuw was Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud (1890-1963) in Nederland, maar vooral in Duitsland, een wereldberoemd architect: een van de vier 'meesters' van het Nieuwe Bouwen in Europa. In tegenstelling echter tot de reputatie van Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius en Mies van der Rohe, is die van Oud een eeuw later geheel verbleekt. De belangrijkste oorzaak is ongetwijfeld de resolute afwijzing, zo niet 'stigmatisering' van een van de grootste en belangrijkste projecten uit zijn loopbaan: het hoofdkantoor van Shell-Nederland in Den Haag.¹ [1]

Hoewel net voor de bouwstop van 1 juli 1942 gereedgekomen, verschenen de eerste foto's, commentaren en kritieken in de vaktijdschriften pas na de oorlog. En het oordeel van vooral de internationale architectuurpers was ronduit vernietigend: door de inzet van de grammatica, regels en compositorische principes van de klassieke architectuur, was Oud 'teruggevallen' op de historische stijlarchitectuur die hij eerder in zijn *Holländische Architektur* (1926/29) met zoveel verve had afgezworen. Sterker nog: in de ogen van zijn critici zowel in Europa als de Verenigde Staten had Oud zich met het Shell-gebouw ontpopt als een verrader van modernistische ontwerp- en architectuuropvattingen, niet alleen die van hemzelf, maar van een hele generatie progressieve architecten. In tegenstelling tot zijn in de jaren twintig zelf gekozen rol als 'Wegbereiter der Moderne', voorloper bij de overgang van een historiserende naar een moderne, eigentijdse architectuur, was het Oud in de jaren veertig met het Shell-gebouw niet gelukt leiding te geven aan de verdieping respectievelijk verrijking van het Nieuwe Bouwen tot een volwaardige 'Nachkriegsmoderne'.

Als gevolg van de eliminatie uit de historiografie van de naoorlogse architectuur- en stedenbouwgeschiedenis, is tot nu toe Ouds architectonisch denken niet of onvoldoende in historisch verband bestudeerd. Zorgvuldige analyse van de door Oud bij het Shell-gebouw gehanteerde ontwerpmethoden, maar vooral ook van de programmatische teksten die hij achteraf ter verdediging schreef, laat zien hoezeer de architectuur van het monumentale kantoorgebouw geen breuk betekende met of verraad aan Ouds oorspronkelijke architectuuropvattingen, maar juist de logische consequentie is van zijn eigenzinnige theoretische keuzen uit de jaren tussen De Stijl en Bauhaus (1917-23).

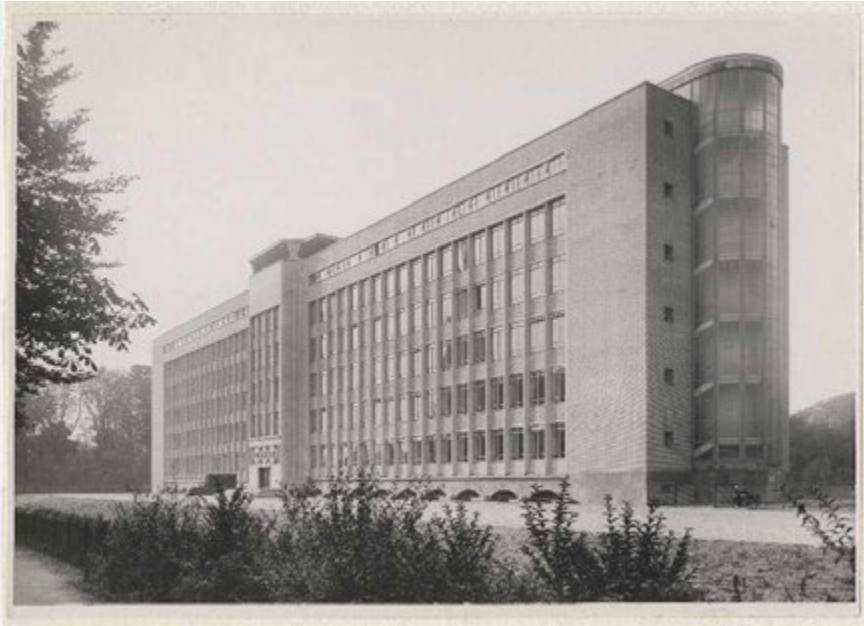


FIG. 1 J.J.P. Oud, Shell-gebouw, Den Haag, 1938-42

Ouds architectuurprogramma (1921-23)

Ouds beroemde bouwwerken uit de eerste decennia van de vorige eeuw – hoofdzakelijk arbeiderswijken die hij vanaf 1918 als (hoofd)architect van de Rotterdamse Woningdienst ontwierp – zijn illustratief voor de vervlechting van avant-gardedenkbeelden over bouwesthetiek met de concrete praktijk van de gemeentelijke woningbouw. Zijn theoretische artikelen uit de beginjaren van De Stijl, over kunst en machine, bouwkunst en normalisatie, massawoningbouw en stadsbeeld, behoren intussen tot de ‘sleutelteksten’ van de internationale, modernistische architectuur.² Sommige onderzoekers menen zelfs in het amalgaam aan voordrachten, opstellen en strijdbare manifesten, de contouren te ontdekken van een consistent architectuurprogramma. Zo werden die in ieder geval door Oud zelf als zodanig in binnen- en buitenland voorgesteld.³

Architectuurhistorisch gezien is het evenwel juister om te spreken van een serie min of meer uitgewerkte stellingen die niet veel meer lijken te bieden dan een parafrasering en bewerking van een architectuurprogramma zoals dat in de jaren tachtig en negentig van de voorafgaande eeuw, door voorvechters van een nieuwe architectuurbeweging vooral in Duitsland maar ook in Nederland, was ontwikkeld. Oude denkbeelden en speculaties over nieuwe ontwerpmethoden en

architectonische verschijningsvormen, geschreven in de taal en met de retorische stijlfiguren van de ‘Ideologie der Moderne’.

Dankzij de analyses van internationale architectuurhistorici als Harry Mallgrave en Werner Oechslin – en in ons land van Auke van der Woud – is de impact van negentiende-eeuwse, Duitse architectuur-theoretische concepten op de theorievorming binnen de Moderne Beweging een onomstotelijk feit.⁴ De historiografie van het Europese modernisme is niet het (succes)verhaal van een ‘massieve, ideologische breuk’ maar veeleer dat van een onoverzichtelijke, evolutionaire weg die via de paradigma’s van Duitstalige denkers als Semper, Wagner en Loos, uiteindelijk teruggaat naar de fundamenteën van de klassieke architectuurtheorie.

Ook is duidelijk geworden dat het architectonisch modernisme van de jaren twintig geen monolithische beweging was, maar dat de verschillen zowel binnen als tussen de afzonderlijke avant-gardes groter waren dan de overeenkomsten. Het is aanleiding voor een kritische (her)lezing van de door Oud zelf gereconstrueerde weg binnen De Stijl, waarmee hij vanaf 1917 tot aan de Tweede Wereldoorlog, met name in Duitsland, een grote reputatie wist op te bouwen.⁵

Oud heeft als ontwerpend architect gedurende zijn hele leven veel over architectuur geschreven, maar zich nooit gezet aan het uitwerken van zijn denkbeelden tot een coherente architectuurtheorie.⁶ De belangrijkste aanknopingspunten voor het begrijpen van Ouds verhouding tot de historische avant-gardebewegingen en met name tot De Stijl, zijn twee essays uit respectievelijk 1921 en 1923 die internationale bekendheid hebben gekregen dankzij hun opname in het enige boek dat op zijn naam staat: *Holländische Architektur* uit 1926/29.⁷ Twee teksten die oorspronkelijk bedoeld waren voor binnenlands gebruik en waarin Oud een beeld schetst van de staat en toekomst van de ‘nieuwe stijl’ die op dat moment in de Europese architectuur – en met name ook in Nederland – bezig was te ontstaan.

Uit deze niet altijd even helder geconstrueerde en hier en daar ook elkaar overlappende essays zijn twee, onderling samenhangende thema’s te distilleren die van cruciale betekenis waren voor de verdere ontwikkeling van Oud als denker en praktiserend architect. Oud beschouwde zichzelf als de tovenaarsleerling die voltooid waarmee Berlage ooit begonnen was: de bevrijding van de architectuur door de ballast van de historische stijlarchitectuur te laten verdwijnen in het ‘afvalputje’ van het verleden.⁸

Vervolgens: bij het experimenteren met nieuwe verschijningsvormen voor een moderne architectuur hield Oud vast aan de klassieke regels voor het bepalen van de volumetrische werking van het ‘gezuiverde’ gebouw: gesloten compositie,

platonische proporties en harmonie. Niet alleen als praktische, compositorische hulpmiddelen, maar vooral ook als 'ideële factoren der esthetische ontroering'. Met deze eerder door Adolf Loos verdedigde opvatting over een 'onhistorisch classicisme' gaf Oud een strikt tektonische interpretatie aan de abstracte denkbeelden over een 'beeldende architectuur' binnen De Stijl-beweging, met name die van Mondriaan en Van Doesburg.

In zijn essays vermengt Oud typische avant-gardethema's over 'mechanische esthetiek' en 'ornamentloze bouwkunst' met functioneel-rationalistische concepten over type en functie op een zodanige manier dat De Stijl-architectuur grijpbaar, in de zin van concreet uitvoerbaar wordt. Het is de uitkomst van een pragmatische keuze voor een persoonlijk 'bouwkunsidee', dat aansloot op Ouds praktijkervaring binnen het grootstedelijk bouwbedrijf in Rotterdam en inhoudelijk gevoed werd door stellingen over zakelijkheid, stijl en typologie waarover in kringen van Duitse woningbouwarchitecten al decennialang nagedacht en gestreden werd.⁹

'Klassieke tendensen van onze tijd'

Dat Oud weinig moeite had spiritualistische kunstopvattingen binnen één vormtheorie samen te brengen met technische-industriële keuzen, illustreert zijn omgang met het classicisme als vormleer, bouwsysteem en esthetische theorie. Het is opvallend hoe quasi-achteloos Oud aan het eind van zijn leven terugkeek op een van de centrale begrippen uit zijn architectonisch denken: 'Mein Drang um Präzision zu erreichen und zugleichzeit mein Mangel an der nötigen Kenntnis diese schon sofort in die Praxis des Bauens umzusetzen, liessen mich (was später bei meiner Arbeit wohl öfters geschah) zurück greifen auf die Exaktheit eines – der Art, nicht der Form nach 'klassischen Formwesens'.¹⁰

In deze overpeinzing blikt Oud terug op een cruciale fase in zijn carrière waarin hij niet zozeer brak met het gedachtegoed van De Stijl maar wel met bepaalde consequenties, zoals de onderschikking van de architectonische vorm aan het primaat van de kleur. Het waren de zogenaamde 'vervolgaren' van De Stijl waarin de oorspronkelijke (tegenstrijdige) ideeën over kunst, politiek en gemeenschappelijkheid op de proef werden gesteld. Van Doesburgs intensieve bemoeienissen met architectuur- en bouwtheorie in de jaren 1922 en 1923, eerst in Weimar en later vooral in Parijs, leidden mede door de samenwerking met de jonge Cornelis van Eesteren, tot de bouw van enkele woonhuismaquettes waarin de theoretische principes van een 'beeldende architectuur' op hun praktische uitvoerbaarheid werden onderzocht.¹¹

Woningen met een open plattegrond, zonder onderscheid tussen binnen en buiten; geen symmetrie of herhaling, geen gevelfront, maar een naar alle kanten uitdijende, ruimtelijke werking die door de kleur als organisch uitdrukkingsmiddel werd versterkt. Oud, die tot dan toe in Rotterdam met Van Doesburg had samengewerkt, kon zich moeilijk vinden in het immateriële en utopische karakter van een dergelijke onderneming. Voor Oud was, net als voor Le Corbusier, 'de grondvorm van de architectuur, geen abstract meetkundige figuur, geen vrij zwevend suprematistisch of constructivistisch lichaam, geen figuur waar voor, achter, onder, boven, links en rechts gelijkwaardig zijn, zoals Van Doesburg wilde.'¹² Integendeel!

Vrijwel op het zelfde moment dat Van Doesburg de fysieke en morele werking van ruimte door kleur op radicale wijze doordacht en praktisch onderzocht, sloeg Oud juist de tegenovergestelde weg in. Intussen internationaal gevierd als avant-gardearchitect met praktijkervaring, verbreedde hij in Rotterdam zijn strenge onderzoek van het 'huizenmateriaal' en testte hij de bouw van de eenvoudige (massa)woning als opmaat voor een toekomstige bouwkunst waarin tal van neoplastische ideeën over vorm en werking, op beheerste wijze moesten terugkomen.

In tegenstelling tot de vaak gekunstelde frasering en polemische betoogtrant van Ouds beschouwingen, stralen de volkswoningen die hij in deze jaren realiseerde in Oud-Mathenesse en Hoek van Holland, een sfeer uit van eenvoud, intimiteit en van weldadige rust. Aan Deutsche Werkbund-functionarissen als Muthesius ontleende Oud een 'sachliche' ontwerphouding die recht deed aan de 'concrete schoonheid van het alledaagse eenvoudige woonhuis'.¹³ Plattegronden en woonruimten zijn tot het meest noodzakelijke gereduceerd en zorgen juist in hun beknoptheid en precisie voor geestelijke waarden zoals intimiteit en huiselijkheid.

Tegelijkertijd onderzocht Oud in zijn 'witte woningarchitectuur' de materiële, technische en organisatorische elementen van de woningbouw op hun betekenis voor een 'mechanische esthetiek', zoals De Stijl die voorstond. Maar in tegenstelling tot de 'destructieve' werkwijze van Van Doesburg en Van Eesteren, vertrok hij daarbij vanuit een vooropgezet klassiek vormidee.

In Hoek van Holland bijvoorbeeld zijn de afzonderlijke woningen, winkels en pakhuizen symmetrisch gerangschikt met in de centrale as een vierkantig poortgebouw. Aan het gevelfront manifesteert het complex zich als een afgeronde compositie met cirkelvormige hoekoplossingen, waarin door de eenvoudige herhaling van architectonische elementen als balkons, betonplaten en plinten, de individuele woningen tot een welhaast klassiek gebouw zijn gebracht.¹⁴ [2]

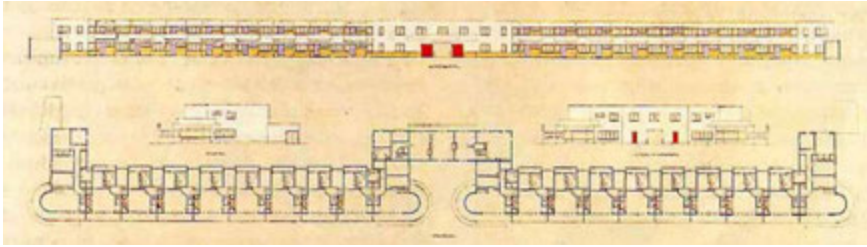


FIG. 2 J.J.P. Oud, woningbouw Hoek van Holland, 1924-27

Binnen de beperkte mogelijkheden van de woningbouw, ondernam Oud hier een poging tot het herstel en behoud van de architectuur in de praktische werkelijkheid van het dagelijks leven. In zijn eigen ogen niet meer dan een bescheiden voorzet voor een toekomstige bouwkunst die hij vervolgens in ‘opgaven van meer bouwkunstig representatieve aard’ trachtte te verheffen tot de ‘ware bouwstijl van onze tijd’, tot de nieuwe ‘Stijl’, waarvan het aan het eind van de jaren dertig ontworpen Shell-gebouw, de meest complete belichaming is.¹⁵

‘Waarheen leidt het Nieuwe Bouwen?’¹⁶

‘Sedert dit geschreven werd, verloor de Hollandse bouwkunst over de hele linie haar tempo en vitaliteit. Te veel door het buitenland geprezen, te veel verzonken in zelfgenoegzaamheid, verburgerlijkte zij volkomen en vervlakte tot een niveau waarvan het ondergaan slechts een dagjesmens plezier kan doen.’¹⁷ Met deze vaststelling besloot Oud de tweede druk van zijn internationaal gevierde Bauhaus-boek over de ‘ontwikkeling der moderne bouwkunst in Holland’ (1929). Mistroostige woorden die doen denken aan de manier waarop hij eerder de ondergang van ‘een levende bouwkunst’ in de stijlen-architectuur van de negentiende eeuw had gekarakteriseerd. Maar het is ook een toepasselijke voetnoot bij Ouds eigen (afgewezen) ontwerpidee voor de Beurs aan de Coolsingel in Rotterdam (1926), het eerste project voor een publiek gebouw in zijn carrière.¹⁸ [3]

Tegenover het groeiend succes van ‘nieuw-zakelijke oppervlakkigheden’ binnen de Nederlandse architectuur, kwam Oud in zijn prijsvraagontwerp met een radicaal architectuurstandpunt. Zijn voorstel voor een uitgekleed, ‘naakt’ bouwlichaam was niet alleen een afwijzing van iedere vorm van ‘vooropgezette esthetiek’, maar ook een indicatie van de weg terug naar het gezonde bouwen. Die liep via de pioniers van de nieuwe bouwkunstabeweging (Berlage, Muthesius) naar het vroege werk van Oud zelf en vooral ook naar dat van Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier en Gropius, die tezamen het fundament hadden gelegd van een ‘ornamentloze, technisch geraffineerde, klare en strakke vormgeving’.¹⁹

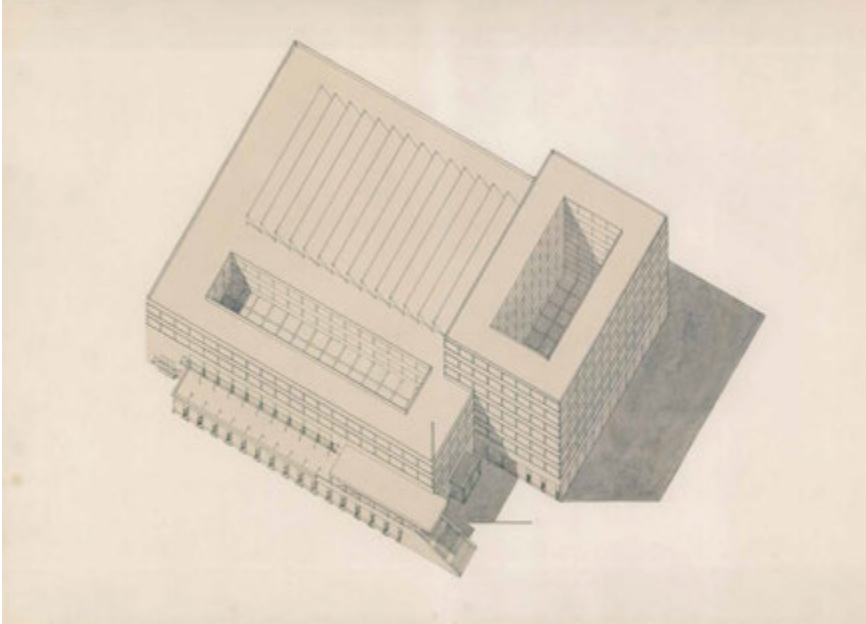


FIG. 3 J.J.P. Oud, prijsvraagontwerp Beursgebouw, Rotterdam, 1926

Oud stond aan het begin van de jaren dertig niet alleen in zijn kritiek op de vervlakking van het functionalisme van streng zakelijke ontwerphouding tot wispelturige bouwstijl. Overal in Europa ontspon zich een hevige ‘querelle des anciens et des modernes’ die inhoudelijk niet veel verschilde van de ‘Typenstreit’ binnen de Deutsche Werkbund vlak voor de Eerste Wereldoorlog.²⁰ En ook nu weer bleek Muthesius voor Oud een voorbeeld te zijn. In diens discussies met Henry van de Velde over de functionele en/of esthetische grondslagen van het vormgeven (‘gestalten’) had Muthesius zich allesbehalve een dogmatisch functionalist getoond, maar pleitte hij voor het toelaten van ‘Stimmungsbestandteile’ zoals gevoelens en emoties als tegenwicht voor het schematisme van geometrische grondvormen. Het was een pleidooi voor een ‘verbreding’ van het functionalisme, waarmee hij zich in 1927 opnieuw in de strijd mengde met zijn kritiek op het esthetisch formalisme van modernistische woonarchitectuur, zoals op de door de Deutsche Werkbund georganiseerde tentoonstelling in Stuttgart te zien was.²¹

Dat de voorstanders van de moderne architectuur fouten hadden gemaakt en in hun gebouwen onvoldoende rekening hielden met niet-functionele en gevoelsmatige belangen, daarover was aan het eind van de jaren dertig iedereen het wel eens. Maar niet over hoe het vervolgens met het moderne bouwen verder moest. Aan de vooravond van de Tweede Wereldoorlog kwam Alfred Roth, Zwitsers architect

en vriend van Oud, met een niet mis te verstane waarschuwing. Terug naar de ‘geschiedenis’ was geen optie en ook het te hulp roepen van de zogenaamd tijdloze ordeningsmethoden van het klassieke was uitgesloten.²²

En dat is precies de uitweg die vrijwel gelijktijdig Oud voor ogen stond met het ontwerp voor het hoofdkantoor van de Bataafsche Import Maatschappij (Shell) in Den Haag.

Geometrie van de ontroering

Het Shell-gebouw aan de Wassenaarseweg in Den Haag is waarschijnlijk het meest tragische, publieke gebouw in de geschiedenis van de Nederlandse architectuur. Het is geen modernistisch bedrijfsongeval zoals veel critici in binnen- en buitenland indertijd dachten, maar veeleer een dominant gebaar op de verkeerde plek. Het is een gebouw op zoek naar de stad.

De opdracht was het maken van een eenvoudig, zakelijk en tegelijk representatief kantoorgebouw voor zeshonderd medewerkers, met een uitbreidingscapaciteit van driemaal zoveel werkplekken. De reconstructie van het ontwerpproces aan de hand van het overvloedige schets- en tekenmateriaal, kan tot geen andere conclusie leiden dan dat Oud bij het ontwerp van het Shell-gebouw zich vertild heeft aan de effectiviteit van de compositorische en esthetische hulpmiddelen waarmee hij de symbolische waarde van het gebouw ten opzichte van de omgeving wilde versterken. De vele, haastig gekrabbelde gevelschetsen stralen een grootstedelijke dynamiek uit die herinnert aan het expressionistisch handwerk van Ouds vriend en collega, Erich Mendelsohn. [4] Maar de vaart en opdringerigheid van die tekeningen lijken in het gerealiseerde gebouw volledig te zijn gesmoord. Daar overheerst een historiserende architectuur die als een loodzware mantel om het klassiek geproportioneerde bouwskelet lijkt te zijn gedrapeerd.

Toch was aan het eind van de jaren dertig een dergelijk klassiek gebouw geen uitzonderlijke verschijning binnen de grootschalige kantoorbouw in Nederland. In 1937 publiceerde de Bond van Nederlandsche Architecten een in drie talen gesteld ‘bouwwerkenboek’, waarin de recente bouwproductie in Nederland in alfabetische volgorde en zonder jaartallen, naar plaats en niet op stijl of naam van de architect, bijeen was gebracht.²³ Opgenomen zijn ook een aantal monumentale administratie- en verzekeringskantoren, banken en fabrieksgebouwen, waartussen Ouds Shell-gebouw niet zou hebben misstaan. Sterker nog, in zijn inleiding lijkt architectuurcriticus J.P. Mieras vooruit te lopen op de ‘aesthetische verwerking’ van het kantoorgebouw dat bij Oud in Rotterdam bij wijze van spreken nog op de tekentafel lag.

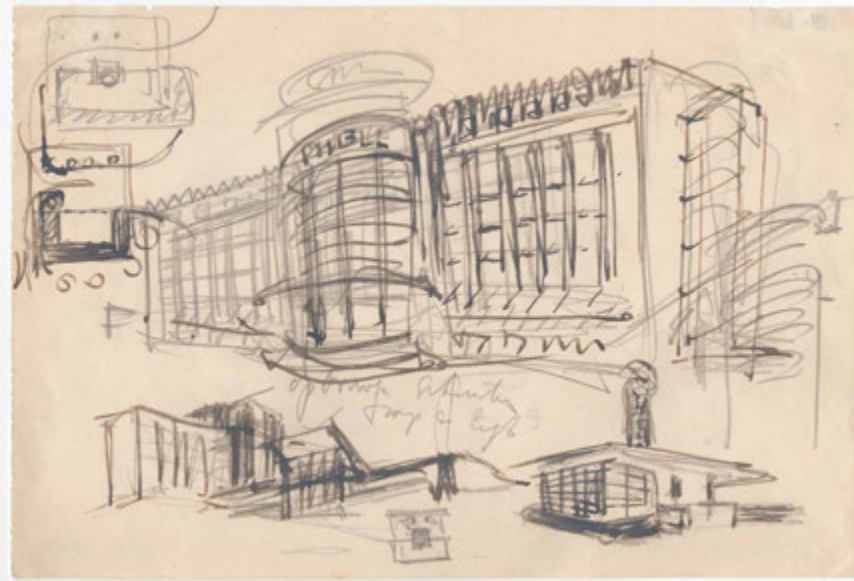


FIG. 4 J.J.P. Oud, ontwerpschets voorgevel en situering Shell-gebouw, Den Haag, 1938

Zijn essay is een pleidooi voor stilistische pluriformiteit waarbij eenvoud en niet stijl het ontwerpprincipe is: 'Uit de talrijke essentiële elementen van bouwkundige schoonheid, waardeere men in de eerste plaats de verhoudingen, de vorm van het geheel, het silhouet en de kleur. Daarbij gelden regels die, voorloopig gevoeglijk, als steeds gegolden hebbende, kunnen worden aanvaard. Men late zich door geen enkele leus wijsmaken dat de fraaie z.g. klassieke verhoudingen afgedaan hebben. Men late zich door geen enkele autoritaire bewering misleiden, als zou een plumpe vorm gerechtvaardigd kunnen worden door innerlijke waarden en geestelijke kwaliteiten van dien vorm.'²⁴

Het is onwaarschijnlijk dat Oud met het predicaat 'aesthetisch bouwen' zou hebben ingestemd. Dat was immers een categorie waartegen hij vanaf zijn eerste contacten met Van Doesburg gestreden had. Hij zou eerder gesproken hebben over de 'esthetische ontroering' als de essentie van het bouwen. 'Een kracht,' aldus Van Doesburg in 1921, 'waar al het andere van het bouwen: techniek, stijl, vorm aan ondergeschikt is en aan bijdraagt.'²⁵ Ontroering was een kernbegrip van een nieuwe esthetica waarin naast geest en het universele, geometrie een centraal thema was. Binnen de vage contouren van de neoplastische schoonheidsleer nam de architectuur een – overigens niet onomstreden – prominente plaats in, omdat zij gebaseerd is op wetmatigheden van geometrie, symmetrie, harmonie en

proporties: compositorische hulpmiddelen die ‘de vorm en spraak van het gebouw algemener doen aanspreken.’²⁶

Vanaf de eerste bladzijden van zijn *Holländische Architektur*, waarin P.J.H. Cuypers door Oud wordt opgevoerd als de eerste die de ‘esthetische onaandoenlijkheid’ van de historische stijlen-architectuur zou hebben ontmaskerd, tot aan de laatste bladzijden van *Mein Weg in ‘De Stijl’* (1960) heeft Oud – zonder al te veel theoretische basis – vastgehouden aan de idee van architectuur als de kunst die alle zintuigen beroert. Zo ook bij het ontwerp en de verdediging van het Shell-gebouw, waar de architectuur op demonstratieve wijze functioneert als een ‘machine à émouvoir’. Een machine die de beschouwer – het publiek – uitdaagt om ‘tot de essentie van de belevenissen en de ontroeringen van onze tijd door te dringen.’²⁷ En die daarmee een eminente, symbolische functie vervult in het omringende stadsbeeld.

Net als in de beginjaren van *De Stijl*, probeerde Oud aan de Wassenaarseweg esthetische ideeën van *De Stijl* te combineren met architectuurhistorische theorieën over het gesloten stadsmodel zoals die aan het eind van de negentiende eeuw in Duitsland waren ontwikkeld. Vanuit een op het ‘monumentale stadsbeeld’ gefixeerde ontwerpvisie heeft hij gedurende de oorlogsjaren tal van stedenbouwkundige plannen ontwikkeld voor het herstel en de wederopbouw van Rotterdam. Ontwerpen met gebouwen die door hun rijke en exotische ornamenten intrigeerden en daarmee het stedelijk publiek probeerden te betrekken bij het maken van de stad.²⁸

Aan de Wassenaarseweg hebben de stedenbouwkundige bedoelingen van Oud niet gewerkt. Wel is het voormalige hoofdkantoor van Shell-Nederland in 1993 tot monument verklaard, als ‘voorbeeld van het bouwen in een traditionele bouwtrant’!

Noten

Deze tekst is een bewerking van een bijdrage aan een in het Deutsches Architekturmuseum (DAM) georganiseerd symposium: *Wandel, Bekehrung, Verrat. Mutabilität in Werk und Karriere der Architekten* (15 maart 2018). Ik dank Wolfgang Voigt (DAM) en Marianne Lahr voor hun hulp bij de totstandkoming van dit artikel.

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- 2 Hilde Heynen et al. (ed.), ‘Dat is architectuur’. *Sleutelteksten uit de twintigste eeuw*, Rotterdam 2001, 91-98; 747-754.
- 3 Eva von Engelberg-Dočkal, “‘Holländische Architektur’. J.J.P. Oud als Vermittler der niederländischen Moderne”, kunstgeschichte-ejournal.net/discussion/2011/engelberg-dočkal; Herman van Bergeijk, “Ein großer Vorsprung gegenüber Deutschland”. *Die niederländischen Architekten auf der Bauhausausstellung*

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- 9 Henk Engel & Jan de Heer, 'Stadsbeeld en woningbouw', *Oase 7* (1984), 10-22.
- 10 J.J.P. Oud, *Mein Weg in 'De Stijl'*, Rotterdam 1960, 25.
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- 13 Henk Engel, 'De Kiefhoek, een monument voor gemiste kansen', in Sjoerd Cusveller, *De Kiefhoek, een woonwijk in Rotterdam*, Bussum 1990, 15-40.
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- 15 Oud, *Hollandse architectuur*, 25; Taverne, *J.J.P. Oud. Poëtisch functionalist 1890-1963*, 334-335.
- 16 Oud, *Hollandse architectuur*, 110-111.
- 17 Oud, *Hollandse architectuur*, 112.
- 18 Taverne, *J.J.P. Oud. Poëtisch functionalist 1890-1963*, 350-361.
- 19 Oud, *Hollandse architectuur*, 28.
- 20 Theo Hilpert, 'Der Funktionalismus-Streit. Bemerkungen zu einer Diskussion von 1929', *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen* 26 (1979) 4/5, 373-381; Christoph Wieser, *Erweiterung des Funktionalismus 1930-1950. Mit Beispielen aus der Schweiz und Schweden*, Lausanne (diss.) 2005, 21-27; 129-138.
- 21 Julius Posener, 'Kritik der Kritik des Funktionalismus', *Werk-Archithese 3* (1977), 20.
- 22 Stanislaus von Moos, Alfred Roth. *Architect of Continuity. Architekt der Kontinuität*, Zürich 1985, 22-24.
- 23 A. Eibink, W.J. Gerretsen & J.P.L. Hendriks (ed.), *Hedendaagsche architectuur in Nederland*, Amsterdam 1937.
- 24 J.P. Mieras, 'Inleiding', in Eibink, *Hedendaagsche architectuur in Nederland*, 7-22.
- 25 Theo van Doesburg, 'De betekenis der mechanische esthetiek voor de architectuur en andere vakken', in Theo van Doesburg, *Naar een beeldende architectuur*, Nijmegen 1983, 49-68. De betekenis van de schoonheidsleer voor de architectuurtheorie van de moderne tijd is in de geschiedschrijving onderbelicht. Auke van der Woud heeft in zijn *Waarheid en karakter* het belang daarvan aangetoond voor de negentiende eeuw.
- 26 J.J.P. Oud, 'Het gebouw "Shell Nederland N.V.", 's Gravenhage', in Oud, *Ter wille van een levende bouwkunst*, Den Haag/Rotterdam 1962, 92.
- 27 Over de impact van kunstwerken en gebouwen op de beschouwer in de kunsttheorie in het algemeen en die van De Stijl in het bijzonder: Eddy de Jongh, *Kunst en het vruchtbare misverstand*, Amsterdam 1992; Yve-Alain Bois, 'Mondrian and the Theory of Architecture', *Assemblage 4* (1987), 102-130; Estelle Thibault, *La Geometrie des Émotions. Les esthétiques scientifiques de l'architecture en France, 1860-1950*, Wavre 2010.
- 28 Taverne, *J.J.P. Oud. Poëtisch functionalist 1890-1963*, 425-433.

Mies van der Rohe's competition entry for the German Pavilion at the Brussels World Fair 1935 ^[1]

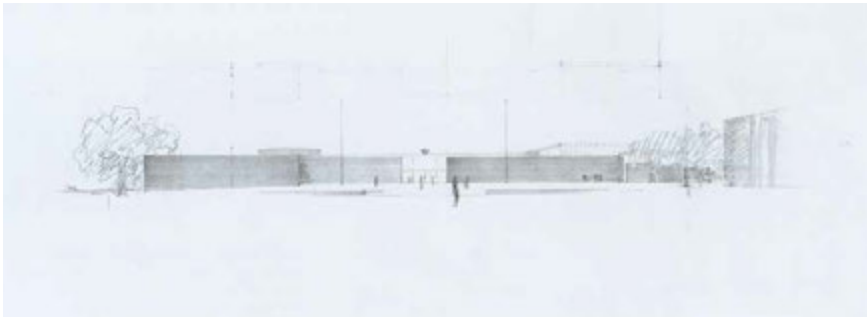


FIG. 1 Mies and Mies office: German pavilion for the 1935 Brussels World Fair, front (southern) elevation [Terence Riley/Barry Bergdoll (ed), *Mies in Berlin*, New York 2001, 286]

Well into late 1934 the position the Nazis were willing to take towards modern architecture and the *Neues Bauen* in particular was rather vague and anything but clear. Despite the general hostile atmosphere against Weimar modernism, some of the more intelligent party leaders could hardly miss to acknowledge the wide recognition that German representatives of the modern movement had gained abroad. This holds particularly true in the case of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Once, in the times of the Weissenhof exhibition, considered the enfant terrible of the architectural avant-garde, he could meanwhile count on many sympathizers throughout the professional establishment. These reached well down to hardcore conservatives and even to overtly right wing circles. Peter Behrens, Paul Bonatz, Theodor Fischer, Joseph Hoffmann, Wilhelm Kreis, Richard Riemerschmid and Fritz Schumacher all signed a petition in his cause, when in summer 1932 the Dessau city council with its newly elected Nazi majority threatened to close the Bauhaus down.¹ And it was the Magdeburg mill owner Adolf Fahrenholz, an ardent admirer of modernism as well as an early member of the Nazi party, who arranged

for a meeting with Alfred Rosenberg in April 1933, when Mies was fighting for the survival of the Berlin Bauhaus.² Later that year, Winfried Wendland, the vice-leader of the Deutsche Werkbund recently installed by the Nazis, admitted in an open letter to Walter Riezler that 'he, personally, holds Mies van der Rohe in extraordinary high esteem, in opposition to many other moderns'.³ Even as late as 1936, when fights about the appropriate architectural style of the Third Reich had long been decided upon after Hitler's personal intervention, it was still possible to speak publicly in favor of Mies. On March 22 of that year the *Berliner Tageblatt*, one of the capital's leading newspapers, published in its fashionable Sunday supplement a whole-page appreciation on the occasion of Mies's fiftieth birthday, illustrated by two images of the Barcelona Pavilion in luxurious offset printing.⁴ [2] The article is signed 'L.', which in all likelihood refers to Wilhelm Lotz, another Werkbund member, author, and short time editor of *Die Form* who like Riezler had written favorably on Mies in the Weimar years.

The reasons why Mies had become so popular even with official Nazi party-liners or conservative antagonists like Paul Bonatz and Wilhelm Kreis were exactly his achievements as an exposition architect at Barcelona in 1929. Barcelona 1929, meaning both the German Pavilion and the exhibition stands of the various sections that he designed in collaboration with Lilly Reich, marked a clear turning point in his career, both as his mature break-through to modernity, as well as in his way of thinking about the theoretical foundations of his professional stimulants. The latter circled around the spiritual notion being the source of architectural creativity as opposed to the prevailing materialistic approach of left-wing architects like Ernst May or Hannes Meyer, a concept met with much sympathy by many of Mies's former opponents. So, for a brief period under Nazi rule, irrespective of the ill fate of the Bauhaus and the furious animosities he had to face as its last director, Mies may have cherished legitimate hopes of further private and public commissions. It was exactly this situation that George Nelson was hinting at in *Pencil Points* of September 1935 when concluding that 'at the present time, oddly enough, Mies is on the up-grade'.⁵ 'At the present time' – the interview with Mies on which the article is based had taken place in summer 1934 – does clearly refer to the phase when Mies was working on his competition entry for the German Pavilion at the Brussels World Fair of 1935.⁶

Considering his reputation as an architect able to provide a uniform and unmistakable 'image' of his country in an international context the invitation to join a small and highly selective group of competitors should have come at no big surprise. The decisive factor, however, may have been the personnel continuities in the ministries and public agencies involved: Head of department Karl Ritter in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and his colleague Hans Posse in the Ministry



FIG. 2 Frauenspiegel, Sunday supplement of Berliner Tageblatt 22 March 1936 [Author's collection]

of Trade and Industry had already been in charge of the German participation at the 1929 Barcelona exposition. Posse, meanwhile promoted to the position of undersecretary, and Ritter were both part of the steering committee for

Brussels as well. Designated Commissioner of the Reich was Peter Mathies, who until 1933 had held the position of Reichskommissar für das Ausstellungs- und Messewesen [Commissioner of the Reich for Exposition and Trade Fair Affairs], a sub-department of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, which also affected his temporary engagement with Barcelona. Ernst Maiwald had headed the office of the then Reich's Commissioner Georg von Schnitzler in Barcelona and was now in charge of all foreign activities within the Ausstellungs- und Messeamt der Deutschen Industrie, a private-sector institution coordinating the engagement of the Federation of German Industries. With Ernst Walther Jun. and Sergius Ruegenberg in his office he had two former assistants of Mies at his hand.⁷ And last not least Georg von Schnitzler himself, member of the board of directors of the powerful IG-Farben trust, as well as his wife Lilly von Schnitzler-Malinckrodt, who were in social contact with high-ranking Nazi-officials like Joseph Goebbels, will certainly have taken the chance and put in a good word on Mies's behalf.

With the economic situation still tight in late 1933, both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the Ministry of Trade and Industry reacted rather reluctantly to the prospect of a German participation in Brussels,⁸ thus giving Goebbels as the appointed Reich's Minister of Information and Propaganda a chance to step in. During a reception at the Belgian Embassy in Berlin he signaled without further consultations that Germany intended to accept the invitation to participate. 'After the rather disastrous German performance in Chicago,' quote Goebbels, he regarded this as a 'most welcome opportunity to convey to the world – for the first time on European soil – an imposing picture of the achievements of the Third Reich.'⁹ Shortly afterwards, on 9 April 1934, Hitler himself made an official declaration to the Belgian Ambassador,¹⁰ thus paving the way for concrete negotiations. Thanks to his insolent venture bypassing everybody else involved so far, Goebbels made sure he stayed in control of affairs. By consequence, it was Goebbels' paladin and vice-commissioner Dr. Bährens and not the latter's rather delicate and somewhat phlegmatic superior Mathies who produced the guidelines for the German participation. Dated Mai 14, 1934, they leave no doubt about the ideological background of the German involvement: 'A German participation has to proceed from the principal of Totalitarianism within the Third Reich. [...] The responsibility of our [i.e. Goebbels'] ministry concerns but the general structure, the hall of fame and the overall presentation of the contemporary Reich. [Within the section "Weltanschauung"] the fundamentals of National Socialism and its preconditions need to be shown. [...] The concept of "blood and soil" is not [!] to be dwelt upon in Brussels. In this section the ties of the peasant to his soil will be shown [instead]. In the light of the [particular social and economic] structure of Belgium this is bound to arouse popular interest. Finally, the question of the interior colonization of the German East as well as the topic of suburban settlements need to be taken care of.'¹¹



FIG. 3 Mies in Brussels, June 1934. The person on his right may be Ernst Maiwald, the young man turning towards the camera possibly Ernst Walther Jun. [MoMA, Mies Archive; Franz Schulze, *Mies van der Rohe. A Critical Biography*, Chicago and London 1985, 202]

Following common practice under totalitarian conditions the Nazis, instead of open competitions, favored direct commissions, habitually to be granted to some loyal party-member. In this case, the respective files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contain a dispersed invitation to a session of the building committee, where on 28 May 1934, 'Professor Schmitthenner is going to present a preliminary concept for the German House at the Brussels Exposition for further discussion, the costs of which he estimates at one Million Reichsmark.'¹² Apparently, Schmitthenner's initial design failed to meet approval. According to Ernst Walther's recollections, it was above all Maiwald, Ruegenberg, and Walther himself – the experts at the privately funded *Ausstellungs- und Messeamt* – who picked it to pieces and who finally made Schmitthenner, after still taking part in the subsequent competition, withdraw completely.¹³ Just one week after the said meeting of the building committee, its chairman Eugen Hönig, president of the *Reichskammer der Bildenden Künste*, the compulsory Nazi chamber for practicing artists of all kind, invited Mies to 'contribute to a preliminary solution for the exhibition buildings at the Brussels World Fair of 1935. On this behalf, he is asked to meet on Sunday, 8 July that year, at the *Reichskammer*, where he is to receive the necessary documents

and further information.¹⁴ Immediately afterwards Mathies send a draft for a call of competition requesting all participant to meet in Brussels on 14 June for a first visit of the exposition grounds.¹⁵ [3] The attachment to his letter defines the preliminaries for a design of the German exhibition building on its designated site. All drawings and papers had to be turned in by 2 July, i. e. within the short limit of a three-weeks period. Participants would receive an allowance of 5.500 Reichsmark, travel expenses included – which meant quite a lot of money in those days, where skilled laborers earned hardly more than 250 Reichsmark per month. Some of the following specifications appear to be of particular interest when discussing Mies van der Rohe’s competition project:¹⁶

- § 3 The exhibition building must express the intentions of National Socialist Germany in a representative form and has to serve as a symbol for the attitude of National Socialism, its militant power, and its heroic will. These ideas need to be expressed by the overall disposition as well as by the exterior design, which has to differ from the somewhat bombastic apparel of the Belgian buildings [on site].
- § 4 The architect is granted complete freedom. In any case he may calculate on building costs of 1.5 to 1.8 million Reichsmark including interior refurbishing (chairs, lettering, restaurant furniture etc. included).
- § 5 The total building area for Germany comprises 9.000 square meters, not including a wine restaurant and beer cellar. Of these 9.000 square meters 4.000 square meters need to be reserved for the Reich’s Ministry of Information and Propaganda [...].

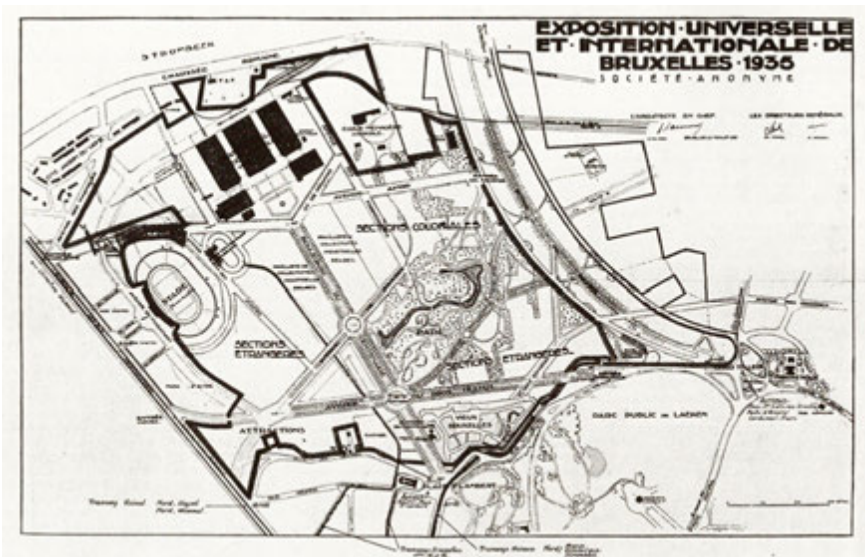


FIG. 4 Site plan of the Brussels Exposition. The area for the German pavilion is in the upper left corner flanked by the stadium and the Belgian exhibition halls [MoMA, Mies Archive 18.22; Arthur Drexler (ed.), *The Mies van der Rohe Archive* (4), New York and London 1986, 86]

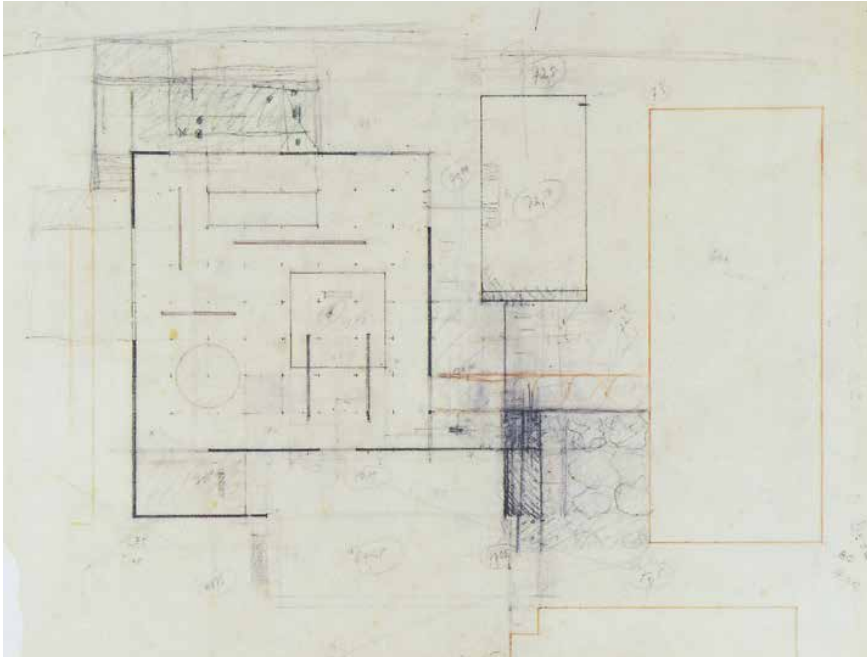


FIG. 5 Mies and Mies office: Floor plan of the German pavilion. The buildings on the right side outlined in red show two of the Belgian exhibition halls already on site [MoMA, Mies Archive 18.8; Riley/Bergdoll, *Mies in Berlin*, 286]

All competition entries were to become the property of the Reich. They had to be turned in fully signed, thereby abolishing the anonymity of the author that had been common practice before 1933 and, up to a certain degree, had granted impartiality of the jurors. Next to Mies, invitations had gone to Emil Fahrenkamp and Karl Wach, both from Dusseldorf, Ludwig Ruff from Nurnberg, Eckart Muthesius and Paul Schmitthenner.

The list of names appears somewhat extraordinary, if not decidedly strange. Outspoken Nazis at this early stage of the regime were in all likelihood only Ruff and Schmitthenner. Wach and Fahrenkamp had been considered major representatives of a moderate western German version of the modern movement, before turning into obedient agents in the later high tide of the Nazi regime. In all likelihood they owed their participation to the strong recommendation of Maiwald's office in Düsseldorf, which worked probably in favor of Mies as well. Completely out of context fell the nomination of Eckart Muthesius, then still in his early thirties, whose extensive work for the Maharaja of Indore was barely known but to a handful of insiders in those days. Apart from that, his French 'affected' version of modernism would hardly have met the expectation of the propagators of a new German architecture. The surviving files of the Foreign Office give no clue

of how this list did come about, nor do they report on the subsequent meetings of the building committee, now apparently under full control of Goebbels' Ministry of Information and Propaganda, of which no relevant material did survive. By consequence, all drawings and models that became property of the Reich were lost – Mies's cautious request to have photographs taken of his entry once the competition had been decided upon seems to have stayed unanswered.¹⁷ Albeit, some 30 sketches and preliminary drawings for his project have come down to us.¹⁸ And so did transcriptions of his explanatory text including notes, first drafts, and earlier versions with his handwritten corrections, which give some insight into his way of thinking.¹⁹ With his basic willingness for cooperation out of the question – otherwise the only way out would have been his open refusal of participation – they allow for a more differentiated assessment of his attitudes and of how far he was willing to obey to Nazi expectation. For this to understand let us proceed with a brief reconstruction of Mies van der Rohe's project.

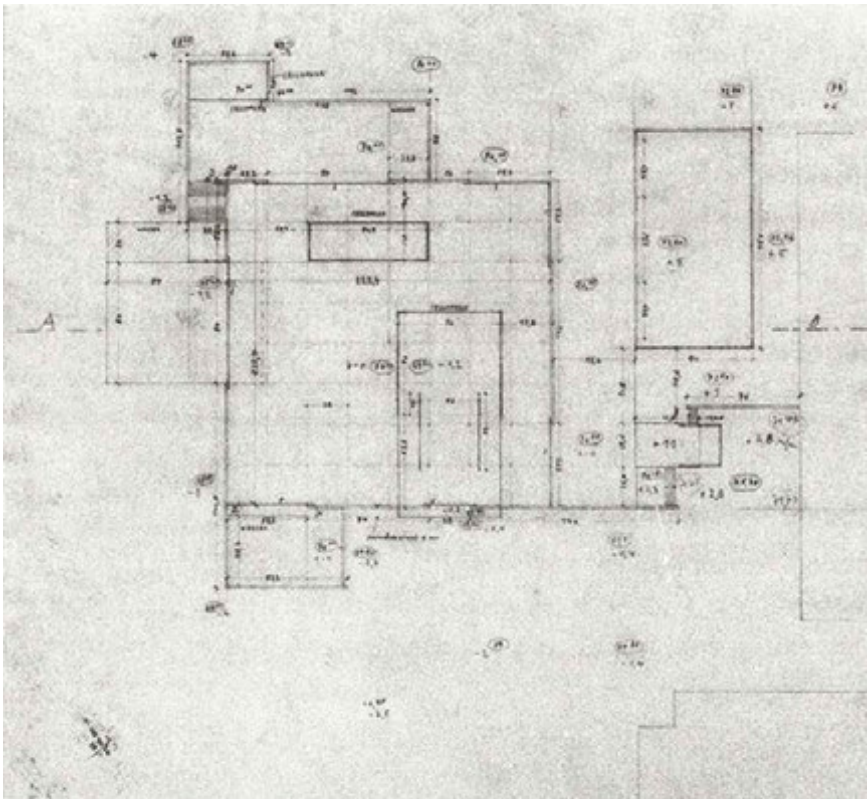


FIG. 6 Mies office: German Pavilion, floor plan for model maker (dimensions given should be read in 1 : 50 scale) [MoMA, Mies Archive 18.9; Drexler, *The Mies van der Rohe Archive* (4), 95]

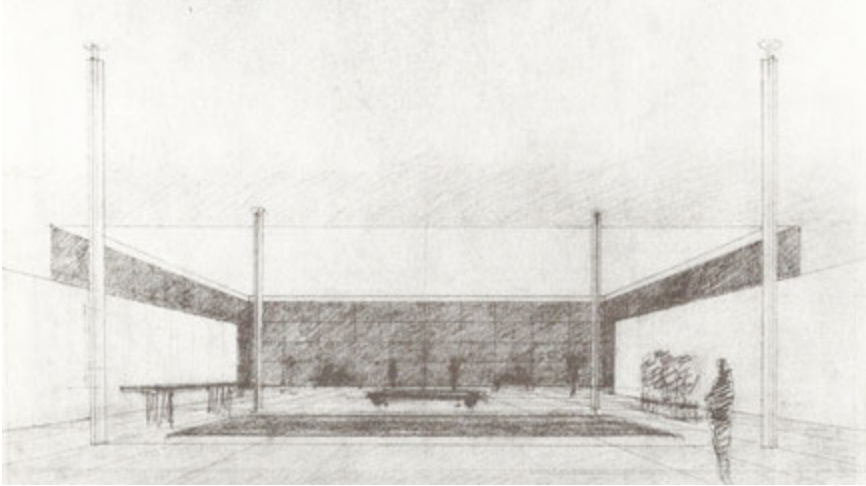


FIG. 7 Mies and Mies office: German pavilion, hall of fame towards court of honor [MoMA, Mies Archive 18.3; Drexler, *The Mies van der Rohe Archive* (4), 101]



FIG. 8 Mies and Mies office: German pavilion, western elevation with lower restaurant level [MoMA, Mies Archive 18.5; Drexler, *The Mies van der Rohe Archive* (4), 90]

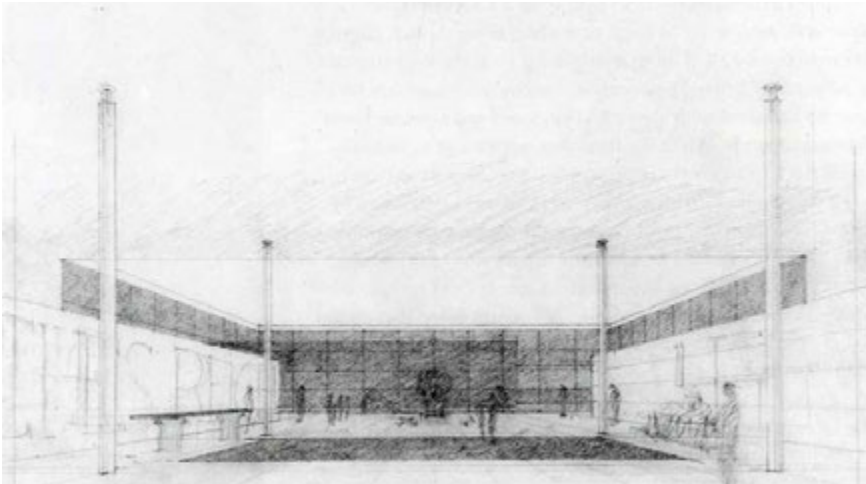


FIG. 9 Mies and Mies office: German pavilion, hall of fame, further version of MoMA 18.3 (ill. 7) with swastika and lettering [Deuts]ches Reich (not by Mies' hand) [Riley/Bergdoll, *Mies in Berlin*, 287]

The building site occupies a prominent position at the northwestern corner of the exposition premises, right behind the stadium and next to the already existing, 'bombastic' Belgian exhibition halls. [4] The German Pavilion comprises a square, almost completely enclosed cube of 112 meters lateral length (8 by 8 columns standing 14 meters apart, which amounts to a total floor area of 12.544 square meters).²⁰ [5-6] The central area includes two courtyards and a large circular lantern providing additional lighting for the interior. The southern main entrance opens directly towards the hall of fame, the axial orientation of which is accentuated by two free-standing walls three quarters the height of the interior space running parallel to each other. [7] They connect to the adjoining court of honor screened off from the hall by walls of darkly tinted plate glass. According to Mies's explanations, the courtyard was to contain highlights of the best German art. Considering the exposed situation this probably meant plaster casts of monumental pieces of sculpture. Quite similar to Barcelona, the projecting wall to the left of the main entrance encloses a square water basin, to which the interior opens up by a fully glazed screening wall. The second courtyard facing north operates on similar principles and is devoted to works of Christian art – quite a cynical Nazi invention when taking account of their antireligious attitude, which reminds one of their later conception of a Jewish museum in Prague. The small extension on its northwestern edge is to house the treasuries of Christian art. This was obviously meant to lure and lull the catholic majority of the Belgian visitors, and one might well wonder if the list of objects on display was already circulating amongst prominent Nazi collectors. The restaurant with its large outside terrace occupies the sunken lower level right beneath the continuous glass wall stretching the enormous width of three bays (42 meters) on the western side of the building. [8] Right opposite towards the East lies the 'Olympic court' meant to propagate the Berlin Olympic Games scheduled for 1936. Beyond that and further to the East follows the completely glazed hall of the German machinery and electric industries. The annex building to the right of the main front contains rooms for the administration, a cinema and a café opening up towards the Olympic court.

The free-standing wall elements of the hall of fame were intended to bear the insignia of the Reich and National Socialism respectively. [9] The sections immediately beyond had to be reserved for Goebbels' Ministry of Information and Propaganda, which thereby occupies almost half of the total floor area, while trade and industry have been delegated to the surrounding spaces along the periphery of the building. Its skeleton structure with loadbearing outside walls in brick is based on a regular grid of 14 meters square. The brick is a dark clinker typical for regions in northern and northwestern Germany. All other materials used had to be of German provenance, too: German travertine and limestone, stoneware for the floor slabs, as well as native fine woods such as oak, beech, and walnut,²¹ thereby responding to a notorious claim

of Nazi propaganda to support domestic industries. On the other hand, Mies had used many of these materials already before 1933, so this may not be held against his professional honesty and esthetic convictions.

From the architectural point of view there is no caesura in his oeuvre, no turning point to indicate a moral shift of attitude. Starting with the Barcelona Pavilion of 1929 a direct line leads via Brussels immediately to his major American projects culminating in IIT's Crown Hall by around 1950. Characteristic features of the Barcelona Pavilion like the free-standing columns and wall elements, the inner court yards and water basins, as well as the subtle merging of interior and outside space do reappear in the Brussels project, while its enormous continuous space anticipates many a project yet to come. One might think for example of his Museum for a Small City or the Concert Hall, which both emerged from his teaching classes in Chicago. Vice versa, no attempts to familiarize with typical Nazi preferences can be detected, be it in the general disposition of the building, which is not strictly symmetrical, nor in the architectural details, which bear no historical leanings. That Mies was well versed in the neoclassical idiom, much better actually than Hitler's preferred idols Paul Ludwig Troost and Albert Speer, is out of the question. Ample proof of this can be found in projects such as his Bismarck Monument for Bingen or his Kröller-Müller House at Wassenaar. Different from his former teacher Peter Behrens, however, he strictly refrained from falling back to his own stylistic roots of around 1911/1912.

So, to get back to the crucial question in how far Mies did actively oppose the temptation of letting himself get pocketed by the Nazis in hope of commissions, one needs to read somewhat more closely in between the lines. Whatever he conceived in his drawings or put down in writing had largely been predetermined by the text of the invitation accumulated by Goebbels' assiduous henchmen; once Mies accepted, these conditions had to be taken for granted. Of much more interest nowadays is what he does not show or feels not willing to say. That the swastika and the Nazi flag had to be shown in a prominent position was a matter of no dispute; in Mies's sketches though, the swastika, if appearing at all, is either hardly visible or scrawled in with such furor that its author would surely have ended up in serious trouble, should ever a true Nazi have seen this desecration of the movement's 'holy' symbol.²² [10] A similar attitude of denial may be read out of Mies's explanations of his project, which to interfere from the multiple corrections and revision had cost him a good portion of tough work. The principal of Totalitarianism, which according to Goebbels' guidelines the building should vividly express, Mies simply misread as a demand for a uniform overall design hedging all German sections underneath one roof. While in his first draft the hall of fame is meant to 'teach the visitor stand in attention', the following version

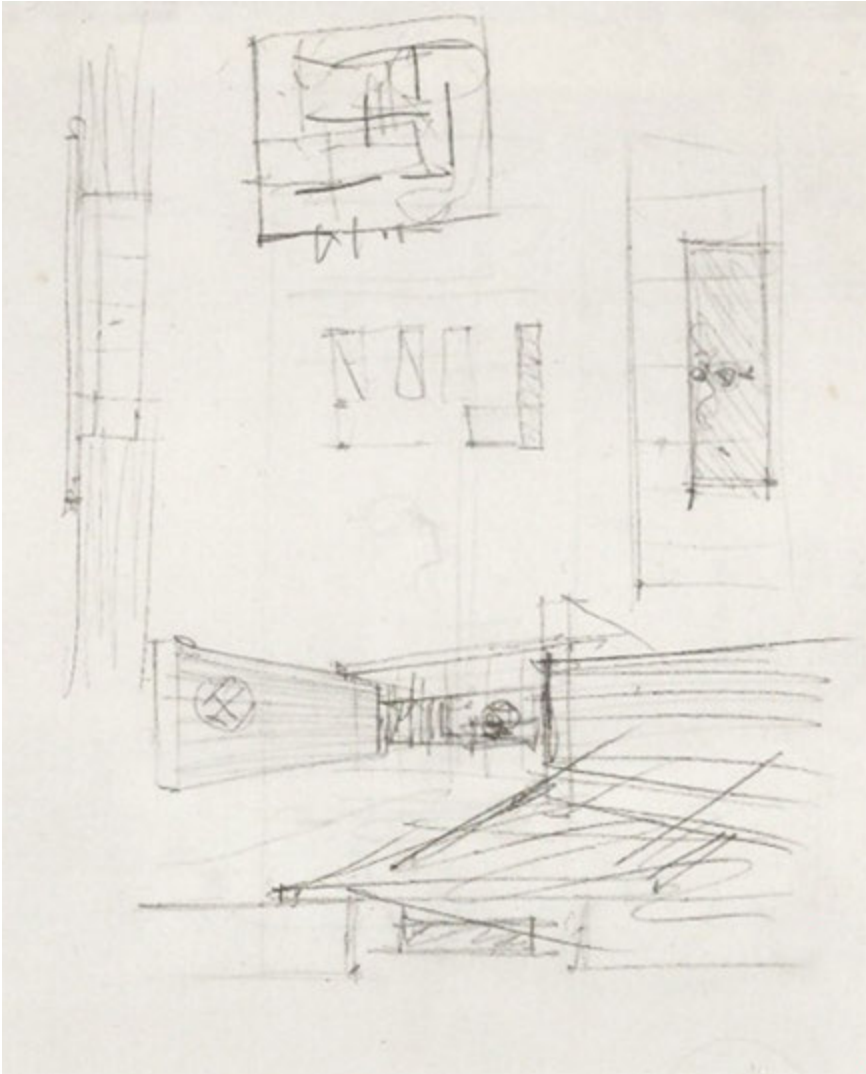


FIG. 10 Mies van der Rohe: German pavilion, sheet of sketches with swastika symbol [MoMA, Mies Archive 18.20; Riley/Bergdoll, *Mies in Berlin*, 285]

simply speaks of it 'evoking an emotional impression', then, finally, to be turned into the 'representative' center of the Pavilion. A 'mighty Eagle cast in bronze' on the one hand side and a 'swastika hammered [sic] into the other' initially distinguished the two free-standing wall elements flanking the hall. In the final version they simply serve for carrying 'the insignia and the representations of the Reich', without given the swastika even a mentioning. Step by step, Mies strips the text of all emotional elements so to achieve a completely technical

explanation of his project bare of empty rhetorical phrases and pathetic Nazi idioms. And yet, it cannot be denied that Mies, while apparently immune to any ideological leanings, did feel prepared to offer his services.

Still in July 1934, the competition was decided upon.²³ Winner was Ludwig Ruff – which hardly did come unexpectedly, once Hitler in consultation with Albert Speer had taken charge of the proceedings himself. That Hitler, confronted with Mies's entry, had thereby turned into one of his dreaded choleric fits trampling down on the latter's drawings may be a legend. The story was later spread by Ruegenberg as well as Mies himself, but neither of them had been present on the occasion and might have taken hearsay for granted.²⁴ If Hitler's knowledge of the Weimar architectural scene did indeed extend much beyond the usual stereotypes and prejudices needs to be proven. And still, a casual dropping of highly emotive terms like Bauhaus or Mies as a leading Kulturbolschewist [cultural Bolshevik] in Hitler's presence would have done the job. Or so might have a letter like the one that follows, written by an eager Nazi toady from Magdeburg in December 1933, and addressed to the Reich's Minister of Information and Propaganda:²⁵ 'Concerns German People – German Labor' – Exhibition. I have been notified that the former Head of the Bauhaus, Mr. Mies van der Rohe, has been commissioned to design the section for the mining industry [of the exhibition *Deutsches Volk – deutsche Arbeit*, scheduled for 1934]. [...] Over here, Mr. Mies van der Rohe is well known as a nasty advocate of Marxist ideas. Artists of his stamp, who in their particular field had poisoned the German people for years, should be given no chance of employment. I request to investigate the case and, if possible, to replace this guy by some suitable party member.' Spiced with further hints on Mies as the author of the Liebknecht-Luxemburg Monument of 1926, which had already circulated during the crucial phase of the Dessau Bauhaus in 1932, denunciations like this should have served to get Mies out of the way once and for all. On the other hand though, all this had luckily saved him the dubious role of becoming Germany's leading architect under national socialists' rule.

Notes

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- 1 Wilhelm Pinder & Hans Prinzhorn, petition to Alfred Freyberg, Prime Minister of the State of Anhalt, 2 August 1932 [Dessau, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Mies van der Rohe Akten (SBD), File # E 26 and E 27].
 - 2 Letter Mies to his attorney Eschstruth, 29 June 1933 [SBD, File # A 12]; on the meeting with Rosenberg on 12 April 1933, cf. Mies's handwritten minutes drawn from memory [SBD, File # E 25].
 - 3 Letter Wendland to Riezler, 1 December 1933 [Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Mies Papers (LoC), Box # 3].
 - 4 L. [Wilhelm Lotz], 'Mies van der Rohe zu seinem 50. Geburtstag', *Frauenspiegel*, Sunday supplement of *Berliner Tageblatt* 22 March 1936, not paginated.
 - 5 George Nelson, 'Architects of Europe Today: 7 – Van Der Rohe, Germany', *Pencil Points* 16 (1935) 9 (September), 459.

- 6 The article by Sevilla et al. on Mies and the Brussels competition only came to my attention after I had finished the manuscript for my present contribution [Laura Lizondo Sevilla, José Santatecla Fayos, Nuria Salvador Luján, 'Mies en Bruselas 1934. Síntesis de una arquitectura expositiva no construida / Mies in Brussels 1934. Synthesis of an unbuilt exhibition architecture', *VLC arquitectura* 3 (2016) 1, 29-53]. Apart from Franz Schulze, *Mies van der Rohe. A critical Biography* (rev. ed. by Schulze & Edward Windhorst), Chicago and London 2012, 170ff, a short passage in Elaine Hochman, *Architects of Fortune. Mies van der Rohe and the Third Reich*, New York 1989, 225-228, and Claire Zimmerman's contribution to the 2001 MoMA retrospective in Terence Riley & Barry Bergdoll (eds), *Mies in Berlin*, New York 2001, 284ff, these have been the only authors giving serious attention to the project so far.
- 7 Letter Walther to Mies, 10 June 1947, mentions Maiwald's, Ruegenberg's and his own involvement with the Brussels competition [LoC, Box # 60].
- 8 Letter Posse, German Ministry of Trade and Industry, to German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15 November 1933, and von Renthe-Fink, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Ministry of Trade and Industry, 19 December 1933 [Berlin, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (AA), File R 86407].
- 9 Memorandum (signature unreadable) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 December 1933, with handwritten note by von Renthe-Fink of 3 January [1934], confirming Goebbel's acceptance of the invitation [AA, File R 86407]; cf. letter Ministry of Foreign Affairs (signature unreadable) to German Legation in Brussels, 9 January 1934 [AA, File R 86407].
- 10 Letter Freiherr von Neurath, Minister of Foreign Affairs, memorandum, 9 March 1934, and verbal note of Foreign Ministry to Belgian Legation, Berlin, 15 March 1934 [AA, File R 86407].
- 11 Letter Bährens, Guidelines for competition, 14 May 1934 [New York, The Museum of Modern Art, Mies van Rohe Archive (MoMA), 1935 World's Fair in Brussels, # 1].
- 12 Letter Hönig to von Rintelen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 23 May 1934 [AA, File R 86407].
- 13 Letter Walther to Mies, 10 June 1947.
- 14 Letter Hönig to Mies, 8 June 1934 [MoMA, 1935 World's Fair in Brussels, # 1]; according to Mathies' letter of 11 June 1934 (note 15) the meeting appears to have been advanced to 10 June 1934.
- 15 Letter Mathies to Mies, 11 June 1934 [MoMA, 1935 World's Fair in Brussels, # 1].
- 16 Draft of competition conditions, not dated but sent as an attachment to Mathies' letter of June 11, 1934 [MoMA: 1935 World's Fair in Brussels, # 1].
- 17 Letter Mies to Mathies, 23 June 1934 [MoMA, 1935 World's Fair in Brussels, # 3].
- 18 The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Mies van der Rohe Archive nos. 18.1-18.25; Riley/Bergdoll, *Mies in Berlin* show three more illustrations from private collections (ills. 271, 271, and 277).
- 19 Projektbeschreibung (description of project), 3 June 1934, with handwritten notes by Mies (5 pages), calculations (9 pages), and preliminary drafts (11 pages) [MoMA, 1935 World's Fair in Brussels, # 3, 5, and 6].
- 20 The dimensions given in Sevilla et al., 'Mies en Bruselas 1934' are mostly wrong. The confusion may be due to the fact that the only plan giving detailed measurements [MoMA 18.9] was meant as building instructions for the 1 : 50 model commissioned from the Berlin sculptor Oswald Herzog [Letter Mies Office to Herzog, 16 June 1934, MoMA, 1935 World's Fair in Brussels, # 1].
- 21 Projektbeschreibung mit Materialbeschreibung (description of project and materials to be used), 3 June 1934 [MoMA, 1935 World's Fair in Brussels, # 3].
- 22 MoMA, no. 18.20.
- 23 Letter Mies Office to Eduard Ludwig, 24 June 1934 [MoMA, 1935 World's Fair in Brussels, # 3].
- 24 Hochman, *Architects of Fortune*, 228; Schulze, *Mies van der Rohe*, 170.
- 25 Reichspropagandastelle Magdeburg-Anhalt to Reichsminister für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, Dec. 18, 1933 (SBD); for reference to the Liebknecht-Luxemburg Monument cf. Mies' letter to Freyberg of June 13, 1933 (SBD: File # F 11).

Tussen wal en schip: Stedenbouwkundige en architectonische karakteristieken van de Heesterbuurt in Den Haag

In publicaties over de architectuur van Den Haag wordt de tussen 1915 en 1927 gebouwde Heesterbuurt nauwelijks besproken. Als gevolg van de hoorn des overvloeds in andere Haagse gebieden kwam ze vooralsnog tussen de wal en het schip terecht kwam en is ze daarmee volledig onderbelicht gebleven. Door voortschrijdende inzichten en nieuw onderzoek naar de stedenbouwkundige en architectonische kenmerken beoogt dit artikel een lans te breken voor waardering voor deze ten oosten van de Laan van Meerdervoort gesitueerde buurt.

Structuur en karakteristieken

De Heesterbuurt wordt begrensd door de Laan van Meerdervoort, Valkenboskade, Loosduinseweg, Kamperfoeliestraat en de Mient. De zuidwestelijke begrenzing werd bij het maken van het Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan door H.P. Berlage in 1908 bepaald door de gemeentegrens met Loosduinen. De zuidwestelijke zijde van de parallel met de Kamperfoeliestraat lopende Laan van Eik en Duinen vormde tot 1 januari 1923 de gemeentegrens en markeert nog steeds de begrenzing met de Vruchtenbuurt, de wijk die vanaf 1922 werd gepland in het door Den Haag te annexeren gebied. De tussen 1915 en 1920 gebouwde Heesterbuurtzijde vertoont tussen de Laan van Meerdervoort en de Mient per bouwblok een heterogeen karakter met duidelijke verschillen in kapvorm, goothoogte en gevelcompositie. De vanaf 1926 gebouwde Vruchtenbuurt toont het streven naar uniformiteit en een 'beheerst gevelbeeld', waaraan in stedenbouwkundige en architectonische zin de term Nieuwe Haagse School werd verbonden.¹ Daarmee sloop in de slechtste gevallen ook een soort saaiheid het Haagse stadsbeeld binnen.

De Heesterbuurt is wat betreft de experimentele stedenbouw, het heterogene karakter en de architectonische verscheidenheid exemplarisch voor een uitbreiding die tot stand kwam alvorens de Nieuwe Haagse School na 1925 zich manifesteerde in haar bloeiperiode. In die zin is de Heesterbuurt te beschouwen als een soort proefkeuken voor deze bouwstijl.

De eerste bouwactiviteiten waren te signaleren in het haakvormige poldergebied tussen de Laan van Meerdervoort en de Valkenboskade, waarna het eerste deel van de Heesterbuurt – begrensd door de Mient – rond 1924 gereed was. Dit gebied kenmerkt zich door een groot aandeel van sociale woningbouwcomplexen. In de loop van de jaren twintig domineerde in het tweede deel – tussen de Mient en de Loosduinseweg – het particuliere bouwinitiatief. Dat is nog steeds herkenbaar aan de hogere bebouwingsdichtheid, onder meer door de toepassing van Haagse portiekwoningen. Ook manifesteerde de Nieuwe Haagse School zich nadrukkelijk in het vanaf 1924 gebouwde gebied.

Net als andere Haagse buurten uit de periode 1915–24 is er grote diversiteit in bouwstijlen in het oudste deel van de Heesterbuurt. Eigenzinnige interpretaties van de Delftse en Amsterdamse School wisselen elkaar hier af, maar ook zijn er aanzetten tot de Nieuwe Haagse School te traceren. Het nieuwere deel is uniformer qua bouwstijl. Alleen de hoek van de Kamperfoeliestraat en de Indigostraat wordt gemarkeerd door architectuur uit de vroege wederopbouwjaren. Dat heeft te maken met het herstel van verwoestingen door de inslag van een V2-raket op 1 januari 1945.

Het oudste deel vormt een soort collage van kleinere, groene woonbuurtjes. Dat is toe te schrijven aan stedenbouwkundige opvattingen binnen de in juli 1918 opgerichte gemeentelijke dienst Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting, die de deelplannen voor het gebied verder uitwerkte op basis van het Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan van Berlage. In plaats van het door Berlage voorgestelde rechte stratenpatroon met diagonale, brede ontsluitingsroutes werd gekozen voor een meer ‘intieme stedenbouw’, met besloten, groene pleinen, zoals het Vlierboomplein, het Weigeliaplein en het Gagelplein. De opzet met halfopen en dubbele bouwblokken aan binnenhoven weerspiegelde het rond 1918 gekoesterde ideaal om de individuele woning ondergeschikt te maken aan het geheel. Ook diende bij de bewoners de gemeenschapszin te worden geprikkeld. Feitelijk gaf de dienst hiermee een eigenzinnige invulling aan het gedachtegoed van Berlage over collectieve woonvormen, mogelijk geïnspireerd door een eerder bouwplan in Amsterdam.²



FIG. 1 Luchtfoto van de Heesterbuurt uit 1962, die onder meer de curieuze structuur van dubbele bouwblokken laat zien. Diagonaal rechts de begrenzing van de Heesterbuurt door de Valkenboskade [Gemeentearchief Den Haag]

De ontwikkeling in kleine en middelgrote deelgebieden is echter niet ten koste gegaan van de grotere samenhang. De sterke relatie tussen stedenbouw en architectuur wordt luister bijgezet door de rijkdom in esthetisch goed verzorgde bouwkundige details. Omdat de bevoegdheden van de Schoonheidscommissie beperkt waren, werden met particuliere bouwondernemers en woningbouwverenigingen erfpachtovereenkomsten gesloten, onder voorwaarde dat Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting kon instemmen met de bouwplannen. [1]

Het dubbele bouwblok

De stapsgewijze ontwikkeling van het gesloten bouwblok naar een open verkaveling met collectief gebruik van het binnengebied voltrok zich tijdens het Haagse interbellum aan de hand van een exclusief Haagse typologie: het dubbele bouwblok. Dat werd in Duindorp I voor het eerst toegepast, en de jaren daarna

werd gevarieerd op dit thema, waarbij het oudste deel van de Heesterbuurt rijk is vertegenwoordigd.

Toen de gemeenteraad besloot tot de bouw van de eerste Haagse woning-wetwoningen aan het Kolenwagenslag in Scheveningen – meer dan een decennium na het in werking treden van de Woningwet en daarmee later dan Amsterdam en Rotterdam – was er geen goed geoutilleerde dienst om het ontwerp en de uitvoering in goede banen te leiden.³ Het vormde één van de vele aanleidingen voor de oprichting van de dienst Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting, via een lang verbeide reorganisatie van Gemeentewerken. Civiel ingenieur en adjunct-directeur van Gemeentewerken, Piet Bakker Schut, zou van 1918 tot 1942 met ijzeren hand leiding geven aan de nieuwe dienst. De ontwikkeling van Duindorp I – de aan de zuidzijde van het Afvoerkanaal gebouwde Meeuwen-, Pluvier- en Zeezwaluwhof – had hij vermoedelijk al voor de splitsing van Gemeentewerken naar zich toegetrokken.⁴ Evenals zijn directeur, Isaac Anne Lindo, had hij een uitgesproken visie op stedenbouw, maar die was aanmerkelijk progressiever dan die van Lindo en sterk verwant aan de ideeën van Berlage.⁵

Er was binnen Haagse gelederen lang getalmd over Kolenwagenslag I, maar daarna ging het rap. Het Raadsbesluit voor de bouw van Kolenwagenslag II op 6 juli 1914 behelsde eveneens de bouw van 766 woningen in de complexen Afvoerkanaal-West I t/m IV (later Duindorp genoemd) en de bouw van de Trekvlietwegcomplexen (later Molenwijk genoemd).

Duindorp I vormt een synthese tussen een traditionalistische verschijningsvorm en een Berlagiaans concept. Het in 1916–17 gebouwde ensemble van de Meeuwen-, Pluvier- en Zeezwaluwhof was in stedenbouwkundig opzicht vernieuwend door de introductie van het dubbele bouwblok.⁶ Dat werd zo ideaal mogelijk vormgegeven. Elke door poortbebouwingen bereikbare groene hof werd omsloten door een binnenring van laagbouw in de vorm van eengezinswoningen en een buitenring van middelhoogbouw met beneden- en bovenwoningen. Tussen de bouwstroken werden ondiepe tuinen voor de laagbouw ingericht en daaraan waren ook de balkons voor de meergezinswoningen gesitueerd.

In de periode na Duindorp I werd het dubbele bouwblok regelmatig toegepast. In de Molenwijk werd op diverse plekken deze verkavelingsvorm toegepast. Helaas is de structuur tijdens de stadsvernieuwing verbrokken en aangetast, waarbij het grootste dubbele bouwblok aan het Cromvlietplein in de Molenwijk werd geofferd voor een buurtpark. Het vijfhoekige dubbele bouwblok in Spoorwijk, met de Schaapherderstraat als hartlijn, is ondanks grootscheepse vernieuwingen wat stedenbouwkundige structuur betreft wel intact gebleven.

Het in 1922 voltooide bouwplan voor de Coöperatieve Woningbouwvereniging Tuinstadwijk Daal en Berg rond de Papaverhof heeft in deze context een status aparte. Het in lichtgrijs pleisterwerk uitgevoerde ontwerp van Jan Wils was in bijna elk opzicht een anomalie in Den Haag, waar het bruin van de baksteen heerste.⁷ Het verschilde in die zin van andere toepassingen van het dubbele bouwblok dat de niet openbaar toegankelijke groene hof – destijds ‘een grote, vreemde, stille tuin’ genoemd – werd gecreëerd door de 68 tweelaagse eengezinswoningen compact te groeperen.⁸ Er was geen ruimte tussen de binnen- en buitenring, zoals in Duindorp I. Beide ringen bestaan uit paarsgewijs, ruggelings geschakelde woningen. Die zijn ten opzichte van elkaar verschoven, zodat ook de woningen in de buitenring zoveel mogelijk kunnen profiteren van het zichtgroen in de hof.

Al met al is het woningbouwproject van Daal en Berg te beschouwen als een eenmalige, eigenzinnige interpretatie van het tuindorpconcept. Het heeft de verschijningsvorm van betonbuurtjes van de apostelen van het Nieuwe Bouwen, de geometrische plasticiteit van de Nieuwe Haagse School en de esthetische vormprincipes van De Stijl.

De laatste toepassing van een dubbel bouwblok tijdens het Haagse interbellum is geconcentreerd aan het Notenplein. De in 1935 voltooide Notenbuurt vormt het enige deel van de Vruchtenbuurt dat aan de zuidwestelijke zijde van de Thorbeckelaan werd gebouwd. De stedenbouwkundige onderlegger voor dit voormalige Loosduinse grondgebied was niet het Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan van Berlage, maar Plan West.⁹ De Notenbuurt heeft een vijfhoekige vorm, geconcentreerd rond het eveneens (destijds unieke) vijfhoekige Notenplein.¹⁰ Rond het plein is een dubbel bouwblok gerealiseerd. Door de onregelmatige vorm kon de maat van één van de ruimtes tussen de binnenring en de buitenring dermate groot worden, dat naast privétuinen en balkons ook een openbaar groengebied kon worden ingericht, dat destijds voor verschillende doeleinden werd gebruikt.

Pleinen in de Heesterbuurt

De eerste toepassing van een dubbel bouwblok met openbare binnentuin in de Heesterbuurt vormt de in 1920 voltooide bebouwing van het Vlierboomplein. Het zeer productieve Amsterdamse architectenbureau Gulden & Geldmaker ontwierp 73 beneden- en bovenwoningen en drie winkelwoningen. De vormgeving is robuust, degelijk en op het traditionele af, maar het open bebouwingsplan was vernieuwend.



FIG. 2 Vlierboomplein met bebouwing van Gulden & Geldmaker in 1920. De grote, nog bestaande pergola bood zicht op het (nog aan te leggen) Kamperfoelieplein [Gemeentearchief Den Haag]

De groene hof is vanaf het Kamperfoelieplein toegankelijk via een langgerekte, hoge pergola, symbolisch voor tuindorparchitectuur. De opdrachtgever voor de aan arbeiders en lage middenstanders verhuurde woningen was de Algemeene Coöperatieve Woningvereniging. [2]

De meest grootschalige toepassing van een dubbel bouwblok met openbaar, groen binnenterrein en private buitenruimtes tussen de bouwdelen vormt het langgerekte Weigeliaplein.¹¹ Net als het Kamperfoelieplein werd het verkavelingsplan voor dit plein ontworpen door de dienst Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting, op basis van het Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan. De opdrachtgever voor de 193 portiekwoningen, drie winkelwoningen en twee pakhuizen in de dubbele ring was de Woningbouwvereniging 's-Gravenhage. De door het Haagse architectenbureau K. Meijer & H.E.N. Rademaker ontworpen woningen werden in 1925 voltooid. De strakke, sobere gevels van de portiekwoningen hadden met horizontale betonbanden en smalle stroken van zwart geteerde bakstenen een zakelijke uitstraling.



FIG. 3 Het Weigeliaplein, enkele jaren na de voltooiing, waarbij het tuinstadconcept tot een kleinstedelijk bebouwingsbeeld leidde [Gemeentearchief Den Haag]

De belangrijkste van de drie entrees tot het ruim bemeten plein werd vanaf de Vlierboomstraat gemarkeerd door winkelruimtes, waarbij de pergolavormige overkluizing van de straat in de periode van de stadsvernieuwing verdween. De beoogde betrokkenheid op de collectieve ruimte kwam lange tijd tot uitdrukking in de activiteiten van buurtvereniging Weigelia. [3]

Door hoekverdraaiingen in het stratenpatroon kreeg het in 1923 voltooide kleinere Gagelplein een langgerekte driehoekige vorm. Het plein met middenplantsoen is alleen toegankelijk via de hogere poortbebouwing aan de Boksdoostraat. Het symmetrische, besloten groengebied wordt begrensd door tweelaagse etagewoningen, met lagere hoekbebouwing waardoor het geheel oogt als een samenstelling van losse bouwstroken.

Architect was Herman Jan de Haas. In die periode stond hij lokaal bekend door de verweving van geometrische baksteenarchitectuur met stijlelementen van de Amsterdamse School. Opdrachtgever van de 200 met overheidssubsidie gebouwde middenstandswoningen en enkele winkels aan het plein en omringende straten was de bouwmaatschappij Uitbreiding West.

Tegenover de knik in de bouwstrook ligt ter hoogte van het breedste deel de toegang tot het symmetrische plein. Zowel aan de kant van het Gagelplein als aan de Bokdoornstraat is de poortbebouwing uitgevoerd als stilistische eenheid. Karakteristiek voor het kleinschalige monumentale stadsbeeld zijn onder meer de cilindrische hoeken van de bouwblokken en de toepassing van vier buitentrappen. De symmetrische gevelwand aan de Bokdoornstraat is plastisch geled door teruggelegde entrees, uitkragende trappenhuizen en driehoekige erkers. Karakteristiek voor De Haas is tevens de toepassing van siermetselwerk. [4]

Het meest curieuze dubbele bouwblok in de Heesterbuurt wordt begrensd door de Bokdoornstraat, Maretakstraat en de 1e en 3e Braamstraat. De meeste, voor ambtenaren bedoelde woningen in de genoemde straten – een afwisseling van Haagse portiekwoningen en beneden- en bovenwoningen – zijn ontworpen door Antoon Pet, in opdracht van de Woningstichting Braamstraat. Pet zou zich na 1925 manifesteren als één van de protagonisten van de Nieuwe Haagse School.¹²

De binnenring van het dubbele bouwblok wordt niet gevormd door woningen, maar door een rechthoekig lichtgeel gemetseld ensemble van onder meer een rooms-katholiek klooster en een bewaar- en meisjesschool. Dit complex werd gebouwd op steenworp afstand van de eveneens door Jan Stuyt ontworpen rooms-katholieke Kamperfoeliekerk. De binnenhof was een schoolplein met, als kers op de taart, een verhoogd plateau dat ‘de kaas’ werd genoemd. Het plein was openbaar toegankelijk, als een soort ruimtelijke verbreding onderdeel van de doorgaande route, die de 2e Verlengde Braamstraat werd genoemd. [5–6]



FIG. 4 Het Gagelplein in 1925. Het creëren van monumentale stadsbeelden met plastische architectuur, door gemeentelijke regie, was één van de belangrijkste doelstellingen van de directie van de dienst Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting [Gemeentearchief Den Haag]



FIG. 5 Huidige situatie van de voormalige rooms-katholieke enclave rond het dubbele bouwblok, ten noordoosten van de Kamperfoeliekerk [Dienst Stedelijke Ontwikkeling Den Haag]



FIG. 6 Plastische baksteenarchitectuur in 1924 van de achtergevels van woningen aan de buitenring in het dubbele bouwblok. De binnenring met klooster en meisjesschool – waarop de woningen uitzicht hadden – was in dat jaar nog in uitvoering [Gemeentearchief Den Haag]



FIG. 7 Geschakelde herenhuizen in een expressieve geleding aan de Valkenboskade aan de rand van de Heesterbuurt, naar een ontwerp van Jacob Hellendoorn [Gemeentearchief Den Haag]

Architectonische curiosa

De in 1922 in de Heesterbuurt gebouwde strook woningen in een groot bouwblok aan de Valkenboskade 306–344 – tussen de Maagdepalmstraat en de 2e Braamstraat – werd ontworpen door de van origine niet-Haagse architect Jacob Hellendoorn, in opdracht van de particuliere bouwondernemer J.A. van de Locht. Dit zorgvuldig gedetailleerde deel van de lange gevelwand met herenhuizen is expressief geleed door de afwisseling van tweelaagse bebouwing met een langskap en drielaagse bebouwing. De lagere bebouwing tussen deze fronten heeft afwisselend strookjes van vlakke gevels en teruggelegde strookjes met balkons.

De gevel is verlevendigd met enkele voor Hellendoorn kenmerkende details, zoals vertand metselwerk, een horizontale roedenverdeling in de hoge verticale ramen en X-vormige roeden in de kleinere ramen. Korte tijd later zou Hellendoorn – die zich rond 1920 liet inspireren door het Duitse baksteenexpressionisme – de vormgeving van de Nieuwe Haagse School overnemen. Dat werd duidelijk nadat hij in 1923 door Bakker Schut werd betrokken bij de uitwerking van een plangebied in het eerste deel van villapark Marlot. [7]



FIG. 8 Portiekwoningen aan de Valkenboskade 264–304 uit 1923, naar een ontwerp van Jacobus Barend Fels. Opmerkelijke elementen zijn de liggende, ellipsvormige ramen. Dergelijke ‘vormenwellust’ werd in de tweede helft van de jaren twintig verbannen door de bloei van de rechte lijnigheid van de Nieuwe Haagse School [Gemeentearchief Den Haag]

Het ontwerp van de strook in 1924 voltooide portiekwoningen aan de Mient 1–111 was voor de jonge architect Jacobus Barend Fels een vervolgoopdracht van de flamboyante bouwondernemer J.W.E.B. Olivier, op het bouwproject van de om de hoek gelegen strook portiekwoningen aan de Valkenboskade 264–304. Zowel het programma van eisen als de vertaling daarvan in architectuur was vergelijkbaar. Net als Hellendoorn probeerde Fels de lengte van de gevelwanden te geleiden door plasticiteit aan te brengen in het tweekleurig metselwerk, waarbij de zorgvuldig gedetailleerde traveeën met portieken zijn teruggelegd uit de rooilijn. De ontwerpqualiteiten van Fels vielen op bij andere particuliere opdrachtgevers en werden ook opgemerkt door Bakker Schut. In de Vogelwijk zou Fels zich enkele jaren later met kubische composities manifesteren als één van de belangrijkste representanten van de Nieuwe Haagse School.¹³ [8-9]

Openbare gebouwen

Tussen 1918 en 1922 werd het Kamperfoelieplein aangelegd en bebouwd. Het vormt één van de meest krachtig vormgegeven ruimtelijke elementen uit het Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan Berlage. Dit is vooral dankzij de centriscie situering van de Heilige Familiekkerk in de as van de Goudenregenstraat. Ten behoeve van de doorgang van het verkeer kreeg de straat een bajonetvorm waarmee de extra ruimte ter hoogte van de verspringing het plein vormt.



FIG. 9 Portiekentree, als onderdeel van een strook portiekwoningen uit 1924 van architect J. B. Fels aan de Mient 1-111. Het roodkleurig metselwerk van de plint is ter hoogte van de entrees verticaal doorgezet en rond gemetseld [foto Marcel Teunissen, 2003]

Het sluitstuk in 1922 was de bouw van de rooms-katholieke Heilige Familiekerk, beter bekend als Kamperfoeliekerk. Nadat het op de neogotiek geïnspireerde ontwerp van Nicolaas Molenaar sr. door de Schoonheidscommissie was afgekeurd, kon zij akkoord gaan met het ontwerp van Jan Stuyt, dat beter paste in het gevelbeeld van de in aanbouw zijnde buurt. [10]



FIG. 10 De Kamperfoeliekerk kort na voltooiing, gezien vanuit de Goudenregenstraat. De monumentale positionering was conform de uitgangspunten van Berlage en Bakker Schut voor het creëren van monumentale stadsbeelden, via hiërarchische stedenbouw [Gemeentearchief Den Haag]

De Heesterbuurt kent nog enkele andere grote openbare gebouwen. In 1906 werd aan het toenmalige eindpunt van de Laan van Meerdervoort de tweede Haagse tramremise gebouwd, naar een ontwerp van Adam Schadee van de Dienst Gemeentewerken. De grote tramremise stond jarenlang in het weiland als industrieel baken van een nieuwe tijd. Het moderne, voor de Haagsche Tramweg-Maatschappij (HTM) gebouwde complex werd in de loop van de jaren echter ingrijpend gewijzigd, onder meer door uitbreidingen en aanpassingen in de jaren tachtig, door Van den Broek en Bakema. Het dienst- en werkplaatsengedeelte aan de Ribesstraat vormt in 2020 het enige deel dat de tand des tijds enigszins heeft doorstaan, evenals de bedrijfswoningen op de hoek van de Lijsterbesstraat en de Vlierboomstraat.

De in 1920 voltooide Goudenregenschool aan de Goudenregenstraat 32 werd eveneens ontworpen door Schadee. Het gebouw is karakteristiek voor de laatste periode van Schadee als stadsarchitect, waarin hij zich in toenemende mate liet inspireren door het werk van Berlage. Kenmerkend hiervoor zijn de asymmetrische compositie van rijzige bouwvolumes met kale muurvlakken, spitse daken bekroond met oranje-rode dakpannen en een fris interieur waarvan de gangen en trappenhuizen zijn afgewerkt met felgekleurde tegels. Daarmee mag Schadee worden beschouwd als één van de wegbereiders van de Nieuwe Haagse School.

Het complex is multifunctioneel herbestemd op initiatief van De Koninklijke Haagse Woningvereniging van 1854, die het leegstaande schoolgebouw in 2003 van de gemeente kocht. Dit droeg bij aan de opkomende waardering van de stedenbouwkundige van architectonische karakteristieken van de Heesterbuurt.

Noten

- 1 De Nieuwe Haagse School is te definiëren als expressieve baksteenarchitectuur met geometrische vlakverdelingen en lineaire accenten. Ideologisch beschouwd is de gematigd moderne bouwstijl onderdeel van de vormgeving van de gebouwde omgeving op alle schaalniveaus: van stedenbouwkundig ontwerp tot het kleinste bouwkundig detail. Zie hiervoor: Marcel Teunissen & Victor Freijser, *Schoone Eenheid, stedenbouw en architectuur van de Nieuwe Haagse School*, Den Haag 2008; Marcel Teunissen, *100 jaar Nieuwe Haagse School*, Rotterdam 2018.
- 2 Het plan van Berlage en Jan Gratama voor de Transvaalbuurt-Kraaipanbuurt in Amsterdam uit 1916–20 is te beschouwen als voorloper van dit concept en was wat betreft bouwperiode een tijdgenoot van Duindorp I.
- 3 De 81 woningen in het eerste bouwplan, de in fasen uitgevoerde vernieuwing van de omgeving van het Kolenwagenslag, werden ontworpen door Adam Schadee van Gemeentewerken. Niet alleen had hij nauwelijks ervaring met woningbouw, zijn dienst kon die nieuwe opgave er eigenlijk niet bij hebben.
- 4 De belangrijkste woningbouwarchitecten van Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting – Willem Greve jr. en Geert Albers – waren al in 1915 bij Gemeentewerken in dienst genomen, vermoedelijk waren zij gerekruteerd door Piet Bakker Schut.
- 5 In zijn laatste dienstjaren wantrouwe Lindo alle actoren, in het bijzonder de Haagse wethouders, H.P. Berlage (na het spaak lopen van het maken van een gezamenlijk Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan) en zijn ambitieuze adjunct-directeur.
- 6 Een precedent was het buurtje aan de Kolenwagenslag, Korbootstraat, Kompasstraat, Reepstraat en Hoogaarstraat in Scheveningen. In dit plan werd het aanwezige stratenpatroon gevolgd, voornamelijk omdat hier al bebouwing aanwezig was. Bij de Windasstraat werd een vroege vorm van het dubbele bouwblok gemaakt, met aan één zijde een straat en daaraan een hofje. De onhandige driehoekige kavel liet vermoedelijk niet toe alle woningen goed in te passen, waardoor het bij een aanzet bleef.
- 7 Er waren nog enkele andere uitzonderingen, waardoor Jan Wils zich liet inspireren. Voor zijn onderneming, de NV Korrelbeton, ontwierp de betonspecialist Willem Greve jr. in 1921 voor de in aanbouw zijnde Vogelwijk aan de Mezenlaan twaalf betonwoningen voor gegoede middenstanders. Het korrelbeton van Greve werd in 1922 van gemeentewege grootschaliger toegepast in de als semipermanent bedoelde woningen in een complex aan de Westduinweg. Net als Duindorp waren de woningen bedoeld voor herhuisvesting van vissersgezinnen die door saneringen van het dorp hun woning moesten verlaten.
- 8 *Nieuwe Apeldoornse Courant* 27 juni 1925.
- 9 Plan West kreeg gestalte door het modificeren van het plan van Antoon Pet voor een in augustus 1922 georganiseerde ideeënprijsvraag, voor de bebouwing van het per 1 januari 1923 volledig te annexeren grondgebied van de gemeente Loosduinen. Pet deelde de tweede prijs met Hendrik Russcher, maar bij nader inzien bood zijn plan geen aanknopingspunten voor uitvoering. De langdurige omwerking van het ontwerp van Pet door de dienst van Bakker Schut steunde grotendeels op de inzichten van Berlage, die jurylid was voor de prijsvraag. Plan West is na 1927 talloze malen gereviseerd.
- 10 In totaal realiseerden zeven woningbouwverenigingen 955 woningen, alsmede een tiental winkels en pakhuizen.
- 11 Bebouwing Vlierboomstraat betreft de huisnummers 2–90 en 92–196a. Voor de aanleg van de straat is gebruik gemaakt van een zandpad. Later werd de straat op de reeds aanwezige lineaire structuur doorgetrokken tot aan de Appelstraat, aan de rand van de Vruchtenbuurt.
- 12 Antoon Pet was in 1921 particulier architect. In 1922 werd hij aangenomen door de dienst Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting. In datzelfde jaar werd zijn prijsvraagontwerp voor Plan West bekroond met de tweede prijs en uiteindelijk gemodificeerd tot het in 1927 door de Gemeenteraad

vastgestelde uitbreidingsplan. Het meest bekend is Pet door zijn gevelontwerpen met Nieuwe Haagse Schoolkenmerken van de tussen 1927 en 1940 bebouwde Vondelstraat.

13

Aanvankelijk betrof dat losse opdrachten voor vrijstaande en geschakelde woningen, in 1927 werd hij door Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting aangesteld als projectarchitect voor een gebied in het tweede deel van de Vogelwijk. Dat hield in dat hij op basis van door hemzelf gemaakte verkavelingsplannen en gevelschema's 120 woningen in een aaneengesloten gebied kon uitwerken

W.M. Dudok en de Raad van Vijf: Conflicterende visies op de wederopbouw van Den Haag, 1945–50

Aan de vooravond van de hongerwinter neemt de secretaris van de Rijksdienst van de Wederopbouw, Z.Y. van der Meer, met instemming van de Haagse burgemeester S.J.R. de Monchy contact op met W.M. Dudok, de door hem beoogde stedenbouwkundig ontwerper voor de herbouw van de zwaar gehavende residentie.¹ [1] Gezien zijn staat van dienst is de keuze voor Dudok niet vreemd: in opdracht van de gemeente had deze ontwerper immers al vanaf 1934 intensief gewerkt aan enkele grote uitbreidingsplannen, onder meer voor de Escampolder, Ockenburg en Mariahoeve. In de keuze voor Dudok schuilt echter ook een gevaar: nog afgezien van het ontbreken van een democratisch gelegitimeerd mandaat voor zijn aanstelling, een feit dat in de discussies in de gemeenteraad steeds weer zou opspelen, botst zijn ‘aristocratisch-creatieve’ mentaliteit met de realiteit van het naoorlogse Nederland. Mede door het verzet van een groep Haagse architecten kan Dudok zijn positie ‘au dessus de la mêlée’ niet handhaven en besluit Den Haag in de zomer van 1951 de samenwerking te beëindigen.²

Voorspel: het interbellum

Stedenbouwkundige sturing – of beter geformuleerd: het gebrek daaraan – vormt vanaf de jaren 1920 in toenemende mate een thema onder Haagse architecten. Tegen de achtergrond van een forse bevolkingsgroei, stijgende welvaart, ontwikkeling van moderne vervoersmiddelen en de typisch Haagse voorkeur voor verkaveling in lage dichtheden wordt deze stad als eerste in Nederland geconfronteerd met het fenomeen *urban sprawl*. Zowel uit eigen ervaring in de Verenigde Staten, waar hij in 1908 als practisant de invloed van de automobilititeit op de groei van New York leerde kennen en de aanleg van de eerste *parkway* meemaakte, als op basis van

literatuur over stedelijke groei is architect A.H. Wegerif een van de eerste Haagse architecten die dit vraagstuk aansnijdt.³

Aanvankelijk vinden de discussies over stedenbouw, waaraan ook leden als D. Roosenburg, J. Wils en J.M. Luthmann deelnemen, plaats binnen de Kring 's-Gravenhage van de Bond van Nederlandsche Architecten (BNA) en de Haagsche Kunstkring. Begin jaren dertig monden deze gesprekken uit in de stichting van het Comité Toekomstig 's-Gravenhage, dat de medewerking met circa twintig maatschappelijke organisaties zoekt, die alle een goede stadsontwikkeling in de meest uitgebreide zin van het woord bepleiten. Daarnaast heeft het de ambitie de niet altijd even goed geïnformeerde gemeenteraadsleden te ondersteunen met hun vakkennis.⁴



FIG. 1 W.M. Dudok

Gelijktijdig groeit ook in de gemeenteraad de kritiek op de bestaande praktijk, wat ertoe leidt dat de raad in augustus 1931 besluit zich te laten adviseren door een kleine groep gezaghebbende vakmensen, onder wie H.P. Berlage en P. Bakker Schut, de directeur van de Dienst Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting. Ruim een jaar later brengt deze groep zijn rapport uit, waarin onder meer wordt gesteld 'dat een goed verzorgd stadsbeeld alleen verwacht kan worden indien de maker van het uitbreidingsplan de gave heeft om dit stadsbeeld in drie dimensies te ontwerpen.'⁵ Deze conclusie wordt door het college van B. en W. onderschreven en leidt op 19 februari 1934 tot het raadsbesluit dat Dudok als stedenbouwkundig ontwerper wordt aangesteld.

In afwijking van het rapport wordt de termijn van Dudoks aanstelling aanvankelijk op twee jaar gesteld en mag hij zich uitsluitend buigen over de voorgenomen zuidwestelijke uitleg van Den Haag. [2] Een nieuw plan voor de gehele stad is expliciet niet aan de orde. Verder is zijn positie ten opzichte van de Dienst voor Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting in die zin onbevredigend, dat hij niet onafhankelijk kan rapporteren aan het gemeentebestuur. Het zijn precies de punten van kritiek die het Comité Toekomstig 's-Gravenhage in een brief aan de gemeenteraad aan de orde stelt. Bovendien vraagt zij aandacht voor 'den wantoestand, dat het beslissende woord bij het ontwerpen van uitbreidingsplannen gesproken wordt door den leider van den grondverkoop der gemeente.'⁶ Het appèl aan de raad valt echter op onvruchtbare bodem en Dudok functioneert tot de formele vaststelling van de uitbreidingsplannen op 11 december 1939 als een 'gekortwiekt ambtenaar'.

Had de aanstelling van Dudok – althans van een onafhankelijk stedenbouwkundige met een ruim mandaat – de volledige steun van de Haagse architecten, na de bezetting zou deze hun positie drastisch wijzigen. Dan komen deze architecten, vertegenwoordigd door de in 1945 opgerichte Raad van Vijf bestaande uit C. Abspoel, J.M. Luthmann, D. Roosenburg, R. Romke de Vries en A.H. Wegerif, in verzet tegen de aanpak van de wederopbouw, zoals deze binnen de ruimte die de Haagse gemeentepolitiek biedt door Dudok wordt ingevuld.

Na de bevrijding

Zonder het woord 'controverser' te gebruiken schetst de directeur van het Haags Gemeentemuseum, G. Knuttel, in zijn inleiding van de publicatie *Den Haag bouwt op*, de brochure die bij de gelijknamige tentoonstelling in december 1946 verschijnt, het begin van dit meningsverschil. [3] Knuttel had een jaar eerder de jonge architect W.S. van de Erve ontvangen die hem vroeg of het Gemeentemuseum plaats zou willen bieden aan een tentoonstelling van de plannen die in de zomer

van 1945 door een groep jongere Haagse stedenbouwers en architecten waren gemaakt ‘voor onze zwaar gehavende stad, en niet alleen voor de vernielde stadsgedeelten, maar tevens, profiterend van noodzaak en mogelijkheid van ingrijpende veranderingen, tot een vernieuwing van de geheele stad, beter dan zij geweest is.’⁷ Na de nodige consultaties besluit Knuttel op dit verzoek in te gaan en de tentoonstelling op een hoger plan te tillen door twee componenten toe te voegen: de stedenbouwkundige groei van de stad vanaf de eerste bebouwing en de eerste plannen voor de wederopbouw van de hand van Dudok.

De woorden van Van Erve geven aan dat de gedachten die betrokken vakgenoten al ruim voor de oorlog aanhingen ook na de bevrijding bij een volgende generatie nog opgeld doen, namelijk dat de noodzakelijke ingrepen in de stad alleen denkbaar zijn op basis van een overkoepelend stedenbouwkundig plan. Wellicht onder invloed van de ervaringen die men had opgedaan onder vijf jaar nationaalsocialistische heerschappij is daar een belangrijk punt bijgekomen: de wens om alle Hagenaars te betrekken bij de wederopbouw van hun stad. Dit is de centrale doelstelling van de Stichting Wederopbouw 's-Gravenhage die het vooroorlogse comité in 1945 opvolgt en deels uit dezelfde initiatiefnemers bestaat.⁸ Dat de Haagse architecten hun gretigheid naar wederopbouw van de stad in de laatste maanden van de bezetting nog maar nauwelijks kunnen onderdrukken en aan het ontwerpen slaan, kan ons niet verbazen. Dat zij teleurgesteld raken in Dudok en het gemeentebestuur evenmin.



FIG. 2 Het uitbreidingsplan van W.M. Dudok voor het zuidwestelijk deel van Den Haag uit 1935 [Haags Gemeentearchief]



FIG. 3 Schutblad van de publicatie *Den Haag bouwt op*, in 1945 uitgegeven door het Gemeentemuseum [collectie auteur]



FIG. 4 Burgemeester De Monchy licht de plannen voor de wederopbouw van de stad toe, rechtsboven kritisch gadeslagen door architect A.H. Wegerif [Haags Gemeentearchief]

Spanningen

De spanning tussen de opvattingen van een autoritaire eenling als Dudok en de veelheid aan ideeën over de inrichting van een democratischer samenleving van de Stichting Wederopbouw loopt al snel op. In zijn bijdrage aan *Den Haag bouwt op* laat Wegerif geen misverstand bestaan over de gevoelens die onder de Haagse architecten leven wanneer hij stelt dat het ‘kennisgeven van de plannen aan den de Haagsche architecten vertegenwoordigende Raad van Vijf [...] geen medewerking van betekenis genoemd [kan] worden.’⁹ De onvrede is groot en dat is niet verwonderlijk, aangezien een van de voorwaarden in de overeenkomst tussen Den Haag en Dudok nu juist een verplichting tot samenwerking met die Raad inhoudt. Zo wordt het ideaal van een gezamenlijk stedenbouwkundig ontwerp voor de naoorlogse stad al direct in de kiem gesmoord. Dudok kan zich echter gesteund weten door burgemeester De Monchy die in 1934 benoemd was en dus van de vooroorlogse plannen op de hoogte is. De Monchy stelt bij de opening van de tentoonstelling onomwonden: ‘Het trekken van de hoofdlijnen is scheppend werk, dat een concentratie vereischt, die zich met collegiaal overleg niet verdraagt.’¹⁰ [4]



FIG. 5 Het Basisplan Stadhoudersplein-Scheveningse Bosjes uit 1947 [Haags Gemeentearchief]

Wanneer planvorming op relationeel vlak al zo moeizaam verloopt, ligt het bijna voor de hand dat dit op inhoudelijk gebied ook zo zal zijn. Maar dat is slechts ten dele waar: de Raad van Vijf betreurt weliswaar de stroeve communicatie met Dudok, maar weet hem tegelijkertijd een zakelijke benadering te handhaven en zich tot de inhoud van de plannen te bepalen. Over een aantal zaken zijn de partijen het in grote lijnen met elkaar eens: de door Dudok voorgestelde invulling van het centraal gelegen Spuikwartier en het wederopbouwplan van Bezuidenhout, evenals de herbestemming van het gesloopte deel van de aan de Scheveningseweg, voorbij het Vredespaleis gelegen villawijk Zorgvliet tot cultuurcentrum. [5] Met Dudoks vertaling van de wijkgedachte kan de Raad van Vijf zich echter niet verenigen.

De basisplannen van Dudok

Het plan voor het Spuikwartier met zijn Plein 1945 – een nieuwe hoogstedelijke ruimte, begrensd door ministeries en publieke voorzieningen – toont verwantschap met ideeën die al voor de bezetting leefden en door Wegerif werden vertaald in zijn *Plan tot verbetering van het stadsgedeelte tusschen Spui en Zwarteweg* uit 1941. Dat plan was door de gemeente volledig genegeerd.¹¹ [6-7] De concentratie van overheidsinstellingen in het hart van de stad vormt in beide plannen een moedwillige breuk met de door de Haagse architecten reeds voor de oorlog bekritiseerde praktijk, waarin de hoofdkantoren van grote bedrijven en instellingen zoals de Octrooiraad, Pensioenraad, BIM, KLM en Petrolea verspreid over de stad in woonwijken worden gebouwd.

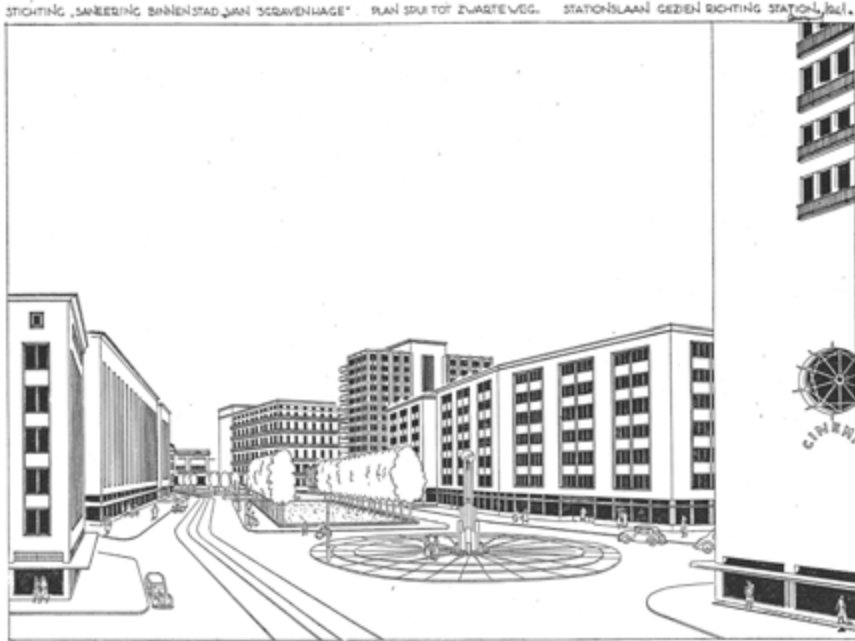


FIG. 6 Het nieuwe Spuikwartier naar ontwerp van A.H. Wegerif, gezien in de richting van Station Staatsspoor vanaf de kruising van het Spui met de Grote Markstraat [uit: Plan tot verbetering van het stadsdeel tusschen Spui en Zwarteweg]

Dudok kan zijn ambitie echter niet verwezenlijken als gevolg van invloeden die buiten zijn macht liggen: de rijksoverheid en de Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS). Wanneer Dudok in mei 1945 van de minister van Openbare Werken en Wederopbouw in het kabinet-Schermerhorn-Drees, ir. J.A. Ringers, de boodschap meekrijgt dat de regering op korte termijn een beslissing wil treffen inzake de bouw van vijf departementsgebouwen met bijbehorende kantoren, werkt hij in korte tijd zijn plan voor Plein 1945 uit. Het wordt in november voorgelegd aan de ministerraad, die zich echter niet kan verenigen met de gedachte dat er naast het Binnenhof een tweede ‘regeringscentrum’ wordt gecreëerd, dat ‘te vergelijken zou zijn met de positie van Paus en tegen-Paus.’¹² Deze afwijzing wordt niet alleen ingegeven door een rapportage van rijksbouwmeester G. Friedhoff, die zich in het geheel niet kan vinden in deze oplossing,¹³ maar getuigt daarnaast ook van een gebrek aan visie en daadkracht bij de rijksoverheid, dat nog decennia lang de relatie tussen rijk en gemeente zal belasten. Verder is van invloed dat de NS tot het besluit komt geen medewerking te verlenen aan een nieuw ondergronds Centraal Station, waardoor het ontwerp voor Bezuidenhout averij oploopt en de verbinding tussen dit stadsdeel en Plein 1945 op een zijspoor komt te staan.

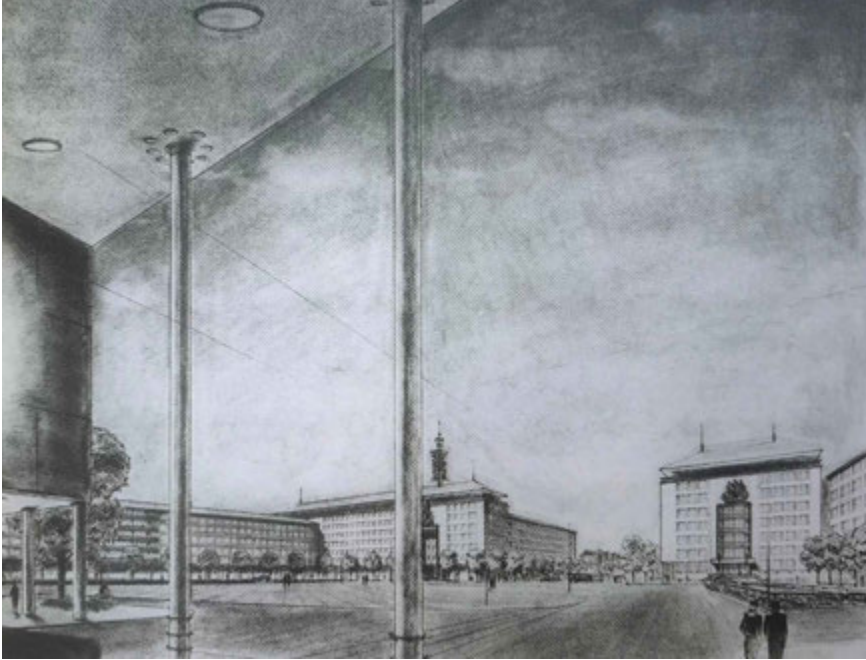


FIG. 7 Plein 1945, het ruimtelijk hoogtepunt in Dudoks visie voor de wederopbouw van het Spuikwartier, gezien in de richting van Station Staatsspoor [Gemeentelijke Dienst Stadsontwikkeling en Grondzaken, Den Haag]

Hoewel omstreden, kan de Raad van Vijf zich ook vinden in het voorstel van Dudok om het in 1943 gesloopte deel van Zorgvliet te bestemmen tot een cultuurcentrum met een bovenstedelijke uitstraling, bestaande uit een congresgebouw, schouwburg, concertgebouw en andere culturele instellingen. Een ondergrondse spoorweglus vanuit het nieuwe Centraal Station – onderdeel van het structuurplan dat Dudok in 1949 aan de gemeenteraad presenteert – moet deze en andere bestemmingen in de stad snel en comfortabel ontsluiten. [8] Het cultuurcentrum komt door het ontbreken van draagvlak binnen de gemeenteraad niet van de grond; het enige onderdeel dat gerealiseerd wordt is het congresgebouw naar ontwerp van J.J.P. Oud. Het plan voor de ondergrondse spoorweg die Den Haag verkeerskundig veel had kunnen opleveren blijft beperkt tot de tekentafel.

De wijkgedachte

Afgezien van overeenstemming is er echter ook conflictstof. Zo legt de Raad van Vijf na afloop van de tentoonstelling in het Gemeentemuseum de vinger op een oude wond, die nog steeds schrijnt: het ontbreken van een stedenbouwkundig plan

voor de gehele stad. Deze kritiek is voornamelijk gericht tot het gemeentebestuur dat – evenals in 1934 – Dudok slechts een beperkte opdracht heeft verstrekt. Over de ontwerpen merkt de Raad onder meer op dat Dudok ‘er niet in [is] geslaagd aan te tonen, dat zijn plannen voor deze nieuwe wijken als onderdelen van één groot samenhangend geheel fungeren.’¹⁴

Daarnaast bestaat er onenigheid over de ruimte die de wederopbouwplannen laten aan het realiseren van de wijkgedachte. Ondanks de toelichting van Dudok dat deze gedachte essentieel moet worden geacht bij de stadsvorming voor de toekomst, komt dit in de gepubliceerde plannen niet tot haar recht. Anders zouden naar mening van de Raad van Vijf ‘de bouwwerken van sociale en culturele betekenis niet die willekeurig aandoende verspreiding hebben gekregen, welke thans in de plannen is waar te nemen.’¹⁵ Dit is onder meer het geval in het ontwerp voor het nieuwe Bezuidenhout, waar Dudok dit soort voorzieningen projecteert langs de Juliana van Stolberglaan, de geplande verkeersas richting Plein 1945.

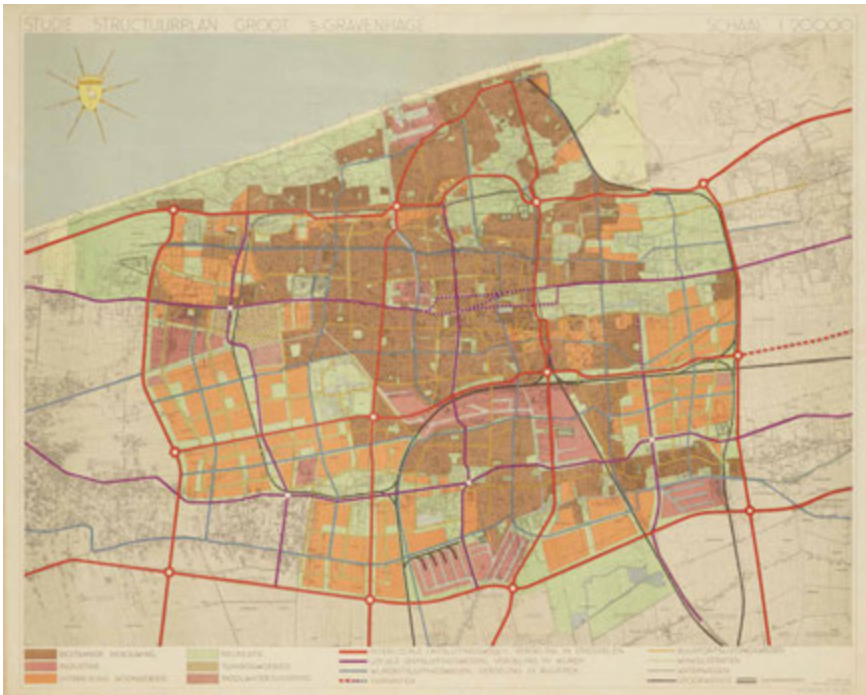


FIG. 8 Studie uit 1947 voor het structuurplan dat W.M. Dudok twee jaar later presenteert voor Groot 's-Gravenhage. De architect heeft niet alleen de (lichtgekleurde) gebieden voor nieuwbouw aangegeven, maar ook de structuur van het wegennet en de ondergrondse spoorlijn die de agglomeratie in de toekomst moesten ontsluiten [Haags Gemeentearchief]

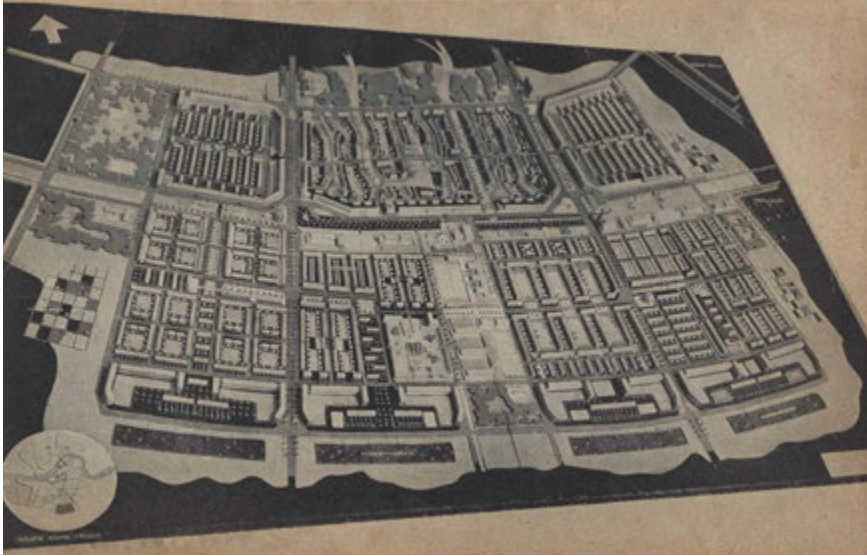


FIG. 9 Maquettefoto van het ontwerp voor het Rotterdamse Zuidwijk; in het ontwerp voor dit stadsdeel vindt de wijkgedachte, oorspronkelijk ontwikkeld door de Amerikaanse socioloog en stedenbouwkundige Clarence Arthur Perry, een optimale ruimtelijke vertaling [uit: *De stad der toekomst, de toekomst der stad*]

De Raad van Vijf staat een stedenbouwkundige opzet voor ogen, waarin wijken met een omvang van circa 15.000 tot 20.000 inwoners over een eigen winkelcentrum beschikken, evenals sportterreinen en een eigen bijkantoor van de gemeentelijke diensten. Daarnaast streeft men naar een wijkgebouw voor bijeenkomsten, uitvoeringen en lezingen in combinatie met een bibliotheek. Dit streven sluit aan op de in vakkringen sterk gevoelde behoefte om ‘mens en gemeenschap in de moderne stad’ centraal te stellen in het wederopbouwproces.¹⁶ Na de gangbare negentiende-eeuwse stedenbouwkundige praktijk, die gebaseerd was op het liberale principe van staatsonthouding en die tal van sociaal-maatschappelijke uitwassen met zich meebracht, is het nu tijd voor een moderne aanpak waarin de bewoners centraal staan. Dus in plaats van een aaneenrijging van identieke woningen in identieke straten en wijken komen er nu zorgvuldig opgebouwde stadsdelen met een gevarieerd woningaanbod, groen en een scala aan voorzieningen. [9]

Conclusie

Terugblikkend op de zes jaar die Dudok aan de stedenbouwkundige planvorming van Den Haag heeft besteed, valt een aantal zaken op. Allereerst dat hij, ondanks de grote inspanningen van zijn kant en de geïnspireerde plannen die hij in de periode 1945–50 heeft ontwikkeld, bedroevend weinig heeft bereikt. Hoewel hij gewend

was als een autocratische eenling te opereren en mede daardoor de nieuwe tijd niet verstond, kan het falen van zijn plannen slechts deels aan zijn karakter worden toegeschreven. Wat Dudok mogelijk heeft gesterkt in zijn halsstarrige houding was het advies van De Monchy om niet met de Raad van Vijf in zee te gaan, want ‘die hebben wij nu eenmaal tegen ons en het lukt u niet die voor uw wagen te spannen; wij kennen de architecten en daar weten wij wel raad mee.’¹⁷

Evenmin was het portuur van de Raad van Vijf en andere maatschappelijke verbanden van dien aard dat het Haagse gemeentebestuur zich daar veel van aantrok. De publicaties en brieven van de Stichting Wederopbouw 's-Gravenhage ondersteunden de gemeenteraad weliswaar in zijn toenemende oppositie tegen de plannen, maar dat verzet sproot in de kern voort uit een gevoel van miskenning, gevoed door de omstandigheid dat de gemeenteraad niet betrokken was geweest bij de benoeming van Dudok. In een wat zonderlinge redenering hoefde dat volgens wethouder van Volkshuisvesting L.J.M. Feber overigens geen bezwaar te zijn, want ‘[de] raad heeft ook geen opdracht gegeven voor de aanleg van de Parijse Champs Ellysées en de Venetiaanse Piazza San Marco. Maar dit belet niet om daarover enthousiast te zijn.’¹⁸

De gemeenteraad bleek echter niet in staat de grote lijnen te zien en verloor zich telkens weer in details: ‘Te veel kritiek en te weinig waardering deden afbreuk aan beraadslaging’ is dan ook de onderkop boven een artikel in *Het Binnenhof*, gewijd aan de bespreking van de plannen in de gemeenteraad in het najaar van 1948.¹⁹ Uiteraard moeten deze ontwikkelingen tevens gezien worden in relatie tot de internationale spanningen, die als gevolg van de snel verslechterende verhouding tussen de Sovjet-Unie en de Verenigde Staten velen het gevoel gaf dat een Derde Wereldoorlog wel eens realiteit zou kunnen worden. Tegen deze achtergrond voelden velen zich onzeker over de toekomst.

Maar nu de werkelijke reden dat Dudok in Den Haag is gestrand: deze ligt naar mijn mening besloten in de situatie dat de Haagse gemeentelijke autonomie sterk werd (en nog steeds wordt) beïnvloed door het feit dat de stad zowel residentie en regeringszetel is, als hoofdstad van de provincie. Deze omstandigheid heeft het gemeentelijk handelen gestuurd vanaf het moment dat graaf Floris IV hier een bescheiden kasteel bouwde en werd een steeds grotere factor in het bestuurlijk krachtenveld naarmate de staat letterlijk en figuurlijk meer ruimte ging opeisen. Onder de Duitse bezetting is deze tendens versneld en werd een planningsapparaat opgetuigd dat zich na de bevrijding volledig heeft ontplooid.²⁰ Aan de centrale sturing van rijk en provincie kon geen enkele gemeente zich meer onttrekken en Den Haag wel het allerminst.



FIG. 10 Het Wijkhavenkwartier: een stadsdeel dat inmiddels al meer dan een halve eeuw in wording is. Foto Paul Lunenburg [Haags Gemeentearchief]

Het falen van Dudok moet dan ook worden toegeschreven aan de uitzonderlijke toestand dat besluiten van de rijksoverheid inzake de huisvesting van haar eigen organisatie, zich direct doen gelden op het vlak van de stedenbouwkundige speelruimte van de gemeente. Zo is over de invulling en vormgeving van het Spuikwartier, waar Dudoks Plein 1945 had kunnen liggen, decennialang gesoebat zonder dat dit tot een bevredigend resultaat heeft geleid. De huidige vorm van dit belangrijke stadsdeel, dat nu als Wijkhavenkwartier bekend staat, geeft blijk van het primaat van grondexploitatie ten koste van het scheppen van betekenisvolle publieke ruimten. Zo herinnert het aan de kritiek die het Comité Toekomstig 's-Gravenhage al in 1933 aan de orde had gesteld. [10]

Noten

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- 1 Herman van Bergeijk, Willem Marinus Dudok. *Architect-stedenbouwkundige 1884-1974*, Naarden 1995, 88.
 - 2 Van Bergeijk, Willem Marinus Dudok, 7.
 - 3 Zie hiervoor Huub Thomas, *Het beziel modernisme van A.H. Wegerif, Architectuur als beschavingsideaal*, Rotterdam 2018, 67.
 - 4 'Comité voor Stadsontwikkeling', *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 27 mei 1933.
 - 5 Van Bergeijk, Willem Marinus Dudok, 232-233.
 - 6 'De opbouw van Den Haag', *Het Vaderland*, 24 juni 1933.
 - 7 G. Knuttel, 'Ter inleiding', in *Den Haag bouwt op*, Den Haag (Gemeentemuseum) 1946, 7.
 - 8 Stichting Wederopbouw 's-Gravenhage, *Herrijzend 's-Gravenhage*, Den Haag [1945], 28-32.
 - 9 A.H. Wegerif, 'Het geheim der architecten', in *Den Haag bouwt op*, 16.

- 10 'Critiek op Dudok's Haagsche plannen', *De Tijd* 21 januari 1947.
- 11 'Saneering Spuikwartier', *De Ingenieur* 29 maart 1940.
- 12 'Toekomstig 's-Gravenhage', *Trouw* 24 januari 1949.
- 13 Van Bergeijk, Willem Marinus Dudok, 268-279.
- 14 'Bezwaren tegen het plan-Dudok', *Het Binnenhof* 22 januari 1947.
- 15 'Bezwaren tegen het plan-Dudok'.
- 16 A. Bos et al., *De stad der toekomst, de toekomst der stad: een stedenbouwkundige en sociaal-culturele studie over de groeiende stadsgemeenschap*, Rotterdam 1946, 35 e.v.
- 17 Brief Dudok aan de Haagse wethouder van wederopbouw L.J.M. Feber, 31 juli 1953, geciteerd in Van Bergeijk, Willem Marinus Dudok, 90.
- 18 'Krachtig appèl aan durf voor de toekomst', *Het Binnenhof* 23 oktober 1948.
- 19 'Krachtig appèl aan durf voor de toekomst'.
- 20 Koos Bosma & Cor Wagenaar (ed.), *Een geruisloze doorbraak*, Rotterdam 1995, 12-16.

An extraordinary photograph: Gerrit Rietveld, Mart Stam and El Lissitzky at the Schröder House, 1926

The Schröder House, designed in 1924 by Gerrit Th. Rietveld (1888-1964) in close collaboration with the client Truus Schröder-Schräder (1889-1985), has been photographed countless times.¹ Most of the photographs of this well-known monument are architectural photographs, of its exterior or interior. Only a few of them include one or both of the designers. One such photograph, from 1926, appears in many publications concerning Rietveld or the Schröder House. It is an intriguing shot; but what exactly does it tell us? [1]

A visit to Utrecht

In 1926, El Lissitzky and his wife Sophie visited the Netherlands and stayed with Mart and Leni Stam in Rotterdam. After years abroad, Stam had returned to the Netherlands that summer and had begun work at the architectural firm Brinkman & Van der Vlugt. He showed his guests projects of his Rotterdam employer; he and Lissitzky visited Cornelis van Eesteren and J.J.P. Oud, and they also travelled to Utrecht. There, Stam and Lissitzky met Rietveld at the Schröder House on 27 September.² This meeting was captured in the well-known black-and-white photograph about which Ivan Nevzgodin wrote in 2010: 'Here we have the representatives of the *Nieuwe Bouwen* (the Dutch manifestation of the Modern Movement in architecture), *De Stijl* and Russian constructivism and Suprematism together as a triad.'³ The Schröder House, which had been completed over a year and a half earlier, had in the meantime gained national and international fame. Right from the start, it attracted the attention of neighbours, of curious passers-by, and above all, of interested architects and students. The attention the house received was – incidentally – not only positive. In her book about Truus Schröder, for example, Jessica van Geel recounts a story about students of the Delft University of Technology. They were sent to Utrecht by the renowned and newly appointed professor M.J. Granpré Molière, representative of the so-called Delft School, to see how not to build.⁴



FIG. 1 Left to right, Mart Stam, Gerrit Rietveld and El Lissitzky at the Schröder House, 27 September 1926 [Centraal Museum, Utrecht, Rietveld Schröder Archives]

Back to the picture. To my knowledge, this is the only photographic evidence for (one of) the many visits famous architects and artists paid to the house. Unfortunately, the picture is out of focus, but we can still derive a lot from it. It is certainly not a casual snapshot; the three gentlemen clearly posed for it. The setting is not the house's exceptional living floor, but Rietveld's -- or rather Rietveld's and Schröder's -- studio on the ground floor, opening onto the street side, the Prins Hendriklaan. Rietveld is in the middle, inside the studio, resting his hands on the lower part of the half-open door; Mart Stam (1899-1986, left) and El Lissitzky (1890-1941, right) are outside, in front of the studio. All three of them are looking straight into the camera. Stam looks quite poised, with his right hand at his side; Lissitzky has one hand loosely in his trouser pocket; in the other, we see a sketch pad. The two visitors are dressed in suits and ties, while Rietveld is wearing a kind of dust coat, as if he just got up from some activity.

The scene seems to have been staged; would they have come up with it themselves? Or was it directed by the photographer? We do not know who took the picture. Was it Sophie Lissitzky? Or was it Truus Schröder? In any case, there was plenty of time to take the photo, since the Russian guests stayed over in the Schröder

House. It was Lissitzky's second visit to Utrecht.⁵ A few years earlier, he had visited the 'room-with-the-fine-greys' that Rietveld had designed for Truus in 1921 in her previous home on the Biltstraat. Truus Schröder later said that on this second visit, to the Schröder House, she had prepared her son Binnert's 'red' room for Lissitzky and his wife, or maybe that woman was his mistress. She had inquired whether they wanted one or two bedrooms, and seemed to remember that in the end, they each got their own room.⁶ Many years later, Sophie Lissitzky also had a clear memory of this visit, during which she and Lissitzky had been very impressed by the beautiful upper floor, the beautiful furniture designs and the ingenious solutions Rietveld had devised in the house. The sketches Lissitzky made in the Schröder House would serve him well afterwards, too.⁷

The door behind which Rietveld is standing is painted black on the outside. Behind Mart Stam, a white surface is visible, against the dark grey outer wall. It is the inside of the open upper part of the door. The front door of the Schröder House on the Laan van Minsweerd is of the same type, a so-called stable door, where the upper and lower parts can be opened or closed independently of each other. It seems an odd choice for this avant-garde house, but apparently Truus Schröder thought these doors were safer: her youngest daughter could not just run onto the street and the doors kept animals from the nearby meadows out.⁸ Lissitzky is under a kind of canopy. It seems this was part of the window that could be folded up and outwards.⁹ We know that the wide windowsill behind it was used initially as a display case. The window also extends outward, like a showcase. [2] On the interior side, this display case used to be enclosed with frosted glass. On the one hand, Schröder wanted to be able to showcase examples of 'the new', and on the other, the showcase hid the interior somewhat from passers-by, as Natalie Dubois relates from the recollections of Truus Schröder.¹⁰ Unfortunately, there are no photographs of exhibited objects; the literature does, however, mention small works by Bart van der Leek and Jacob Bendien.¹¹ With a little difficulty, we can recognise this showcase behind Lissitzky in the photograph, but there are no objects on display to be seen. We do see, however, two works of art on the wall behind Rietveld. One of them is largely hidden by Rietveld's head and in the other, the details are only vaguely distinguishable; very likely, however, these are variants of the 1923 *Maison Particulière*, designed by Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren.¹² Whether we are dealing here with a counter-construction (or counter-constructions) or with one or two axonometries is difficult to distinguish.¹³ Their size can roughly be estimated, but nothing can be said about technique and exact dating by looking at them.¹⁴ We also know nothing of their origin, since no additional documentation is known to exist; it is interesting to consider these works, however.



FIG. 2 The window of the former studio in the Schröder House extends out like a showcase [photograph by Marie-Thérèse van Thoor, 2020]

Maison Particulière and the Schröder House

An important question in this context is whether there might have been a reason for showing Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren's designs other than offering a podium to 'the new'. The most obvious hypothesis in this context is that we see here (the) sources of Rietveld's inspiration for his design for the Schröder House. In 2009, Henk Engel wrote: 'The Counter-Construction image shows a clear similarity to the appearance of the Rietveld-Schröder House, completed in 1924.' Engel links this conclusion to the fact that Van Doesburg depicted the house in the 1925 German reissue of his *Principles of Neo-Plastic Art* (1919) as 'the most perfect realization of De Stijl's ambition to create a "four-dimensional" architecture.'¹⁵ Late in 1925, Van Doesburg also placed two photographs of the Schröder House in *De Stijl*, an exterior

photograph with the caption ‘G. Rietveld & Schrader, Maison de Mme Schrader à Utrecht’, and a month later, a photograph of the interior of the living floor. The caption now reads ‘Architecten G. Rietveld en Schröder. Interieur (indeelbaar) van het Woonhuis, gereproduceerd in No. 10/11’ (Architects G. Rietveld and Schröder. Interior (divisible) of the Residence, reproduced in No. 10/11).¹⁶

It is indeed tempting to compare counter-constructions, axonometries, facades and floor plans of *Maison Particulière* with the much scarcer sketches and drawings of the Schröder House.¹⁷ [3–8] The open space, the relation between inside and outside, the play with loose planes and elements, horizontals and verticals and also the colour palette are certainly related. The influence of Rietveld’s *De Stijl* colleagues on his design has been mentioned repeatedly, before and since Engel.¹⁸ The fact that Van Doesburg immediately classified Rietveld’s house as a perfect example of *De Stijl* architecture is certainly responsible for this. Later, too, Rietveld played a central role in post-war exhibitions, by means of which *De Stijl* underwent a true ‘revival’ from the 1950s onwards. As a result, both he and the Schröder House enjoyed renewed international interest.¹⁹

If, however, we look more closely for the connection between *Maison Particulière* and the Schröder House, there is, apart from their general similarity, no evidence of a direct influence of Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren on the Schröder House. Ida van Zijl and Bertus Mulder rightly identify major differences between these designs. In the utopian counter-constructions, the bearing and supporting parts are mere floating lines and planes. All elements and colours are treated in the same way. The Schröder House, on the other hand, has the configuration of a solid, rectangular house; at its core is the stairwell with, on the first floor, a large space around it. Only the outer shell is broken up in disparate lines and diverging planes, with all colours having a separate meaning.²⁰

In the first sketches and the model Rietveld made for Truus Schröder, the house already had its final basic form of two storeys under a flat roof. The design was, however, too closed in Schröder’s view. Rietveld might have received inspiration to break up the walls as they are in the ultimate design from the counter-constructions of Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren, as Van Zijl and Mulder also suggest. This only came up when Schröder and Rietveld approached the essence of designing the house differently, however. It was not the structure or the exterior, but the interior and its uses that formed the basis of the final design. Once Schröder and Rietveld conceived of the central living floor as one open and freely divisible space, the appropriate design emerged.²¹ The design and placement of the outer walls that followed can be seen as first examples of what Rietveld took as a guiding principle for his future architectural work and thinking: delineate space.²²

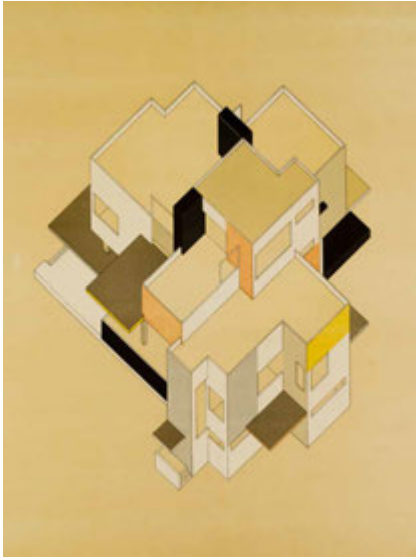


FIG. 3 Theo van Doesburg & Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison Particulière, axonometry, 1923 [Het Nieuwe Instituut]



FIG. 4 Theo van Doesburg & Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison Particulière, counter-construction (made by Van Doesburg), probably 1925 [Het Nieuwe Instituut]



FIG. 5 Theo van Doesburg & Cornelis van Eesteren, Maison Particulière, plan of first floor, 1923 [Het Nieuwe Instituut]

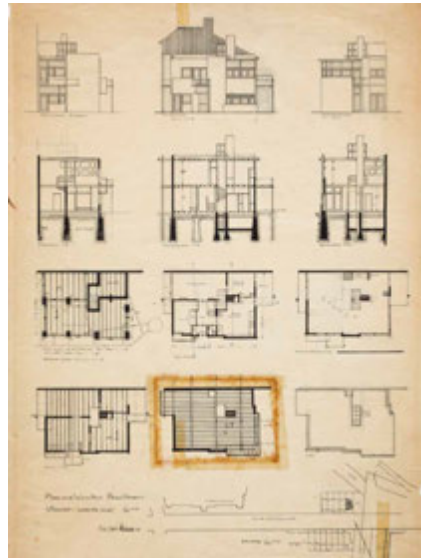


FIG. 6 Gerrit Rietveld, drawing of the Schröder House that Rietveld sent to the municipality of Utrecht shortly after 2 July 1924 [Centraal Museum, Rietveld Schröder Archives]

G. Rietveld & Schröder, architects

If the designs for *Maison Particulière* were not the initial sources of inspiration for the Schröder House, why would Rietveld have hung them on the wall of his studio, when the works of art of his artist friends were not in the showcase -- at least in the photograph? In 1919, Rietveld was introduced to Van Doesburg by Robert van 't Hoff and thus joined the ranks of *De Stijl*. In her research, Marijke Kuper paid a lot of attention to the relationship between Rietveld, *De Stijl* and other *Stijl* members.²³ The new network, the new [sources of] inspiration and the foreign contacts coincided with a new phase in Rietveld's creative life. A few years earlier, he had met Truus Schröder. In these years she too distanced herself more and more from her old life and developed into an independent woman with modern ideas that harmonised well with Rietveld's. Rietveld and other members of *De Stijl* certainly influenced each other in those early years. For Rietveld, however, the principle issue during this period was shaking off his 'narrow-mindedness' and developing the new.

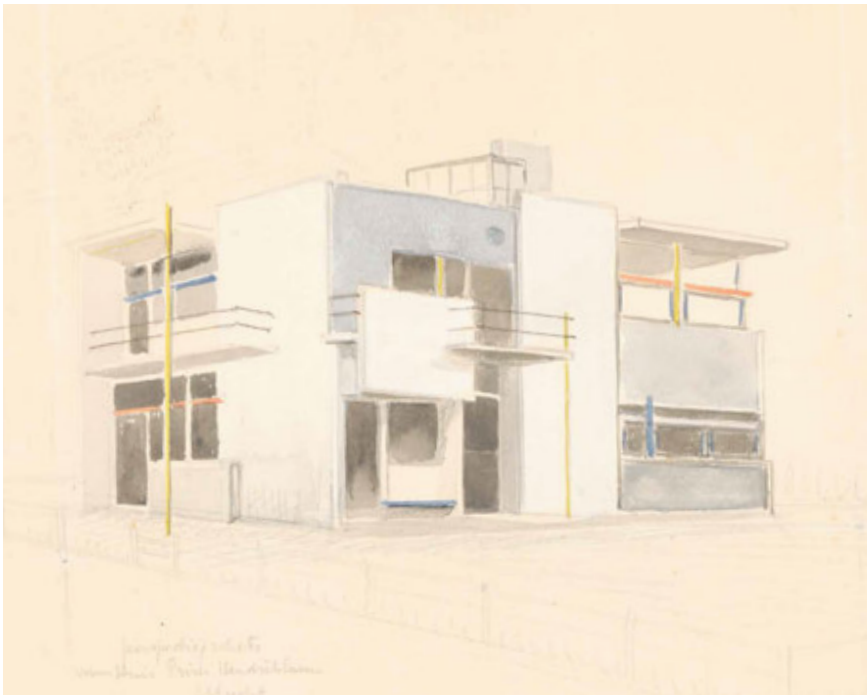


FIG. 7 Gerrit Rietveld, coloured perspective sketch of the Schröder House (pencil, water colour and ink), signed, c. 1950 [Centraal Museum, Rietveld Schröder Archives]



FIG. 8 The Schröder House, perspective cross-section; coloured-in collotype; unsigned; probably 1950 [Centraal Museum, Rietveld Schröder Archives]

As Kuper shows, Rietveld's collaboration with his Stijl colleagues came about mainly through invitations from others. Van Doesburg, for example, involved Rietveld and Van Eesteren in a De Stijl architectural exhibition held in the autumn of 1923 at Léonce Rosenberg's Galerie L'Effort Moderne, in Paris. Although Rietveld's share was initially expected to be larger, due to a lack of time, he would ultimately confine himself to making a model of the Hotel Particulier (or Maison Rosenberg), after a design by Van Eesteren.²⁴ At a distance, Rietveld was nonetheless involved throughout the year in the plans for this exhibition, where Maison Particulière and Maison d'Artiste were also exhibited. He was undoubtedly familiar with these designs, and it is not unreasonable to assume he had obtained the works hanging on the studio wall of the Schröder House in 1926 from Van Eesteren.

Rietveld had also been busy making his own design for Rosenberg, but it did not result in a successful issue. ‘Dear folks, I’m busy working on the Rosenberg model - but I have to abandon it so often that I haven’t yet succeeded in turning it into a simple, self-explanatory whole that would satisfy me,’ Rietveld wrote in August 1923.²⁵ In 1923, too, he was already employed by Truus Schröder in her search for a new house. Thus, the contact with the Stijl colleagues slowly petered out, at least with Van Doesburg. For the anniversary issue of *De Stijl* in 1927, Rietveld submitted a short text and images of a few furniture designs and his latest architectural project, the Utrecht Chauffeur’s House (1927-28).²⁶ Following the death of Van Doesburg (1931), however, he would not respond to the invitation to contribute to the commemorative issue of *De Stijl*. According to Marijke Kuper, Rietveld gave up on *De Stijl* in the second half of the twenties, at the latest.

While the Schröder House might be the best example of Rietveld’s architectural contribution to *De Stijl*, it was also the moment when he began to detach himself from this movement. The collaboration between Rietveld and Truus Schröder-Schröder at the Schröder House had in the meantime led to the partnership of ‘Schröder & Rietveld arch-atelier’ - or ‘G. Rietveld & Schröder architects’ - which they were to conduct from their studio in the Schröder House until 1933. In my opinion, it is therefore reasonable to assume it was Truus Schröder who took the special photograph on 27 September 1926. In it, she pictures her companion Gerrit Rietveld, as an architect, amidst like-minded colleagues. This observation also raises a new, intriguing question: in the designs of this architectural firm, what were the role and significance of the partner next to Rietveld, of the woman behind the camera?

Notes

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- 1 Since 1970, the house has officially been called the Rietveld Schröder House.
 - 2 Stef Jacobs, Mart Stam. *Dichter van staal en glas*, Amsterdam 2016, 96.
 - 3 Ivan Nevzgodin, ‘Perspective from the East: Rietveld’s Impact on the Soviet Union’, in Rob Dettingmeijer, Marie-Thérèse van Thoor & Ida van Zijl (ed.), *Rietveld’s Universe*, Rotterdam 2010, 216.
 - 4 Jessica van Geel, *I love you, Rietveld*, Amsterdam 2018, 180.
 - 5 Van Geel, *I love you, Rietveld*, 176; Ida van Zijl & Bertus Mulder, *Het Rietveld Schröderhuis*, Utrecht 2009, 42.
 - 6 El Lissitzky would not marry Sophie Küper until 1927, which probably explains Truus Schröder’s doubts about whether she was his wife or his mistress.
 - 7 Sophie Lissitzky-Küpper (1967) quoted by Ivan Nevzgodin, ‘Perspective from the East: Rietveld’s Impact on the Soviet Union’, in *Rietveld’s Universe*, 216-217. Lissitzky used examples of Rietveld’s design solutions in his teaching and in his texts.
 - 8 Van Geel, *I love you, Rietveld*, 170.
 - 9 During research funded by The Getty Foundation into the Rietveld Schröder House (2015-18), a large collection of historical photographs has been brought together and studied. It can be deduced from this that the studio window has had various layouts since 1925. See Marie-Thérèse van Thoor (ed.), *Colour, Form and Space. Rietveld Schröder House challenging the Future*, Delft 2019, <https://books.bk.tudelft.nl/>

index.php/press/catalog/book/681. See also: <https://www.rietveldschroderhuis.nl/nl/ontdek/ruimtelijk-archief>.

- 10 Natalie Dubois, 'The house of Truus Schröder: from home to museum house', in Van Thoor, *Colour, Form and Space*, 80.
- 11 Dubois, 'The house of Truus Schröder', 80; Van Zijl / Mulder, *Het Rietveld Schröderhuis*, 52.
- 12 Both Van Zijl and Dubois point to this in the above-mentioned texts. They only mention Van Doesburg as author, while it would be more accurate to attribute the designs jointly to Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren. For this, see Kees Somer, "'We werkten steeds vollediger samen." Van Eesteren and the "construction collective"', in Dolf Broekhuizen (ed.), *Maison d'Artiste. Onvoltooid icoon van De Stijl*, Rotterdam 2016, 43-52.
- 13 Herman van Bergeijk and Sjoerd van Faassen suggest that what we see here is a drawing of *Maison Particulière* [De kleur lost de architectonische ruimte op. *De briefwisseling tussen Theo van Doesburg en architect C.R. de Boer, 1920-1929* (ed. Sjoerd van Faassen & Herman van Bergeijk), Haarlem 2019, 74].
- 14 For several variants of these works, see Els Hoek et al. (ed.), *Theo van Doesburg. Oeuvre Catalogue*, Utrecht/Otterlo 2000, no. 702.III.
- 15 Henk Engel, 'Theo van Doesburg & the Destruction of Architectural Theory', in Gladys Fabre & Doris Wintgens Hötte (ed.), *Van Doesburg & the International Avant-Garde. Constructing a New World*, London 2009, 36-37.
- 16 Respectively, *De Stijl* 6 (1924-25) 10-11, 160; *De Stijl* 6 (1924-25) 12, 140. A photograph of the Schröder House ('Rietveld et Schrader') also hung at the *Deuxième Exposition Annuelle: Architecture Internationale* in Nancy. See: *De kleur lost de architectonische ruimte op*, 74.
- 17 For images, see, for example, Broekhuizen, *Maison d'Artiste* and Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Rietveld*, London 2010.
- 18 See, for example, Van Zijl, *Gerrit Rietveld*, 68-69.
- 19 Rob Dettingmeijer, 'Rietveld and the Writing of Architecture History' and Ida van Zijl, 'De Stijl als Style', in *Rietveld's Universe*, 20-35 and 226-249.
- 20 Van Zijl / Mulder, *Het Rietveld Schröderhuis*, 42-43.
- 21 For a more elaborate description of the construction of the Schröder House, see Van Zijl / Mulder, *Het Rietveld Schröderhuis*; Van Zijl, *Gerrit Rietveld*, 47-71.
- 22 Marie-Thérèse van Thoor, 'Factors of the Visible. Rietveld's Ideas about the Renewal of Architecture', in *Rietveld's Universe*, 154-173.
- 23 Marijke Küper, 'Rietveld and De Stijl', in *Rietveld's Universe*, 194-211. See also Marijke Küper, 'Gerrit Rietveld', in Carel Blotkamp et al., *De beginjaren van De Stijl 1917-1922*, Utrecht 1982, 263-284; Marijke Küper, 'Gerrit Rietveld', in Carel Blotkamp (ed.), *De vervolggjaren van De Stijl 1922-1932*, Amsterdam/Antwerp 1996, 196-240.
- 24 The design is usually attributed to Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren, but Rietveld only mentioned Van Eesteren. See also Somer, 'We worked together more and more completely', 45-48; Evert van Straaten, 'Theo van Doesburg', in Blotkamp, *De vervolggjaren van De Stijl 1922-1932*, 26-27.
- 25 Cited in Van Straaten, 'Theo van Doesburg', 27.
- 26 *De Stijl* 79-84 (1927), 46, 47.

De architect en de auto: de dialectiek van de statische en dynamische voertuigen

De stormachtige opkomst van de auto vanaf circa 1900 heeft op vele manieren grote invloed gehad op de geschiedenis van architectuur en stedenbouw. De auto kreeg een belangrijke rol in het maatschappelijk leven en werd dus ook een cruciaal thema in de architectuurgeschiedenis van de 20ste eeuw. Door de auto veranderde het aanzicht van steden en landschappen drastisch, en de auto kreeg ruim baan, als logisch onderdeel van de vooruitgangsgedachte. Tot omstreeks 1970 werd de opkomst van de auto door velen, ook architecten, toegejuicht. Maar daarna sloeg de sfeer om. Het lijkt op het scenario van de tovenaarsleerling: hoe kon men het disruptieve effect van auto's op onze omgeving weer in bedwang krijgen?

Maar hoe was die relatie in omgekeerde zin? Hoe was de relatie tussen automobiele ontwikkeling en architectuur-ontwikkeling? Dit artikel gaat over architecten die zich waagden aan het ontwerpen van een auto. Aan de hand van voorbeelden wordt duidelijk gemaakt hoe die relatie evolueerde, gekoppeld aan de technische ontwikkeling van de automobiel, van ambachtelijk tot industrieel product. Het toont ook aan dat de architecten er niet in slaagden om vat te krijgen op de dynamische eigenschappen van het voertuig. Dit sluit aan op de (bredere) observatie van de Franse cultuurfilosoof Paul Virilio dat architectuur en stedenbouw de aansluiting hebben verloren met de gevolgen van de achtereenvolgende maatschappelijke versnellingen in de 20ste eeuw, als eerste met de opkomst van de automobiel en later met de opkomst van IT, internet, enz.: 'als statisch voertuig gaat de architectuur langzaam maar zeker ten onder'.¹

Aan de hand van de dualiteit statisch/dynamisch biedt dit artikel een bijzondere blik op de geschiedenis van de architectuur in de eerste helft van de 20ste eeuw. Het laat vooral zien hoe enkele architecten, als uiting van hun streven naar 'moderniteit', zich stortten op het ontwerp van een automobiel, maar geen of amper begrip hadden voor de dynamische aspecten ervan. Hierdoor zijn 'gebouw-architecten' niet meer dan een voetnoot in de automobielhistorie.² Andersom is het fenomeen 'lightness' een heel interessante 'lesson learned' uit de automobiel- en vliegtuigwereld dat een (bescheiden) plaats verwierf in de architectuurgeschiedenis, waarbij architecten probeerden gebouwen te ontwerpen die zich losmaken van de wetten van 'de zwaarte van de materie'.

De architect als auto-pionier: de elektrische BGS van W.B. van Liefland (1899)

Rond 1900 behoorden in Nederland ook enkele architecten tot de groep van gefortuneerden die zich een automobiel aanschafte. De Haagse architect W.B. van Liefland (1857-1919) was daar één van. Hij was directeur van de Exploitatie Maatschappij Scheveningen (EMS) en de architect van grote bouwprojecten in Scheveningen, zoals de Wandelpier (1899), het Circustheater (1903) en het Palace Hotel (1904). Hij was tevens van 1896 tot 1911 lid van de gemeenteraad van 's-Gravenhage.³

Op 1 mei 1899 werd Van Liefland initiatiefnemer en tevens directeur van de Algemeene Nederlandsche Autocar Maatschappij (ANAM), opgericht met als doel om 'zowel electro- als essence cars' te leveren en te verhuren. Deze firma was onder meer importeur van elektrisch aangedreven auto's van het Franse merk BGS (Bouquet, Garcin & Schivre), dat van 1899 tot 1906 bestond. De ANAM was tevens de eerste taxionderneming van Nederland.⁴ Het kantoor was aanvankelijk gevestigd aan de Juliana van Stolberglaan 1 en daarna in een groter gebouw aan de Laan van Nieuw Oost-Indië 178 in Den Haag. Omstreeks 1903 werden de activiteiten overgenomen door de firma Verweij & Lugard. Van Liefland was niet betrokken bij het ontwerp van deze auto, maar was wel representatief voor het soort creatieve architecten/ondernemers van rond de eeuwwisseling die een rol speelden bij de promotie van de automobiel in de maatschappij.

Van Liefland werd in 1899 zelf de eigenaar van een BGS (Rijksnummer 129). [1] Maar in 1903 schafte hij zich een nieuwe automobiel aan bij de firma Verweij & Lugard, nu een 20 pk Peugeot met een verbrandingsmotor (Rijksnummer 1070). Op een publiciteitsfoto zit Van Liefland zelf achter het stuur, maar meestal liet hij zich rijden door zijn chauffeur die lange tijd bij de ongehuwde Van Liefland woonde.[2]

Op zondag 10 juli 1905 maakte Van Liefland met deze Peugeot een plezierrit naar de duinen tussen Noordwijk en Bloemendaal. En toen ging het vreselijk mis: 'De stuurstang brak, waardoor de auto niet meer te regeeren viel. De bestuurder haalde met kalmte en beleid de remmen over, waardoor de vaart der auto eenigszins getemperd werd. Evenwel liep de machine, geheel aan zichzelf overgelaten, tegen de berm op, en vloog tegen een aan den weg staanden zwaren boom te pletter. De slag was zóó hevig, dat de auto pl.m. 15 centimeter in den boom drong en het stalen chassisraam als een veer in elkander boog. De auto was bijna geheel vernield. Een der heeren, welke naast den chauffeur zat, sprong er vóór de botsing uit. De anderen konden er niet uit en maakte den schok mede, waardoor zij door elkander werden geslagen en behoudens eenige ontvellingen en lichte kneuzingen wonder boven wonder ongedeerd bleven.'⁵

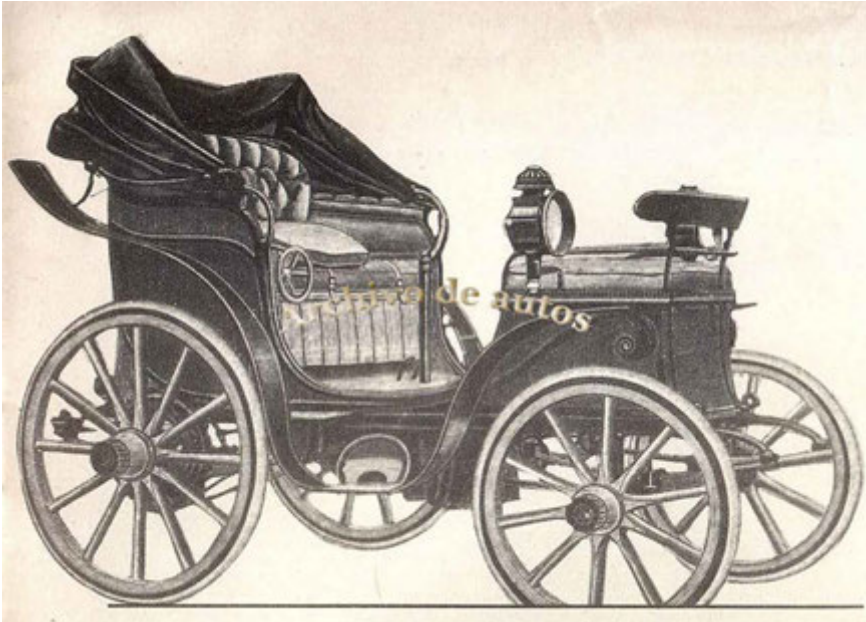


FIG. 1 Een BGS elektrische auto. De elektrische krachtbron had een vermogen van 7 pk, gevoed door een batterijpakket van circa 84 volt, waarmee het voertuig een topsnelheid van 27 km/uur bereikte



FIG. 2 De werkplaats van de firma Verweij & Lugard aan de Laan van Nieuw Oost-Indië in Den Haag, circa 1903. De auto in het midden is de Peugeot 20 pk uit 1903 van Van Liefland. Van Liefland zit zelf achter het stuur; naast hem zijn chauffeur

Van Liefland schafte kort daarna een nieuwe auto aan, waarmee hij in 1906 een tweede prijs won bij een ‘concours de carrosserie’ bij de ‘automobiel-week’ te Scheveningen; het was een krachtige FIAT 60 pk met een 4 cilinder motor van 10,6 liter en een ‘double phaeton’ carrosserie van de Haagse carrosseriebouwer B.T van Rijswijk en Zoon.⁶ Van deze monster-auto bestaan voor zover bekend geen foto’s.

De automobielfcarrosserie als toegepaste kunst: twee carrosserieën naar ontwerp van Ed. Cuypers/ Atelier ‘Het Huis’ (1905-7)

In de eerste decennia van de automobielhistorie was het gebruikelijk dat bij de autofabrikant een rijdend chassis werd gekocht (chassis met aandrijflijn) en dat daar vervolgens bij een van de gespecialiseerde carrosseriebouwers een carrosserie op werd gezet. Ook in Nederland waren er diverse carrosseriebouwers, meestal voortgekomen uit werkplaatsen waar koetsen werden vervaardigd. De carrosserieën bestonden veelal uit een houten geraamte, met daartussen panelen van hout, metaal of doek.

Toen de gefortuneerde Dordtse industrieel J.A. Stoop, mededirecteur van de Dordtsche Petroleum Maatschappij, een grote villa had laten bouwen door het Amsterdamse architectenbureau van Ed. Cuypers (1859-1927) en bovendien ook het interieur had laten uitvoeren door het aan dit bureau gelieerde Atelier ‘Het Huis’,⁷ was het een logische gedachte dat Stoop ook een bijpassende nieuwe automobiel door hetzelfde atelier liet ontwerpen en uitvoeren.⁸

Het betrof een Peugeot 18/24 PK, die op 11 november 1905 werd geregistreerd (Rijksnummer 67). [3] Met deze auto was Stoop in 1905 en 1906 deelnemer aan de Scheveningse automobiel-week.⁹ In een artikel in *Het Huis, Oud & Nieuw* werd uitgebreid aandacht besteed aan deze auto.¹⁰ In het begin van de tekst legt de auteur, waarschijnlijk Ed. Cuypers, een relatie met de historie. Net als bij de andere architecten van zijn generatie, vond hij het belangrijk om vormgeving te relateren aan illustere voorbeelden uit de geschiedenis. In het verleden hadden architecten immers ook ontwerpen gemaakt voor koetsen, zoals de Frans-Nederlandse barokarchitect Daniel Marot: ‘De heer J. A. Stoop te Dordrecht, die eene warme belangstelling koestert voor de moderne kunstnijverheid, liet kort geleden eene villa bouwen en geheel meubeleeren en inrichten. Ook aan den tuinaanleg en de automobiel-remise werd den zelfden aandacht besteed.’

Daarna volgt een beschrijving van de auto, waarin, opvallend genoeg, wordt ingegaan op de dynamiek van de rijdende automobiel: ‘Er is bij het ontwerpen

getracht aan deze reisautomobiel zoo eenvoudig mogelijke hoofdvormen te geven, daar men bij een snel voortbewegend voertuig, van grootere vormen eenen krachtiger totaal-indruk ontvangt, dan van eene gecompliceerde detaillering. De kleur is licht gehouden, omdat stof daarop veel minder zichtbaar is, dan op donker geschilderde reiswagens, die er na lange tochten ontoonbaar uitzien. Ook is de licht geschilderde auto reeds op grooten afstand zichtbaar. De chassis, een Peugeot van de firma Verwey & Lugard, is in feroline geschilderd, zoodat het onderstel een staalkleur heeft. De carrosserie, die hierop rust, heeft eenigszins het karakter van de oude Engelsche reiswagens, de zoogenaamde mail-coach; beneden licht groen en daarboven roomkleurig geschilderd en versierd met breede gele banden en geel koper beslag op het gebogen portier.' Daarna volgt een zin die duidelijk maakt dat de ontwerpers de opvattingen volgden van de 'rationele vormgeving', hetgeen vooral tot uitdrukking kwam in de vormgeving van de achterspatborden: 'Om het karakter van den hoofdvorm niet te verzwakken, volgen de spatborden de lijn van de carrosserie, die zij daardoor krachtig prononcereen. Niet alleen door type en kleur is getracht in deze automobiel het karakter van een reiswagen te leggen, maar ook is, door eene praktische ruimte-indeeling, gezorgd voor eene ruime berging van reisbenodigdheden.'

De carrosserie werd weliswaar ontworpen door 'Het Huis', maar werd waarschijnlijk gebouwd door de rijtuigfabriek J.H. van der Meulen L.C. Zn. te Amsterdam.

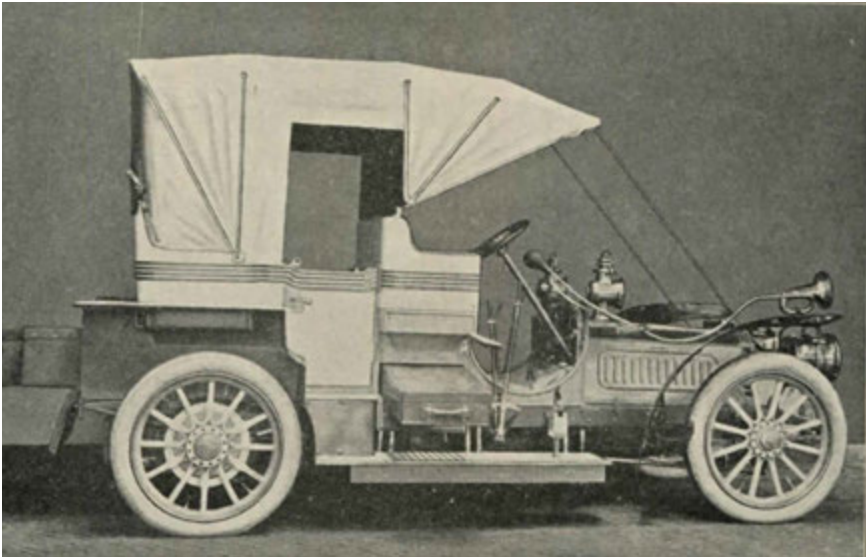


FIG. 3 De Peugeot 18/24 PK uit 1905 met carrosserie naar ontwerp van Atelier 'Het Huis

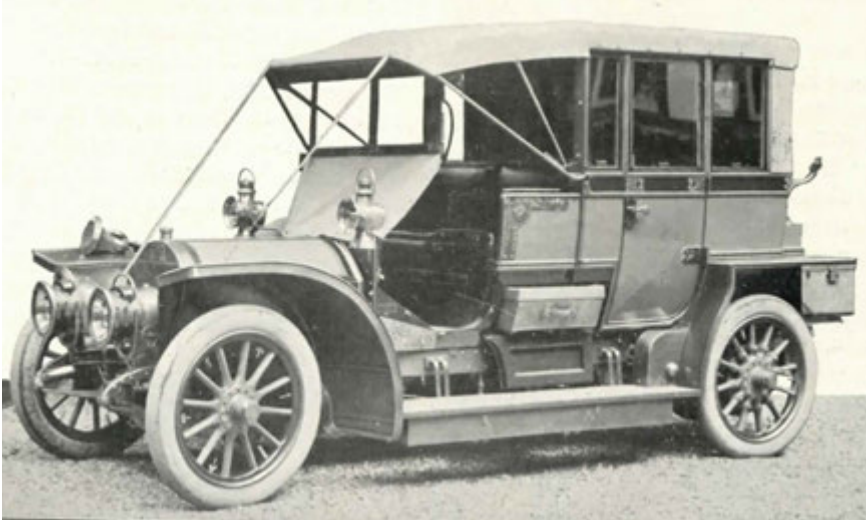


FIG. 4 De Peugeot uit 1907; carrosserie naar ontwerp van Atleier 'Het Huis'

In 1907 was Stoop opnieuw winnaar van het concours voor 'koetswerken van groot-toerisme' tijdens de Scheveningse automobiel-week.¹¹ Maar nu met een andere Peugeot, dit maal met een koetswerk van B.T. van Rijswijk en Zn. maar opnieuw ontworpen door 'Het Huis'. [4] Ook aan deze automobiel werd een artikel gewijd in *Het Huis*.¹²

'De reisautomobiel [...] is voor den Heer J. A. Stoop te Dordrecht door het Atelier "Het Huis" ontworpen. Het ontwerp heeft zich natuurlijk uitsluitend bepaald tot de carrosserie [...]. De carrosserie is groen geschilderd met bruin linnen kap. Breede koperen banden en gedreven beslag en slotplaten versieren het rijtuig. De zetels zijn met rood leder bekleed. Het onderstel of chassis is in feroline geschilderd. Al het koperwerk ook van de lantaarns enz. is bronskleurig hetgeen aan het geheel een meer gedistingeerd aanzien geeft dan het glimmende geel koper. Door een praktische ruimte-indeeling, [is] gezorgd voor eene ruime berging van reisbenodigdheden'.

Industriële productie en stroomlijn: de Gropius-Adlers en de Amilcar 8 van Leen van der Vlugt (1930)

In enkele publicaties over Leen van der Vlugt (1894-1936) wordt gememoreerd dat deze architect zeer trots was op zijn Amilcar 8 cilinder die hij in 1930, kort na voltooiing van de Van Nellefabriek, had aangeschaft. De carrosserie was deels door hem zelf ontworpen.¹³ [5]



FIG. 5 De Amilcar 8 cilinder van Leen van der Vlugt, met mevrouw Van der Vlugt achter het stuur (bij de meeste Franse luxe-auto's was het stuurwiel rechts). De smalle hoge radiator hoorde bij het 'rijdend chassis' zoals dat werd geleverd door de Amilcar-fabriek. De strak gelijnde hoekige carrosserie, zonder treeplanken, was gebouwd op basis van aanwijzingen van de architect

Amilcar was een kleine Franse autofabriek die in de jaren twintig enig succes had met kleine, lichte auto's ('cycle cars' genoemd) die weliswaar laaggeprijsd waren, maar ook een matige betrouwbaarheid hadden. In 1929 probeerde deze fabriek toe te treden tot de klasse van luxe-automobielen met de introductie van een 8 cilinder model. De Amilcar 8 cilinder werd gebouwd van 1929 tot 1932, in totaal circa 350 exemplaren. De auto had een 8 cilinder-lijnmotor van 2330 cc (daardoor was het in Frankrijk een 13CV). Deze motor leverde 58 pk (43 kW) bij 4.000 tpm. De topsnelheid was circa 120 km/uur, afhankelijk van de toegepaste carrosserie. Een groot deel van deze auto's werd verkocht als rijdend chassis, dus de koper moest zelf bij een carrosseriebouwer een carrosserie laten maken.

Het is niet bekend bij wie Van der Vlugt zijn Amilcar 8 van een tweedeurs cabriokoetswerkliet voorzien. De carrosserie was uitgevoerd volgens het Weymann-principe; het houten frame van de carrosserie was bekleed met kunstleer. Deze constructie was lichter dan een carrosserie met staalplaat en bovendien waren er minder krakende geluiden dankzij de toepassing van flexibele koppelplaten tussen de houten delen. Het sportieve karakter wordt versterkt door het ontbreken van de treeplanken en bovendien is het koetswerk strak vormgegeven.



FIG. 6 De door Walter Gropius ontworpen Adler Standard 8 uit 1931

Het lijkt er op dat Van der Vlugt daarbij de strakke vormgeving van de door de Bauhaus-architect Walter Gropius (1883-1969) ontworpen Adler Standard 6 en Standard 8 als voorbeeld nam. Deze gerenommeerde Duitse autofabriek had in 1928 Gropius gevraagd om nieuwe carrosserieën te ontwerpen, die in september 1929 op de Parijse Salon de l'Automobile 1930 werden gepresenteerd. Gropius was bevriend met de zoons van Heinrich Kleyer, de oprichter van de Adler-fabriek. [6]

De fabriek verwachtte met de inschakeling van een Bauhaus-ontwerper in één klap af te komen van het imago van 'degelijk, maar nogal oubollig' dat toen aan Adler kleefde. In het ontwerp van Gropius zijn de afzonderlijke componenten van de carrosserie duidelijk van elkaar onderscheiden. Het is in essentie nog een traditioneel koetswerk, maar wel in de stijl van het 'Industriedesign' van het Bauhaus. Daarmee staat zijn ontwerp nog dicht bij het auto-ontwerp van het bureau van Cuyper uit 1903. De vernieuwing in het ontwerp van Gropius ging niet verder dan het aanbrengen van harmonie tussen afzonderlijke componenten zoals motorkap, passagierscompartiment, spatborden, lampen, enz. Er was dus geen sprake van een geïntegreerde carrosserie, die recht deed aan de wetten van de aerodynamica, zoals enkele jaren later in de mode kwam. Gropius had duidelijk geen kennis van die wetten, zoals Le Corbusier dat al wél had. En blijkbaar hadden

de gestroomlijnde Rumber Tropfenauto's die vanaf 1922 in Berlijn als taxi reden, geen indruk op hem gemaakt. De frontoppervlakken van de carrosserie van Gropius' auto staan vrijwel rechtop en de koplampen staan los naast de radiator. Daarbij waren de glanzende wieldeksels er vooral om esthetische redenen aangebracht.

Er werden in totaal niet meer dan zes exemplaren gebouwd. Kort na de introductie van de Gropius-Adlers brak namelijk de Wall Street-crisis uit, waardoor ook de Duitse economie al snel hard werd geraakt. De teleurstellende verkoopaantallen van deze Adlers kunnen dus niet volledig worden geweten aan het ontwerp van Gropius.¹⁴ Doordat in de pers veel aandacht werd besteed aan de Gropius-Adlers had dit een positief effect op het imago van Adler. Een concreet en blijvend resultaat van de samenwerking met Gropius was het door hem ge-redesignde logo dat op alle latere modellen zou worden aangebracht.

Twee jaar later deed de fabriek een nieuwe poging om een vooruitstrevend model op de markt te brengen, de Adler Trumpf. Dit was in technisch opzicht een zeer modern ontwerp met voorwielaandrijving en onafhankelijke wielophanging (voor en achter). Het was het geesteskind van twee automobieleningenieurs met kennis van voertuigdynamica, Hans Gustav Röhr en Joseph Dauben, en niet van een architect.

De Voiture Minimum van Le Corbusier (1936) en de 'Car of the Future' van Frank Lloyd Wright (1959)

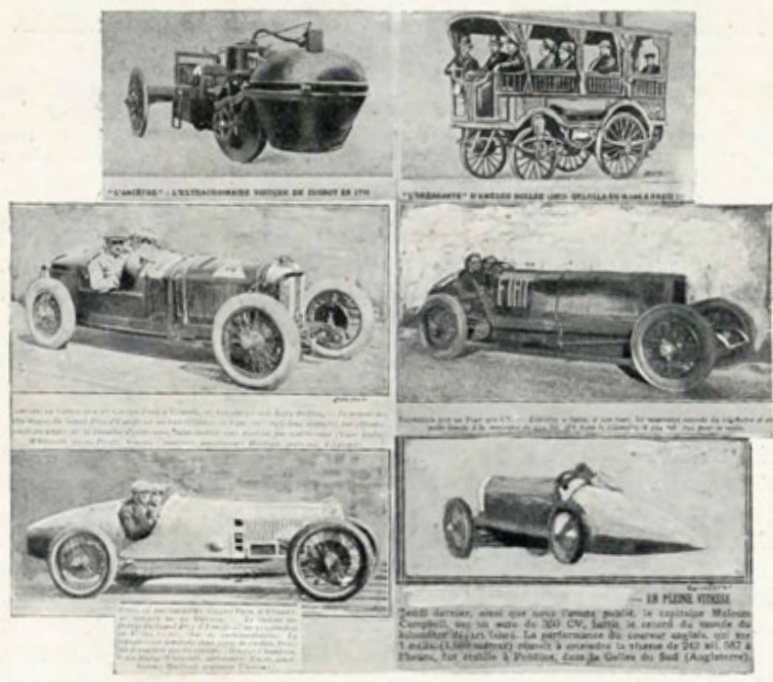
In zijn boek *Vers une architecture* (1923) stelde Le Corbusier dat de esthetica van een auto net zo belangrijk was als die van het Parthenon. Mede dankzij dit boek werd de industriële vormgeving van niet alleen auto's, maar ook van vliegtuigen en schepen, inspiratiebron voor de modernistische architectuur. De 'streamline style' van de jaren dertig was daarvan een uitvloeisel. Le Corbusiers vergelijking werd een polemische stelling: als een auto een machine is om voort te bewegen, dan is een huis een machine om te wonen. Hij bedoelde dat een woning, net als een auto of vliegtuig, een goed functionerend apparaat moest zijn, het resultaat van zorgvuldige bestudering van de eisen van de gebruikers. Voor J.J.P. Oud, die dit boek in 1924 recenseerde, was dit een eye-opener: 'Het huis als industrie-product, als massa-artikel [...]. Zoals men van een limousine, een landaulette, enz. spreekt en dan meteen weet welk type van auto bedoeld is, zoo zijn hier verschillende woningtypen samengesteld, die al naar gelang van het arrangement den naam "Domino", "Citrohan", "Monol", enz. dragen.'¹⁵ Dat Le Corbusier in 1923 goed op de hoogte was van de laatste ontwikkelingen op het gebied van de auto, blijkt uit de aandacht die hij in dit boek besteedt aan aerodynamica.¹⁶ Op dat moment was dit een onderzoeksgebied dat pas kort in opkomst was. [7]

	→ PLANIMÈRE PERPENDICULAIRE A LA MARCHE.	K 0.085
○	→ SPHÈRE.	0.0135
◐	→ DEMI-SPHÈRE OUVERTE A L'AVANT.	0.109
◑	→ DEMI-SPHÈRE OUVERTE A L'ARRIÈRE.	0.033
◔	→ CORPS OVOIDÉ GROS BOUT EN AVANT.	0.002

Le cône de meilleure pénétration, issu de l'expérimentation et du calcul, confirme les créations naturelles, le poisson, l'oiseau, etc. Application expérimentale : le dirigeable, l'auto de course.

*
*
*

Mais il faut d'abord tendre à l'établissement de standards pour affronter le problème de la perfection.



A la recherche d'un standard.

FIG. 7 Le Corbusier, Vers une architecture, 118. In de bovenste afbeelding een analyse van het stroomlijngedrag van verschillende objectvormen; in de onderste toonde Le Corbusier aan dat er een logische evolutie zou plaatsvinden naar de 'stroomlijnauto'

Mede door deze 'wake-up call' van Le Corbusier werd de industriële aanpak van de auto-industrie een lichtend voorbeeld voor de architecten van het Modernisme; met name om te worden toegepast bij de sociale woningbouw, waar industriële productietechnieken moesten leiden tot betaalbare arbeiderswoningen van hoge kwaliteit. Met veel interesse keken deze architecten naar de autofabrieken in de V.S., zoals de Ford-fabriek in Detroit, waar in 1913 de lopende band was geïntroduceerd. Daarna openden ook General Motors (Chevrolet, Buick, enz.), Dodge en Chrysler grote nieuwe fabrieken waar auto's in steeds grotere productieaantallen van de band rolden.

Vanaf 1918 deden reusachtige persen hun intrede waarmee carrosseriepanelen in één keer konden worden geperst. Nadeel was dat toepassing van deze persen alleen rendabel was bij zeer grote productieaantallen (circa. 50.000-100.000). Dit wordt wel de 'Wet van Budd' genoemd, naar het bedrijf van Edward G. Budd in Philadelphia, dat vanaf 1913 met deze persen stalen carrosseriedelen vervaardigde.

In Europa werden de grote staalpersen van Budd voor het eerst in de Citroën-fabriek in Parijs toegepast; hier werd in 1924 een persstraat voor carrosseriedelen in gebruik genomen. Korte tijd later werden deze staalpersen ook in gebruik genomen bij de Morris-fabriek in Engeland. Met deze innovatie waren Citroën en Morris in staat om 'meer auto' te bieden voor een lagere prijs dan de concurrentie. De 'woningfabrieken' die na de Tweede Wereldoorlog werden opgericht, zijn hierop geïnspireerd.

Het lijkt erop dat Le Corbusier, nadat hij dankzij zijn vele publicaties een aanzienlijke reputatie had verworven bij de wetenschappelijke benadering van het vraagstuk van de massawoningbouw, ook een rol wilde krijgen in de automobiëlandustrie, met de ontwikkeling van een innovatieve auto. Daarvoor gebruikte hij een eenvoudig recept: hij projecteerde de innovaties in de architectuur op de autoproduktie. Concreet gezegd: hij richtte zich op de ontwikkeling van een 'Auto für das Existenzminimum', vergelijkbaar met de 'Wohnung für das Existenzminimum', zoals die vanaf 1929 door de Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne werd gepropageerd. Echt origineel was zijn ontwerp voor de 'Voiture Minimum' niet, want vanaf 1930 werden in autovakbladen al regelmatig artikelen gewijd aan de betaalbare 'volksauto'.¹⁷

Zoals Le Corbusier wel vaker deed, probeerde hij, aan het eind van zijn leven, zijn rol in de geschiedenis wat op te poetsen. Hij beweerde dat de eerste ontwerpschetsen voor de 'Voiture Minimum' in 1928 zouden zijn gemaakt.¹⁸ [8]



FIG. 8 Schets van Le Corbusier van de Voiture Minimum uit 1960, met de notitie 'inventée par L.C. et P.J. en 1928'. Het jaartal is onjuist

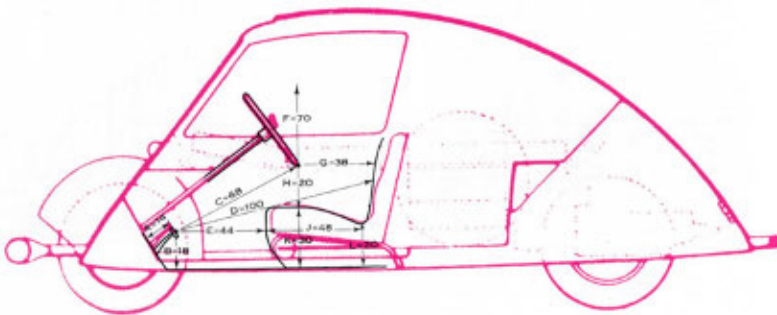


FIG. 9 Werktekening van de 'Voiture Minimum' van Le Corbusier en Pierre Jeanneret uit 1936

Uit recent onderzoek is gebleken dat dit ontwerp, dat hij samen met zijn neef Pierre Jeanneret maakte, dateert uit 1935-36 en dat de bewering over voorafgaande schetsen uit 1928 evident onwaar is.¹⁹ Het betrof namelijk de inzending voor de in maart 1935 uitgeschreven wedstrijd voor het ontwerp van een kleine goedkope auto, door de Société des Ingénieurs de l'Automobile (SIA). De twee Jeannerets zonden hun ontwerp in na de sluitingsdatum, en kwamen daardoor niet in aanmerking voor een prijs. [9] Hun ontwerp bevatte weliswaar een aantal interessante ideeën, zoals een interieur met drie zetels en een groot schuifdak, maar al deze ideeën waren al eerder toegepast in andere auto-ontwerpen.

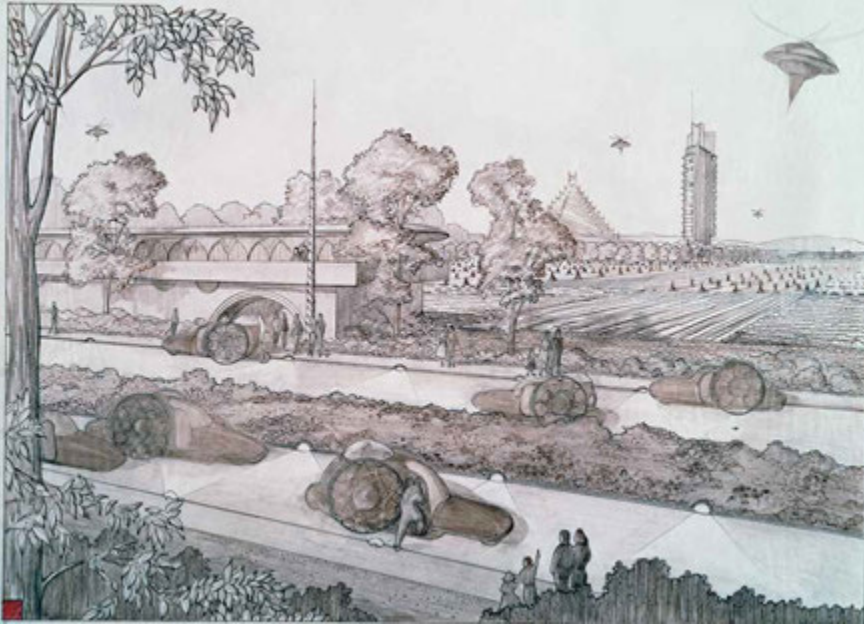


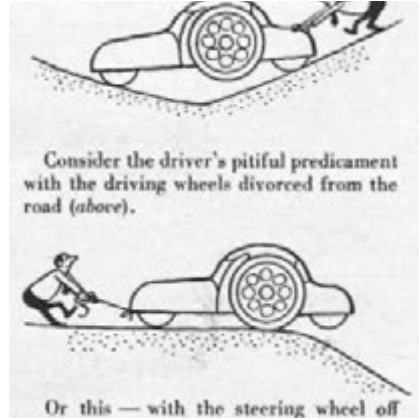
FIG. 10 Frank Lloyd Wright, ontwerp-tekening uit circa 1958 voor Broadacre City

Sindsdien fungeerde Le Corbusier regelmatig als lichtend voorbeeld voor architecten, die zich graag rekenden tot het Modernisme, ook wat betreft de vertaling van de constructie van auto's naar eigentijdse architectuur. De Nederlandse architect Moshé Zwarts knutselde (voor eigen gebruik) een camperauto in elkaar met stalen en aluminium profielen. In de jaren 1986-87 gebruikte hij het ontwerp en de bouw van deze auto als case study bij de colleges Bouwconstructie voor eerstejaars studenten aan de TU Delft. Welbeschouwd ging het hier om een nogal artisanale constructie; het had weinig te maken met de productietechnieken die in de auto-industrie werden toegepast.

Als slot een ontwerp van de andere 'most famous' architect van de 20ste eeuw, Frank Lloyd Wright. Hij kwam echter pas in 1958 met een bewijs dat hij als geniale 'gebouwenarchitect' in staat was om ook een revolutionair nieuw autoconcept te bedenken. De auto was onderdeel van de reeks ontwerp-schetsen voor 'Broadacre City' die Wright tussen 1932 en 1958 maakte. Dit was een visie op de suburb van de toekomst, waarin ruim baan werd gegeven aan de auto en waarin het leven totaal was gedecentraliseerd. Alle bewoners in Broadacre City waren aangewezen op de auto en daarom ontwierp Wright ook een futuristisch voertuig met extreem grote zijwielen en een besturing via het achterwiel.²⁰ [10]



a



b

FIG. 11 Cartoons door Ralph Stein (uit 1959) van de door Frank Lloyd Wright ontworpen 'Car for 1960'

Het voertuig van Wright oogde dan misschien revolutionair, maar bij het ontwerp waren enkele cruciale aspecten van de voertuigdynamica over het hoofd gezien. De auteur van een in 1959 verschenen artikel maakte duidelijk welke structurele 'bugs' kleefden aan het ontwerp van de wereldberoemde architect.²¹ De cartoons die hij daarbij maakte waren dodelijk. Daarna hoorde niemand meer van dit auto-ontwerp. [11a-b]

En de andere architecten? Die legden zich erbij neer dat architectuur een statisch voertuig is.

Noten

- 1 Paul Virilio, *L'horizon négatif. Essai de dromoscopie*, Paris 1984; Nederlandse vertaling: *Het horizon-negatief*, Amsterdam 1989.
- 2 Om de omvang te beperken blijven enkele interessante auto-ontwerpen van architecten hier buiten beschouwing, zoals de Dymaxion van Richard Buckminster Fuller (1933) en de sportwagens naar ontwerp van Carlo Mollino (1955 e.v.).
- 3 Van Liefeland trad af nadat hij vanaf 1907 onder zware politieke druk kwam te staan, met name vanwege frauduleuze transacties van de bouwgrondmaatschappijen waarvan hij medeandeelhouder was.
- 4 *TUF-TUE, Orgaan van Pioniers Automobiel Club* nr. 1, 1974, 20.
- 5 *Het Nieuws van den Dag* 13 juli 1905.
- 6 *De Telegraaf* 9 juli 1906 en *Algemeen Handelsblad* 11 juli 1906.
- 7 Het Atelier 'Het Huis' was circa 1900 door Ed. Cuypers opgericht om kunstnijverheidsontwerpen in eigen beheer uit te kunnen voeren.
- 8 Stoop was een automobiel-liefhebber; hij was onder meer betrokken bij de organisatie van de hiervoor genoemde 'automobiel-week' te Scheveningen in 1906.

- 9 In de Scheveningse 'automobiel-week' van 1905 stond J.A. Stoop met deze Peugeot ingeschreven in de
10 categorie V (chassisprijs tot f7.500). Ook in de Scheveningse automobiel-week van 1906 stond Stoop
11 ingeschreven in de categorie V (chassisprijs f7.500 en minder) met dezelfde Peugeot.
12 *Het Huis, Oud & Nieuw. Maandelijksch prentenboek gewijd aan huis-inrichting, bouw en sierkunst*, 3 (1905)
13 2, 231 e.v.
14 *Nieuws van den Dag, Kleine Courant* 10 juli 1907.
15 *Het Huis, Oud & Nieuw* 5 (1907) 7, 287 e.v.
16 Zie Jeroen Geurst, Joris Molenaar, *Van der Vlucht - Architect 1894-1936*, 1984, 8.
17 Werner Ostwald, *Deutsche Autos 1920-1945*, 1978, 15.
18 J.J.P. Oud, "'Vers une architecture" van Le Corbusier-Saugnier', *Bouwkundig Weekblad* 45 (1924) 9
19 (1 maart), 90-94.
20 Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture*, 1^{ème} édition 1923, 118.
21 Onder anderen door Joseph Ganz en in 1933 gaf Adolf Hitler opdracht aan Ferdinand Porsche om zo'n
22 auto te ontwikkelen, de KdF Wagen, later bekend als Volkswagen Type 1, de 'Kever'.
23 Zie o.a. Stanislaus von Moos und Chris Smeenk, *Avant Garde und Industrie*, Delft 1983, 91. In dit boek
24 wordt de bewering van Le Corbusier dat de eerste schetsen dateren uit 1928 zondermeer overgenomen.
25 Le Corbusier deed deze bewering in 1960, daaraan toevoegend dat er nadien auto's volgens een
26 vergelijkbaar concept op de markt waren gekomen, en dat hij met dit ontwerp zijn tijd dus ver vooruit
27 was geweest.
28 Amado, Antonio, *Voiture Minimum - Le Corbusier and the Automobile*, Cambridge MA 2011.
29 Het concept van besturing via het achterwiel was waarschijnlijk afgekeken van de Dymaxion-auto van
30 Richard Buckminster Fuller uit 1933; deze druppelvormige auto had echter maar drie wielen. Van deze
31 auto werden drie exemplaren gebouwd; het enige overgebleven exemplaar is in bezit van architect Sir
32 Norman Foster.
33 Ralph Stein, 'Mr. Wright's Wonderful Automobile', *This Weeks Magazine* 24 mei 1959. Dit tijdschrift werd
34 als supplement gevoegd bij een groot aantal zondagskranten in de V.S.

Unostentatiousness examples of relations to the ordinary in modern danish architecture

A house in Skagen

In 1917, the year of the Russian revolution, the architect Knud V. Engelhardt, who was to become a pioneer of modern graphics in Denmark, made the design for a small summer-house in Skagen – the first and only house he was to realize as an architect. [1]

Engelhardt's house was contextual as it related strongly to the local fishermen's simple long-houses and the way they were placed in the landscape. His interpretation was based on simplification and clarification but also included exaggeration and a little twist. For example the house was placed precisely according to the four points of the compass, the volume was crystal-clear and cleansed of any additions, the tarred plinth was drawn up to align with the windows and thereby exaggerated according to the norm, and the tarred chimney was literally twisted 45° to align its two corners with the ridge of the roof.

To help him with the drawings for the house Engelhardt hired the young Kay Fisker who had already established himself with, first of all, the famous railway stations on Bornholm, designed in collaboration with Aage Rafn. Fisker's influence on the house in Skagen is obvious, but truly he was not hinting at his own contribution, when he later expressed his admiration for it.¹ Also, much later, when Fisker almost had become the father of the strong tendency, labeled by himself as 'the functional tradition', he claimed that Engelhardt was the pioneer of functionalism in Denmark: 'He [Engelhardt] was the first to whom the decisive was to let the form of things be dictated by practical reasons, by their useability.'² Also Engelhardt were interested in all kinds of objects of daily use, and according to Fisker he designed his own bicycle and even his clothes: 'Like Vosey he wore a jacket that anticipated development; a jacket without the rudimentary lapel [...] but in Engelhardt's case with a small round buttonhole.'³ And, surely Engelhardt also had the ability to 'rise the form to Art', as Fisker put it.⁴

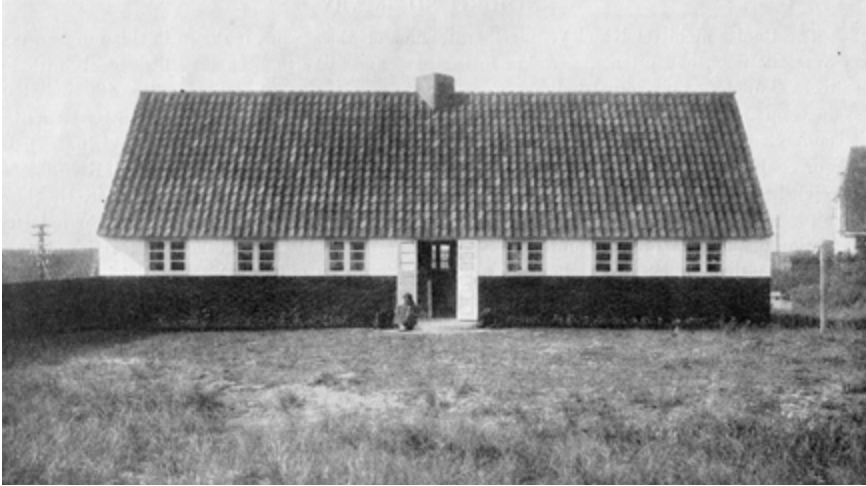


FIG. 1 Summer-house, Skagen. Architect Knud V. Engelhardt, 1917

Talking of the house, its vague touch of strangeness, can probably be ascribed to Engelhardt himself. Exactly the sharpness, the formal reduction and almost graphical elucidation of the ordinary as well as the small, more or less ideosyncratic, 'twists' made the house a bit strange among its 'own' and thereby calling to their attention. As other modernist graphic artists of the time, Engelhardt, like the revolutionary artists in Soviet Russia, had a preference for red, and for the use of red and black on white. In the house the tiled roof was red, and the wall white and black. In its most reduced state the elevation would be almost like a flag with three stripes; red, white and black. That way it catches your eye, and as you get closer, and even into the house, new levels appear. At first the house appears to be simple, while it gets richer and more complex the closer you study it.

Engelhardt revealed the qualities and the complexity of the ordinary by simplification.

Dehn's Laundry Plant

Poul Henningsen, often called just PH, is first of all known for his lampdesigns, but he was also a very important voice in the Danish cultural debate from the 1930s to the 1960s. And besides being a designer of lamps he was also a writer and editor; a filmmaker and an architect. As an architect he, already as a young man, collaborated with Kay Fisker on two quite large housing projects. And when Fisker designed The Danish Pavillion for the *Exposition Internationale des Art Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris in 1925 he used lamps by Henningsen.



FIG. 2 Laundry-plant, for the Dehn company, Gladsaxe outside Copenhagen. Architect Poul Henningsen, 1936

As a modernist Henningsen was critical of any aestheticism and pretentiousness. To him the core values were common sense, useability and low costs. So when in 1936 he was commissioned to design a laundry-plant, for the Dehn company in Gladsaxe outside Copenhagen, he took it as a opportunity to optimize the organization of the production, as well as the work-environmental conditions, in a rational flow. In that he succeeded as far, as the plant was considered to be the most advanced of its kind in the world. [2]

The profile of the cross-section is related to needs for climate-control as well as the attempt to obtain daylight to the centre of the very deep building. This profile in collaboration with the open and lightweight construction, and the light, low-cost materials was potentially flexible to extension, first of all by elongation. Aims the building shared with most advanced industrial buildings, among these some American plants designed by Albert Kahn, to which it also bears resemblance. Still, the structure was also open to minor sideways extensions for servicing programs etc.

The lightweight construction makes use of new industrial materials as woodfiberboards and asbestos cement for facade-panels, together with an, just as basic, unpretentious material as roofing felt.

The whole attitude and appearance of the building was as a demonstration of PH's strive for what he understood as honesty, for 'being, instead of pretending'. And still there was a trick. What made the building work as architecture, was the effect of the strong form provided by the profile. The simple but strong form made the building

both relate to and stand out from the suburban context. At the same time it provided it with a characteristic major feature, which was not threatened by the appearance of all kinds of changing, minor additions. The strong form dominated the shed-like, ordinary appearance of the building, making it a shed with character. But, although the overall form was strong, it signified nothing about the program since its form was abstract. So, the building was not what the Venturis called a duck. Neither was it what they called a decorated shed, although it actually was decorated with large letters. The letters signified nothing about the program, since they formed just a name, the surname of the founder. And, although the lettering worked as a kind of logo, it was of little importance, since the business did not appeal to ordinary consumers and very few bypassers would respond to its name or logo.

Probably the lettering first of all works as a legitimation for decoration. PH was also a man of the theatre, and the shed-like quality of the building, the cheapness of its materials and the canvas-like surfaces probably provoked him to decorate. And, as he was also a man of words, he used the letters as an excuse for the decoration his building invited to, but which he as a modern architect was hesitating to apply. And, as he was also a playful man, a passionate kites builder and flyer, he simply wanted to add some color, have some fun. Exactly the ordinariness, the low-cost, the unostentatiousness inspired the freedom of behaviour he strove for, and allowed himself to respond to.



FIG. 3 Studio Houses, Copenhagen. Architect Viggo Møller-Jensen

For PH the ordinary worked for a new liberation of architecture itself, as well as its inhabitants and users.

The Studio-Houses

When PH worked on Dehn's he employed a young architect: Viggo Møller-Jensen who worked on the house PH was designing for himself at the time, and probably also on the project for Dehn's. Five years later Møller-Jensen got his first own major project: to design a small low-cost housing-scheme for artists with combined studios and homes in the Copenhagen suburb Emdrup. [3] The Studio-Houses they were called. It was during World War II, and resources were restricted, not only economically, but also when it came to certain materials, imported not at least. The site was boggy land with a small pond. The relatively high prize of the site gave reason for row-houses of which there are three types in three rows. In every row the houses are shifted to accommodate for corners to provide shelter and privacy. The three primary exterior materials were yellow brickwalls for the ground floor and transverse walls, brown wooden planks for first floor façades and wawery asbestos cement plates for the roofs. To the houses a system of balconies, staircases, shelters and fences were added, in planks as well. All ordinary, low-cost, unpretentious materials with a certain semi-rough materiality within a lightgrey-brownish colorrange. Jensen thought of 'the coolish, light houses [...] as a picturesque contrast to the sappy landscape of the moor.'⁵

The shifting of the volumes, the alternating materials and the system of sheds, balconies etc. creates an ensemble of buildings which is relatively complex and differentiated – and tight as well. There is an affinity to the traditional village here, or rather the small provincial town.

It is as if the small additions, sheds etc. that Engelhardt stripped off, are back, as they were in PH's plant, in the form of the changing transverse extensions. In the case of Dehn's they were just there, as manifestations of the freedom the building provided, but dominated by the strong form. In The Studio-Houses the various additions were an important part of the architecture, part of Jensen's strive for exactly the picturesque. There is a tendency in The Studio Houses towards the cultivation of the self-grown, the accidental. Jensen would probably have some understanding for the Austrian/Swedish architect Josef Frank's statement: 'we should design our surroundings as if they had come into existence by accident. Everywhere you feel comfortable, rooms, streets and cities, has come into existence by accident.'⁶ Following the picturesqueness, and as a consequence of it, a certain degree of heterogeneity came into play. Designed heterogeneity, that is, supporting the picturesque.

But certainly The Studio Houses were also picturesque in the sense of the term suggested by Peter Smithson: ‘Picturesque not as picture, but people in the centre, sensitiveness and feeling.’⁷

The Studio Houses represents the emerging cultivating of the ordinary towards the picturesque. But they also anticipated a very strong tendency in Danish housing of the 1970s and 1980s: the so-called low-rise/high-density developments.

The Hansted School

The Hansted school in Vigerslev, Copenhagen from 1955–58 is designed by the municipal architect F.C. Lund and his co-worker Hans Chr. Hansen, but is, without doubt, first of all Hansen’s work. [4] The lay-out and scale of the school in general is governed by contextual considerations, conditions according to sunlight and noise, as well as the desire to preserve the old trees on the site.



FIG. 4 Hansted school in Vigerslev, Copenhagen. Architect F.C. Lund with Hans Chr. Hansen, 1955-58

In its exterior expression the school is quite dramatic and shedlike. Dramatic in a way that resembles the massing of Fisker's Voldparken School in Husum, Copenhagen from almost the same time. Also the materials are the the same: yellow brick, asbestos cement and wood, probably the most widespread and ordinary at the time. The detailing is more rough than in The Studio Houses, which seems to be the school's primary predecessor. But, Hansen went further than both Fisker, Jensen and Henningsen. As stated by Jørgen Sestoft, the Hansted School was 'the first example of Hans Chr. Hansen's deviation from the decent, harmony-seeking line in Danish architecture. Cultivation of common, cheap material and grinding collisions of surfaces and form gave the buildings a brutal expressiveness.'⁸

One could also say that the school represents a heterogeneity previously unseen in Danish modern architecture. And in a less picturesque way than The Studio Houses. The Hansted School is less romantic, less harmonic. The images it may evoke are of factories rather than of provincial small-towns. It is rough and brutal as opposed to smooth and refined.

But is this brutality related to what was called brutalism? Sestoft did not think so, maybe also because he saw Hansen as an rather ideosyncratic architect, uninterested in -isms as such. But, maybe Hansen anyway, and without knowing, was a kind of brutalist. To Alison and Peter Smithson, who were involved with brutalism and labeled as brutalist, it 'tries to face up to mass-production society and drag a rough poetry out of the confused and powerful forces which are at work. Up to now, Brutalism has been discussed stylistically, whereas its essence is ethical.'⁹ As I see it, this fits very well with the Hansted School and Hans Christian Hansen. The architecture of the Hansted School faces and interprets reality, its conflicts, the heterogeneity and the ordinary. It is an architecture which does not want to be pretty or just pleasing, an architecture which avoids and provokes the harmonizing mainstream.

With the Hansted School the concept of the ordinary includes heterogeneity and becomes complex.

The Crimp Building

This building is designed and built 1984–85 in Lillerød for the Crimp company, which 'crimps' electronic products. [5] Architects are the studio Vandkunsten, which is, first of all, known for its contribution to Danish housing, and which, to a high degree, shares and develops the values expressed in Møller-Jensen's The Studio-Houses. It is also known that, as students of architecture, the founders of Vandkunsten spent quite some time studying Hans Christian Hansen's Hansted School.



FIG. 5 Crimp company in Lillerød. Architects Studio Vandkunsten, 1984-85

Actually the Crimp building is laid out as a typical Danish farm with four wings embracing a court. Another obvious reference could be a monastery, as the four wings in this case frame a garden court. Anyway there is no direct reference to the surroundings, as well as no real attempt to be contextual, but on the other hand the site is surrounded by trees and the building almost invisible from the outside. Also the building in itself is quite introvert, as its interior, first of all, interrelates with the court. As a consequence it is not suitable for expansion as P.H.'s Dehn's laundry plant, with whom it otherwise shares the emphasis on a strong form. Still, the strong form of Crimp's is broken, as it actually consists of four slightly shifted angles and as one of its corners is opened to form an entrance. Also the volumes are divided further by irregular placed vertical window slits. All in all, the wholeness of the form is to some degree fragmented.

The use of horizontally oriented waved roof-boards for façades, was introduced by Møller-Jensen and continued by Vandkunsten in several of its low-rise/high-density housing developments. But the deepwaved boards used in this case are intended for use as noise protectors. So, a material looking as if intended for roofs are used for walls, but walls that are tilted, so they in a way partly becomes roofs.

All in all, the essential notions of wall and roof, as well as their interrelation, is questioned. But, what is important according to our focus is, that the façades are covered with noiseprotective plates developed out of a plates for roofing. A change of use of the material, which demands a fresh look at it, as something loaded with new potentials. Looking at it, 'as found', with reference to the Smithsons, which means 'a new seing of the ordinary, an openness as to how prosaic "things" could re-energise our inventive activity,'¹⁰ or as it has also been said, to 'take note of things in a radical way.'¹¹

And of course there is more of it at the Crimp building: for example the window-slits at ground-level, below the waved plates, are framed by shades covered with tarred roofing felt. So, as in Engelhardt's house in Skagen, the bottom is tarred.

Notes

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- 1 Kay Fisker in the preface to Erik Ellegaard Frederiksen, *Knud V. Engelhardt*, Copenhagen 1965, 9.
 - 2 Knud Millech & Kay Fisker, *Danske Arkitekturstrømninger 1850–1950*, Copenhagen 1950, 281.
 - 3 Preface Fisker (note 1), 9.
 - 4 Millech/Fisker, *Danske Arkitekturstrømninger 1850–1950*, 282.
 - 5 Viggo Møller Jensen, 'Atelier-Huse ved Utterslev Mose', *Arkitekten Månedshæfte* 9 (1943), 137.
 - 6 Josef Frank, 'Akzidentismus' (1958), quoted from Peter Thule Kristensen, *Det sentimentalt moderne*, Copenhagen 2004, 56.
 - 7 Quoted from Bruno Krucker, *Complex Ordinariness*, Zürich 2002, 17.
 - 8 Jørgen Sestoft, 'Stadsarkitekten i København 1886–1986', *Arkitektur DK 6-7* (1986), 317.
 - 9 *Architectural Design*, April 1957, 113, quoted from Krucker, *Complex Ordinariness*, 16.
 - 10 Alison & Peter Smithson, 'The "As Found" and the "Found"', in David Robbins (ed.), *The Independent Group. Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty*, Cambridge (MA)/London 1990, 201, qouted here from Claude Lichtenstein & Thomas Schregenberg, *As Found. Entdeckung des Gewöhnlichen. Britische Architektur und Kunst der 50er Jahre*, Zürich 2001, 40.
 - 11 Lichtenstein/Schregenberg, *As Found*, 8-9.

Delft meets Stuttgart

An excursion to Paul Schmitthenner in 1934 and a failed dialogue twenty years later

In the year 1934, two young architects traveled from Holland to Germany to visit new buildings in Stuttgart. However, their destination was not the Weissenhofsiedlung, which had been built in 1927 as a showcase exhibition for 'Neues Bauen' and had received great attention at home and abroad.¹ On this occasion, they may have visited the modernist architecture assembled there – two houses of Le Corbusier, prototypes for his basic 'five points', or the cubic houses in white and blue of their Dutch compatriots J.J.P. Oud and Mart Stam. But this was not the reason for their visit. They wanted to see works by architects who were in conflict with the avant-garde of the Weissenhofsiedlung. For the traditionalist architecture in Germany in the interwar period, the Stuttgarter Schule was of similar importance as the Delftse School in the Netherlands.[1]

J.F. Berghoef (1903-1994) and J.J.M. (Jo) Vegter (1906-1982) began studying architecture at the Technical University in Delft in the 1920s.² There they belonged to the closest circle of M.J. Granpré Molière (1883-1972), who had made a name for himself with the garden city of Vreewijk in Rotterdam. He was appointed as a Professor of building and urban planning in 1924. Within the university, around Granpré Molière a circle called Bouwkundige Studiekkring (BSK) was formed, in which Berghoef and Vegter were active members. The BSK became the intellectual nucleus of the conservative current in Dutch architecture for which the name Delftse School was adopted later. Granpré Molière's thoughts, which had become increasingly philosophical-Christian since his transition to Catholicism, shaped the orientation of this 'school'. The focus was on concepts such as spirit, creation, tradition and materiality; the striving for eternal values and general rules of architecture with unlimited validity played a major role.³ Granpré Molière taught in Delft until 1953. During the last years of his teaching Berghoef became his colleague, when he was appointed to the post of a teacher for architectural form in 1947. Vegter and Berghoef were active as architects until long after the Second World War; from 1958 on Vegter held the position of Rijksbouwmeester of the Dutch state.

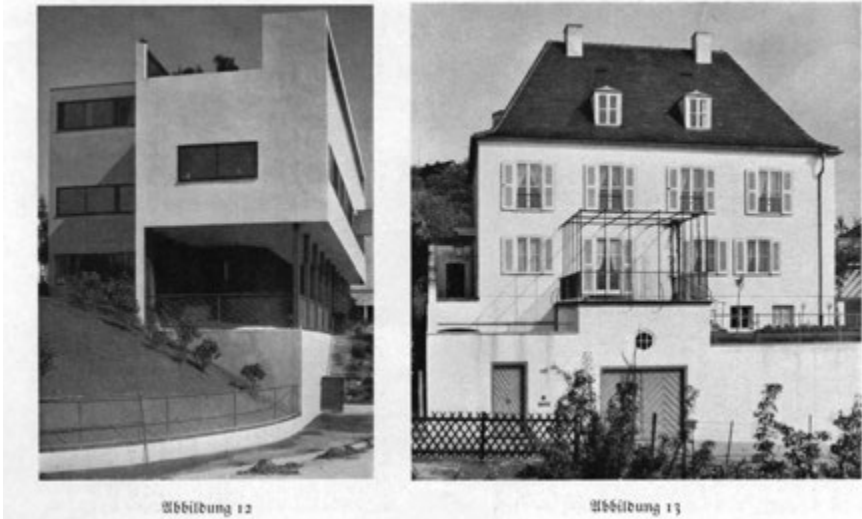


FIG. 1 Le Corbusier's House at the Weissenhofsiedlung (1927) in confrontation with Schmitthenner's House Debatin, Stuttgart (1931) [Paul Schmitthenner, *Baukunst im neuen Reich*, 1934]

Like at the TH Delft, the faculty of architecture at the Technical University in Stuttgart existed since the 19th century. As the *Stuttgarter Schule* it gained increasing prestige during the 1920s and attracted students from home and abroad. Their leading teachers Paul Bonatz (1877-1956) and Paul Schmitthenner (1884-1972) had used the political vacuum during the November Revolution in 1918 and had implemented a radical reform of the education of architects that preceded the founding of the Bauhaus in Weimar by a few months.⁴ The basis of the course was the 'Werklehre' aiming at mastering the details. The architectural form should not be obtained from an abstract 'Formwille', but on the basis of Schmitthenner's theory of the *Gebaute Form* from a construction appropriate to the material,⁵ and always in the context of landscape and regional building tradition. In a nutshell, experience was preferred to experiment, practice was more important than theory. The Stuttgart school refused the idea of an 'international' architecture, as it was propagated by Walter Gropius and practised at the Weissenhofsiedlung.

The *Stuttgarter Schule* received its name by the publisher Werner Hegemann, who presented the group in a special issue of his review *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst* in 1928.⁶ In the years 1929 and 1931 other issues followed, in which in particular works of Schmitthenner and his students were shown. Hegemann was an unindulgent critic of the Weissenhofsiedlung. It prompted him to take sides with the architects of the *Stuttgarter Schule*, who had been consciously excluded from the project. The protagonists of the Weissenhofsiedlung were confronted by Hegemann with Schmitthenner as the 'true master of form': 'Schmitthenner

does not purportedly develop the shape of his buildings like the “modern ones”, but actually from the construction process and from the practical requirements of the building materials. The architects of the Weissenhof are “formalists”, Schmitthenner is a realist.⁷

Conveyed by Hegemann’s undisguised advertising in his magazine, Schmitthenner had been noticed in the Netherlands too. In autumn 1929, *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura* printed a comment about the supposedly insurmountable contradiction between romanticism and objectivity, written by the Amsterdam architect Jouke Zietsma. As an illustration, two houses by Schmitthenner and his disciple Paul Fliether were added. Zietsma praised Schmitthenner through rhetorical questions: ‘Doesn’t this work really look super functional, despite the use of [pitched] roofs and despite the absence of concrete, steel windows, pumice walls and what else is there? And don’t the relationship and design show great care and concern about the task at hand? Or will we be blamed for this as a symptom of irrelevance? Then let’s keep silent about “architecture”!’⁸ Berghoef and Vegter became aware of Schmitthenner. During several years they searched for more information in German architectural reviews. Their curiosity was even more driven in 1932 by Schmitthenner’s book *Baugestaltung I. Das Deutsche Wohnhaus*.⁹ As Hartmut Frank reports, it was one of the few popular architecture books of its time.¹⁰ Schmitthenner’s intention was to provide an exemplary publication on the architect’s work using the example of residential houses, which he had built himself for an educated and wealthy clientele since 1921. The hallmarks of the houses were solidity, restrained bourgeoisie, sensitive adaptation to the topography and deliberate timelessness. So there is the ‘House with the brick gardens’, ‘Large house in the open air’, ‘House of an elderly couple’, ‘The house of the painter’. With a few exceptions, locations and clients are not communicated in order to make the houses appear as exemplary solutions to the respective task. However, the book could not really be perceived as a pure architectural book, because it contained sharp attacks against the architecture of the Bauhaus Modernism, labeled as ‘Neue Sachlichkeit’, which was assumed by the Nazis as a Bolshevik-conspiratorial movement.¹¹ Schmitthenner had just signed a call for Hitler’s election in July 1932.¹²

In order to see Schmitthenner’s buildings with their own eyes, Berghoef and Vegter made an excursion to Stuttgart in the summer of 1934. How the contact with Schmitthenner came about is not known. He invited them to his house, and the tour of the house and garden was extended to an evening spent together ‘while the light from the lamp sparkled the wine in the glasses’.¹³ [2-3]



FIG. 2 *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura* with the contribution of Berghoef and Vegter, December 1935. Illustration: Roser House, Stuttgart 1925



FIG. 3 Paul Schmitthenner, 'The Ark above Stuttgart', garden front of Schmitthenner's own house, Stuttgart 1922. Foto Ludwig Fels



FIG. 4 Paul Schmitthenner, entry to Roser House, Stuttgart 1925. Foto Ludwig Fels



FIG. 5 Entry to Schmitthenner House. Foto Ludwig Fels



FIG. 6 Schmitthenner House, garden room [Die Kunst 28 (1927) 5]

In Germany the house had been presented to the public through a report in the illustrated magazine *Die Dame* in 1927, written by the prominent novelist René Schickele, who was a satisfied client of the architect.¹⁴ Like Schmitthenner he originated from Alsace. He praised Schmitthenner's own house as a shimmering white 'ark above Stuttgart' of 'unique, cheerful grace' and thus used the well-known naval metaphor that Le Corbusier had introduced for modernist architecture. But in contrast to the floating machines in *Vers une architecture* (1923) of the latter, Schickele stayed with the biblical Ark and described a ship that had landed safely on the heights, the charm of which he saw based on Schmitthenner's 'noble traditionalism' in Alsatian style. Instead of giving a description himself, Schmitthenner had adopted the poetically chiseled text into *Das deutsche Wohnhaus*.

A poetic association was not just introduced by Schickele. On a slope over the city then undeveloped, the house had been set up in a way that was reminiscent of Adalbert Stifter's novel *Der Nachsommer* [Indian Summer], published in 1857. The depiction of the legendary 'Rosenhaus', is one of the legendary architectural fictions in literature, comparable to Franz Kafka's *The Castle* or to the *Magical Mountain* of Thomas Mann. At the Stuttgart school, the reading of *Der Nachsommer* was

recommended by Schmitthenner to the students. As Uwe Bresan has shown in his study, for architects inclining to tradition, the novel played a meaningful role in a similar manner as Paul Scheerbart's *Glasarchitektur* (1914) for the avant-garde of modernity in Germany.¹⁵ As with the Rosenhaus in the novel, Schmitthenner had put in place the half-hidden house in a way that allowed to recognize the shape of the house as a step-by-step discovery from the landscape, alike the willfully hesitated approach to the Rosenhaus in *Der Nachsommer*. Not until arriving in front of it the visitor grasps the view and the volume. [4]

One year after their visit, the two architects published their detailed, fascination-filled report in *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura*.¹⁶ Whoever wants to find Schmitthenner's house has to seek it; Berghoef and Vegter begin their story not hazardedly with this advice; they were familiar with Stifter's novel before.

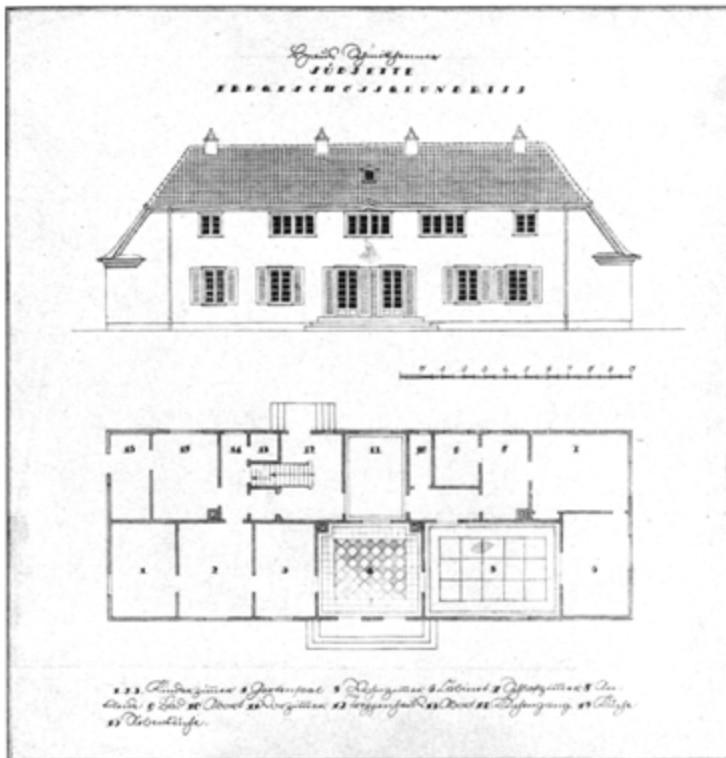


FIG. 7 Floor plan and elevation of Schmitthenner House [Die Kunst 28 (1927) 5]

The key sentences of the house description follow here, because of the authenticity in Dutch: ‘Schmitthenner’s huis ligt boven Stuttgart, breeduit op een vooruitgeschoven ouden wijnberg. [...] Wie ’t vinden wil, moet zoeken; wie ’t vindt zal vreugde beleven aan de schoone gestalte, die een rijke geest aan zijn omgeving vermocht te geven. Een steil, onaanzienlijk wegje voert lange een tuinmuur, bij een poortje met sierlijke lantaarn moet ge, naar ’s lands wijs, bellen alvorens U de hof ontsloten wordt; dan betreedt ge Schmitthenner’s domein. De voorhof is een koele ruimte, groen beschaduwd door wat vruchtboomen. Een bronnetje maakt er de stilte hoorbaar. Het huis bevat een rij van eenvoudige, rechthoekige vertrekken, rythmisch in hun wisseling van licht en van maten: blanke voorruimten, een zonnige tuinkamer, een muziekcabinet, schemerig door de kamerlinde die het venster bedekt en ruime woonkamers. Alle wanden zijn wit of even getint. Ofschoon de kamers laag zijn (2,55 m vrije ruimte) doen ze nergens gedrukt. Door de lichte en klare sfeer laat elke gedaante zich duidelijk onderscheiden, de donkere meubels zoowel als de menschen. De spaarzame details, zooals deurbeslag, traphekjes, profielen hier en daar zijn speelsch en geestig. [...] Ge betreedt het huis door een koele ruimte; natuursteen en vloerplaten, geschuurde wanden waartegen reeds een enkel verzorgd meubeltje, doen de herinnering aan de voorhof overgaan in een eerste vermoeden van de sfeer der woonruimten.’ [5–6]

The text begins with subtle observation. All the senses, even hearing, are offered to reflect the moods which are noticed with enjoy. The narrative is coined by emotion and atmosphere, which determine the judgment. The house is seen as a combination of ‘healthy craftsmanship’, ‘cozy domesticity’ and ‘natural nobility’. The house description merges into the portrait of the architect. There is no shortage of predicates: Schmitthenner ‘intuitively finds the living form’; everything shows ‘the awe and joy in everything that really lives.’ [7] The task of the architect, masterfully mastered by Schmitthenner, is to ‘shape life firmly and gently’; Berghoef sums up in his conclusion. That the Ark is also a stage and this architect is a master of staging, who lives in his house like in the seat of a ‘Landedelmann’ [member of the landed gentry], shines through between the lines.

The illustrations are completely out of the ordinary. The 19 photographs and 8 floor plans present seven other buildings built by the architect, of which only two are briefly mentioned in the text. Schmitthenner’s own house, which is praised with much verbal effort, is not shown. Neither pictures, nor is a floor plan provided, as it was standard not only in *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura*, but commonly in architecture magazines to give the professionally trained reader the chance to comprehend the description with the eye. This does not happen accidentally, but for a calculated effect: as with the Rosenhaus in *Der Nachsommer*, the perception of the ‘Ark’ remains limited to the imagination of the reader, with the purpose of making the description seem all the more impressive. [8–9]



FIG. 8 Schmitthenner House, living room [Die Kunst 28 (1927) 5]

‘We found our master and were delighted,’ Berghoef will remember later.¹⁷ The report in *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura* was printed in December 1935 at a time when Germany’s neighbours had reason to distrust Adolf Hitler’s statements of peace. The German Reich had left the League of Nations in 1933, the restrictions of the Versailles Treaty were ignored, the massive re-armament of the military was underway and a powerful air force was set up, the terror of which would hit the Netherlands a few years later. Vegter writes: ‘In the middle of a world that preaches the dispute – but then the rough dispute, which in its shattering anger is a form of death – in his architectural game he ties the reluctant into a harmonious unity.’¹⁸ Against the background of the impending doom he obviously wishes to understand the ‘gentle’ architecture of Schmitthenner as a peaceful signal.

During the following years, friendly letters were exchanged. Berghoef made another trip to Stuttgart in 1938, but there was no encounter because he came unannounced, when Schmitthenner was not at home.¹⁹ The veneration for the master in Stuttgart did not go that far that his forms were imitated. Patterns for the draft competition of Berghoef and Vegter for a new town hall in Amsterdam (1939) are not to be found in Stuttgart, but in Berlage’s Beurs and in medieval Siena.²⁰

However, there were clear appeals to Schmitthenner's ostentatious craftsmanship. The Burgerzaal in the town hall should have an open roof structure like the Beurs, but be made of a wooden beam construction, explicitly not made from steel. [10] Berghoef had been 'enchanted' a year earlier by a similar majestic roof structure when he visited the Altes Schloss in Stuttgart,²¹ which Schmitthenner had rebuilt after a fire.²² [11] Berghoef received a last letter from Schmitthenner at Easter 1940. Seven weeks later, Rotterdam was bombed, it was the beginning of the occupation of the Netherlands by Nazi Germany, accompanied by violence and hunger.

The correspondence broke off and was not restarted for a long time. Even after the World War II, Berghoef sought information from German architectural reviews. Presumably through the December 1954 issue of *Baumeister* dedicated to Schmitthenner,²³ he found out about his 70th birthday and took it as an occasion to contact him again, twenty years after his successful visit to the 'Ark'. [12] In Berghoef's letter, dated at Christmas Eve 1954, the encounter of 1934 is recalled. He reaffirms the strong impact of the buildings and the personality of Schmitthenner on the young architects at the time. But then the nostalgic tone changes to bitter, and there follows a long stretch of charges not against Schmitthenner, but against his nation, which had attacked his country 'like thieves at night'. Berghoef lists everything: the destruction of the city of Rotterdam from the air, 'for the first time in Western Europe'; the suppression of 'freedom of conscience and thought'; the plundering of the country; recruitment to forced labor in Germany; the famine in the last year of the war, when many died of hunger; the torture and murder of countless people. Nine years after the end of the war, the wounds are still open and nothing has been forgotten. 'We have experienced and suffered too much', Berghoef writes: 'Since 1940 I have hardly spoken a word of German, I haven't written a single word: I disliked the language.'

In the final passage of the letter, the tone becomes mild again. Berghoef keeps Schmitthenner free from collective guilt for the crimes committed during the war. For him, Paul Schmitthenner and Heinrich Tessenow were 'small candle lights in the dark German night'. He collected and kept German reviews with new Schmitthenner designs which arrived in the Netherlands during the occupation. They 'comforted me a lot, they made me not completely lose trust in German people'. And he confirms the judgment made before the war: he admires Schmitthenner's work because of the 'interplays of good material, clear construction, honest and human form. In addition, your buildings have a generous noblesse and testify to architectural and human sense of measure. These are qualities that 'modern architecture' often lacks, but which are just as many architectural values that last over time.'



FIG. 9 Schmitthenner House, stairs and upper vestibule with the architect's wife Charlotte Schmitthenner [Paul Schmitthenner, *Baugestaltung I. Das deutsche Wohnhaus*, 1932]

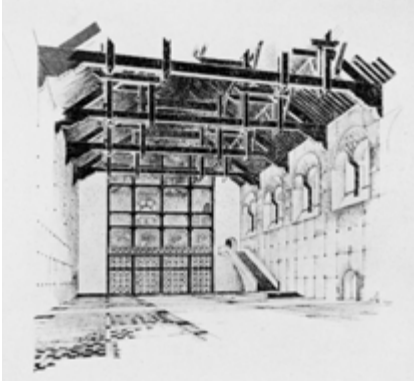


FIG. 10 Johannes F. Berghoef, Johannes M. Vegter, Citizen's Hall with open roof construction for New Town Hall competition, Amsterdam, 1939 [Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura 61 (1939) 7]



FIG. 11 Paul Schmitthenner, upper hall with open roof construction Altes Schloss, Stuttgart 1935 [Digital Reconstruction by Annamaria Gatti, Nicola Panzini, and Vito Ruggiero, ICAR at Politecnico di Bari]

Paul Schmitthenner took his time before his answer is finished on 5 January 1955.²⁴ He fondly remembers the visit from 1934; the encounter was ‘never forgotten and it remained alive all the years’. He quickly comes to speak of the past, which is a delicate issue for the German side after WW II, in order to leave it behind just as quickly: ‘Then you write to me about the worst that happened to your country and people. Let it suffice if I say that I fully understand your feelings and also let me be silent about the violence, injustice and meanness that happened to us here.’ A word of empathy is immediately followed by offsetting with his own losses, of which he claims to remain silent, but in the next phrase he enumerates them: Schmitthenner’s own house, so much admired by Berghoef and Vegter, was completely destroyed in the air war, as well as many other buildings from his work; his son died as a soldier, as did many of his students.

Together with his letter, as an evidence of his position during the late Third Reich, he sends his lecture *Das Sanfte Gesetz in der Kunst*, in *Sonderheit in der Baukunst* [The Gentle Law in Art, especially in Architecture], printed in 1941.²⁵ Here too, a text by Adalbert Stifter served as a template. From the novel *Bunte Steine* (1853) Schmitthenner had taken the first paragraphs and replaced a few words, in order to obtain an architectural criticism recognizable to everyone despite the literal encryption. The target of the Gentle Law was the blatant hybris of Albert Speer’s Nazi state architecture, as it became apparent in the plans for Berlin and Munich. Speer’s planning staff was rightly provoked, so that in March 1944 a counter-speech by Friedrich Tamms, presumably coordinated with Speer, was printed in the magazine *Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich*, which contrasted Schmitthenner’s statements with a ‘Hard Law in Architecture’, justifying grandeur in architecture since the pyramids.²⁶

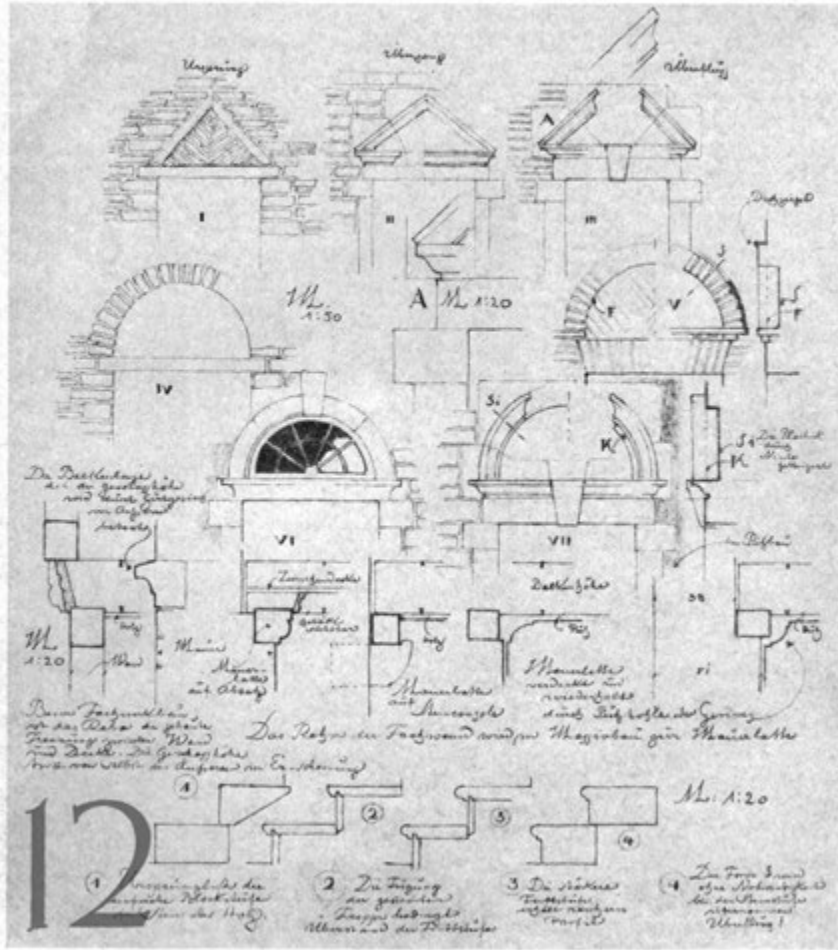
On the subject of suffering, Schmitthenner recommends to Berghoef the reading of Adalbert Stifter's *Abdias* (1842). The novel deals with forces of nature that hit people hard: they should accept them as a fate sent by higher powers and rely on hope that they or subsequent generations will be given even more gifts from the same nature. Schmitthenner continues: 'The terrible events which happened across Europe and the injustice that is happening everywhere on earth today has its cause.'²⁷ He says that he knows what the evil is based on, but leaves it unsaid at this point. As a cultural pessimist, he saw it in industry and in technology that had become overwhelming and was about not only to destroy craft ethics in construction. 'We are proud to have technology, while technology has us,' Schmitthenner quoted in a lecture given in 1932.²⁸ Actual political crimes are lifted on the level of overpowering strokes of fate, so that he doesn't need to name deeds and perpetrators.

In his answer to Berghoef, Schmitthenner is pleased about the renewed contact. He does not know Holland and so he expresses the 'wish to get to know this lovely country'.²⁹ But this did not happen. No further letters can be found in his estate; the correspondence was barely started again. I see Berghoef's letter as a therapeutic charge with reconciliation in mind. If Berghoef wanted to initiate a healing dialogue, this had failed. It seems that Schmitthenner's tortuous answer did not meet the expectations placed in it.

Although Berghoef expressly exempted Schmitthenner from his charge, the question of guilt was emphasised. After 1945, 2.5 million Germans in the Western zones of occupation were forced to undergo a procedure of 'denazification', ordered by the Allied Powers. Despite his membership of the Nazi party, despite his fruitless attempt to become the supervisor of all architectural education, and despite his tribute to Hitler in his essay *Baukunst im neue Reich* (1934) he was assessed as 'relieved'.³⁰ Immediately after the acquittal in March 1947, he had sent a confession of guilt to his friends: he felt having been obliged 'to do more than the obvious against the regime, but lacked the courage to do so. [...] So I stayed unfree and became guilty of the general.'³¹

The attitude of humility, however, did not take long. When Berghoef's letter arrived in the mid-1950s, the vast majority of West Germans did not like to be confronted with the question of historical guilt. Schmitthenner's answer to Berghoef ends with the request 'Let us forget the darkness and let us believe in the light.'¹ In self-pity, the West German society saw itself as a collective of victims which had done enough penance through their own suffering. This attitude has been described by Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich as *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern* [The Inability to mourn, 1967].² It blocked the serious reappraisal of the Nazi past for a long time.

Baumeister



VERLAG GEORG D.W. CALLWEY · VERLAGSORT MÜNCHEN

FIG. 12 Sketch by Paul Schmittner, cover of Baumeister 1954/12

Notes

- 1 Karin Kirsch, *Die Weissenhofsiedlung. Werkbund-Ausstellung 'Die Wohnung' – Stuttgart 1927*, Stuttgart 1987.
- 2 Jennifer Bosch-Meyer, *Nicht für die Ewigkeit. Der Architekt Johannes Fake Berghoef (1903-1994) zwischen Kontinuität und Erneuerung*, Groningen 2016 (PhD thesis), [https://www.rug.nl/research/portal/publications/nicht-fur-die-ewigkeit\(f89302a5-25ae-414b-a7b0-ed2aec8014de\).html](https://www.rug.nl/research/portal/publications/nicht-fur-die-ewigkeit(f89302a5-25ae-414b-a7b0-ed2aec8014de).html).
- 3 Woorden en werken van Prof. ir. Granpré Molière. *Bijeengebracht door zijn vrienden en leerlingen*, Heemstede 1949
- 4 Wolfgang Voigt & Roland May (ed.), *Paul Bonatz 1877-1956*, Tübingen 2010 respectively Wolfgang Voigt & Hartmut Frank (ed.), *Paul Schmitthenner 1884-1972*, Tübingen 2003, Vitangelo Ardito, *Paul Schmitthenner 1884-1972*, Bari 2013, and Herman van Bergeijk, 'De come-back van Paul Schmitthenner. Een Duitse architect en de actuele betekenis van zijn geschriften', *Archis* 1986/5, 29-32.
- 5 Paul Schmitthenner, *Gebaute Form. Variationen über ein Thema* (ed. Elisabeth Schmitthenner), Leinfelden-Echterdingen 1984.
- 6 Werner Hegemann, 'Die Architektur-Schule Stuttgart', *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst* 12 (1928) 11.
- 7 Werner Hegemann, 'Stuttgarter Werkbund-Ausstellung und Paul Schmitthenner', *Die Horen* 4 (1928), 233-242.
- 8 J.Z. [= Jouke Zietsma], 'Buitenlandse Tijdschriften. Romantische Zakelijkheid en zakelijke Romantiek', *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura* 50 (1929) 38, 301.
- 9 Paul Schmitthenner, *Baugestaltung I. Das deutsche Wohnhaus*, Stuttgart 1932.
- 10 Hartmut Frank, 'Schiffbrüche der Arche. Anmerkungen zur Neuauflage von Paul Schmitthenners "Baugestaltung"', in Paul Schmitthenner, *Das deutsche Wohnhaus. Baugestaltung I*, Stuttgart 1984, V-XVII.
- 11 Paul Schmitthenner, 'Sachliches über die neue Sachlichkeit', in Schmitthenner, *Baugestaltung I*, 10-12
- 12 Johannes Voigt, 'Ein Architekt im Sog des Nationalsozialismus', in Paul Schmitthenner. *Kolloquium zum 100. Geburtstag*, Stuttgart 1985, 18 f. See also Wolfgang Voigt, 'Zwischen Weißenhof-Streit und Pour-le-mérite: Paul Schmitthenner im Architekturstreit der zwanziger bis fünfziger Jahre', in Voigt/Frank, *Paul Schmitthenner 1884-1972*, 67-99.
- 13 J.F. Berghoef, 'Professor Paul Schmitthenner. Indrukken en beschouwingen naar aanleiding van een bezoek, I', *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura* 57 (1935) 50, 517.
- 14 René Schickele, 'Die Arche über Stuttgart', *Die Dame* 55 (1927) 14, 9 ff.
- 15 Uwe Bresan, *Stifters Rosenhaus. Eine literarische Fiktion schreibt Architekturgeschichte*, Leinfelden-Echterdingen 2016.
- 16 J.F. Berghoef & J.J.M. Vegter, 'Professor Paul Schmitthenner. Indrukken en beschouwingen naar aanleiding van een bezoek, I-II', *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura* 57 (1935) 50, 515-520, 520-524.
- 17 Letter J.F. Berghoef to Paul Schmitthenner, Christmas [24 December] 1954 [Archives Paul Schmitthenner].
- 18 J.J.M. Vegter, 'Professor Paul Schmitthenner. Indrukken en beschouwingen naar aanleiding van een bezoek, II', *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura* 57 (1935), 524.
- 19 Letter Berghoef to Schmitthenner, Christmas 1954.
- 20 'Prijsvraag voor het nieuwe Raadhuis te Amsterdam', *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura* 61 (1939) 7, 53-84.
- 21 Letter Berghoef to Schmitthenner, Christmas 1954.
- 22 Marc Hirschfell, 'Nicht historisch – nicht modern: der Wiederaufbau des Stuttgarter Alten Schlosses 1932 bis 1943 und 1961 bis 1968 durch Paul Schmitthenner', in *Neuordnungen. Südwestdeutsche Museen in der Nachkriegszeit*, Tübingen 2002, 207-227; Voigt/Frank, *Paul Schmitthenner 1884-1972*, Tübingen 2003, 151-153.
- 23 Rudolf Pfister, 'Paul Schmitthenner Lehre und Auswirkung. Zum 70. Geburtstag am 15. Dezember 1954', *Der Baumeister* 51 (1954), 765 f.
- 24 Letter Paul Schmitthenner to J.M. Berghoef, 5 January 1955 [Archive Paul Schmitthenner; typed copy]
- 25 Paul Schmitthenner, 'Ansprache des Preisträgers: "Das sanfte Gesetz in der Kunst"', in *Der Erwin von Steinbach-Preis 1939. Paul Schmitthenner*, Kolmar 1941, 19-29; Voigt, 'Ein Architekt im Sog des Nationalsozialismus', 85-91; Hartmut Frank, 'La doctrine architecturale de Paul Schmitthenner à travers

trois de ses ouvrages / The architectural doctrine of Paul Schmitthenner through three of his works',
enseignement architecture Ville eaV N° 13, 2007/2008, 62-75.

- 26 Friedrich Tamms, 'Das Grosse in der Baukunst', *Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich* 8 (1944), 46-60.
27 Letter Schmitthenner to Berghoef, 5 January 1955.
28 Karl Willy Straub, 'Bekennnisse eines deutschen Baukünstlers', in *Völkischer Beobachter* 30 March 1931.
29 Letter Schmitthenner to Berghoef, 5 January 1955.
30 Voigt, 'Ein Architekt im Sog des Nationalsozialismus', 91, 93.
31 Voigt, 'Ein Architekt im Sog des Nationalsozialismus', 93.
32 Letter Schmitthenner to Berghoef, 5 January 1955.
33 Alexander & Margarete Mitscherlich, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern. Grundlagen kollektiven Verhaltens*,
München 1967.

Goodbye history

The retirement of Dr. Herman van Bergeijk marks the end of an era. At the end of his career at Delft University of Technology, Herman had become somewhat of an anomaly. Would he deny being out of touch with contemporary realities in architectural history? Probably not – more likely, he would claim that these realities have lost touch with him. His leaving (on the night flight to his next destination – Harbin, China?) robs the profession of its noisiest provocateur – serene calm will reign in the spaces of the History Chair. What would be more appropriate than to contribute a little provocation to this book? If Herman leaves the scene, why not say goodbye to history altogether? Why not admit that it has outlived its usefulness and has become the relic of the past, a pastime for hobbyists whose work echoes ways of thinking from long ago? As long as the ruined walls of the historical edifice erected between the 1950s and the 1980s were still standing, these sounds kept on reverberating in the intellectual circles from which the profession recruited its most loyal representatives. Now that they have collapsed, they sail away unheard. The audience has left. We should leave as well.

Of course, the notion that a new epoch is beginning is as old as history itself – at every moment in time, a new era breaks away from the past (as Robert Musil mockingly stated in his epochal novel *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (1930). Again, we are at the threshold of a new world, but the means to describe it in detail, in the way historians are able to paint a precise picture of, for instance, the rise and fall of the Roman empire fail us. All we know is that, from yesterday's perspective (our point of view), it is entirely new, though it has been in the making for quite some time. It is as difficult to relate to it as it is to accept the Inca-victory over Europe in the sixteenth century, a historical feat that never happened but has been studied with admirable precision by Laurent Binet in his novel *Civilizations* (2019). In the new era architectural and urban historians who ran the show for so long are no longer needed. The object they used to study – the city and its buildings – has liberated itself from the programs and ambitions that created it in the decades after 1950, the setting that shaped their profession. Who would disagree with Werner Hegemann's conviction that the city and its buildings are the accumulation, solidified in stone, of the infinite numbers of social, economic, and demographic data that shaped it over time? Hegemann, the 'transatlantic' urban planner, critic and theoretician, knew what he was talking about. He was the intellectual power behind Europe's first public exhibition of urban plans: the

Groß Berlin show in Charlottenburg, and what the 40.000 visitors who roamed the rooms of the Königliche Akademische Hochschule für die Bildenden Künste saw were grand visions of the Prussian capital after its merger with the surrounding communities.¹ If the historical city can, at least in part, be seen as statistics in a built form, plans for the city of tomorrow might be the very best way to give life to what otherwise would remain huge lists of data and dead numbers. In Hegemann's view, it required skillful design and aesthetic mastery to make them speak in ways everybody, including laymen, could appreciate. *Groß Berlin* gave life to the facts and figures that define the choreography of city life (which is an indispensable part of urban aesthetics – streets without people are dead museum pieces). Hegemann was a scientist, a theoretician – but he was also a political activist. Joseph Roth, the Austro-Hungarian journalist and novelist who worked in Berlin in the 1920s, was impressed and wrote in 1930: 'In Deutschland pflegt die Sachkenntnis in der formlosen Stammelsprache des schriftstellerischen Dilettantismus zu erscheinen. Die Gelehrtheit hat kein Temperament, das Wissen stottert, as wäre es Unwissenheit, und der Objektivität fehlt die eigene Meinung. Werner Hegemann ist eine der seltenen (deshalb nicht weniger deutschen) Erscheinungen, in denen die Sachkenntnis die Leidenschaft schürt und die Leidenschaft Kenntnisse aufspürt.'² Facts, figures and plans for tomorrow's society – the curious mix that was to revolutionize the urban environment since the 1950s – is already present in Hegemann's mind.

The intimate relations between numbers and form, contents and imagery, program and plan, function and design have been accepted as a matter of fact by architects, urbanists, policymakers and historians alike. If we have indeed entered a new phase in history, the numbers must have changed, and if the numbers have changed, the prospects for the city of tomorrow must have changed as well. What does the new world look like? Many things are still unclear, but it is easy to see how dramatically it contrasts with the past. Especially with the phase that concerns us most: the first four decades after the Second World War, the years between 1945 and 1985. The gap between these years and contemporary society-in-the-making is immense. Let's take the liberty to mention a few remarkable qualities of this era.

Back then, everything was marked by growth and expansion. Economic growth, demographic growth, growth in people's purchasing power. The most striking quality of yesterday's world was, however, the ambition to give the lower classes a fair share in the benefits of economic prosperity. Reducing inequalities was one of the main targets. This happened in all Western European countries, but also in the United States (and, for a time, in countries in Latin America). It even occurred in the socialist countries in Eastern Europe, some of which for a time were more effective than popular opinion in 'the West' is nowadays inclined to

believe – one may even argue that political strife between the two political systems fueled the social policies of Western Europe. All this resulted in grand visions of a bright future. Leisure time increased as working days got shorter and the weekend off became the norm. In the 1960s, this fueled the perspective that ‘the stunning competition between automation and rising consumption is likely to result in more time off for more people who earn more money’.³ Both trends combined resulted in a vast increase in consumer goods and consumer places (shops, cinema’s, facilities for outdoor recreation, to name but a few). Industrialization was the power pack of the economic boom in the first few decades, but it was gradually surpassed by the emerging service economy – after January 1981, more than half of the working population of the United States worked in offices.⁴ Factories and office buildings produce all kinds of goods and services, but much more important is that they created jobs. According to some scholars at the time, they produced a new type of personality, labeled ‘organization man’ by William H. Whyte in his well-known book of the same title. What distinguished this new type of personality was ‘a belief in the group as the source of creativity; a belief in belongingness as the ultimate need of the individual; a belief in the application of science to achieve the belongingness’.⁵ One of the characteristics of modern mass society was, not surprisingly, its uniform quality, a consequence of the standardization of people’s needs and wishes that is also manifest in the uniform qualities of some of the most widespread icons of urban happiness. In *The Lonely Crowd*, the authors explained this unifying tendency by the ‘other directed’ psychological make-up of the organization man. ‘What is common to all the other-directed people is that their contemporaries are the source of direction for the individual – either those known to him or those with whom he is indirectly acquainted, through friends and through the mass media.’⁶ Thus a kind of uniform, collective and allegedly classless society emerged even – or maybe even especially – in the capitalist welfare states. The wages these people earned represented the vast bulk of the purchasing power and their preferences shaped the so-called consumer society – something like that had never existed before.

These were the facts and figures, or at least their backbone. They came to life in urban realities and daring urban plans that prove that Hegemann was right when he attributed great powers of conviction to plans as a vehicle to make utopian futures tangible. The urban landscape they resulted in, however, could hardly contrast more with the ideals that had inspired his *Groß Berlin*. For the first time in history, the entire political, economic and cultural apparatus of the state was geared to the social needs of the working classes, which, for political reasons, were referred to as the masses of ‘common men’ in most Western countries. (The term working classes was associated with the socialist countries in Eastern Europe, and directly linked to a central theme in Marxist thinking: the class struggle. Western

Europe and the United States preferred to cultivate the notion of a 'family of man', not by accident the title of the world's most successful photo exhibitions ever; organized in 1955 by the New York Museum of Modern Art, it gave an idealized view of a society that was the very opposite of the one socialism cherished.) The new facts and figures culminated in what in the 1960s was often referred to as a Megalopolis. This became the planners' ideal of a society where class distinctions had disappeared, and where the relationship between individual and collectivity was radically redefined. Active participation in the (local) community became the norm, and it implied both total participatory democracy and a different perception of privacy. The public domain should become a theater where individuals manifested as much of their private sphere as they felt comfortable with, the assumption being that this enhanced their individual personality. Thus, social connectivity became a crucial factor. Whereas in previous decades this had culminated in projects for spatial structures at an urban or even metropolitan scale, it now revolved around functions: living – including shopping, sports – leisure and work on the one hand, and accessibility of these function on the other. This was the essence of the Megalopolis. Megalopolis is a dream come true; it is also the climax of decades of consistent anti-urban ideals by – paradoxically – urban planners. Instead of forcing facts and figures in a fixed physical and spatial form, it saw them as formless. It gave a completely new meaning to the work of what became known as the spatial sciences (and which J.M. de Casseres had dubbed 'planology' in 1929, stressing its scientific qualities): facts and figures alone suffice to identify and analyze urban phenomena – there is no need to study its form and design.⁷ Nevertheless these numbers had to be accommodated in space. 'The continuous molding of the Western European spaces', the urban planners claimed, 'is a task that has to be fulfilled, not only and not even primarily to serve certain interests, but for the benefit of all mankind.'⁸ Megalopolis refrains from Hegemann's ideal to represent facts, figures and numbers in urban aesthetics. Instead, it proposes an open field without limits where all human activities are connected by a car-based infrastructure. Ultimately, the Megalopolis revolves between two poles: the individual home, and the network of streets, roads and highways that disclose the other amenities needed for a full life. These serve no other purpose than traffic. Not technology took command, as Sigfried Giedion, one of the intellectual powers behind the modern movement had claimed, the car did. Martin Wagner, Berlin's chief town planner in the 1920s, had predicted that the car was going to liberate modern man from the constraints of space and time.⁹ At that time he was one of the very few urbanists who had something positive to say about the car. Now planners almost without exception began to celebrate the car. Few people cared about one of its side-effects: wherever the car appears, all other modes of mobility are likely to become impossible. Since the car, even more so than the television set, became the ultimate symbol of success in the consumer society, most planners did

not dare criticize it. The infrastructure connects the individual home to a number of well-defined functional zones or centers (malls, sports centers). Some coincide with old historical cities; ideally, however, these were also re-planned as shopping centers, which implied that they served well-defined functions and opened up to the car. The Megalopolis is the result of a managerial approach to modern life in which the future is calculated in economic and social terms in a way that, thanks to the improved quality and status of social sciences, had become much more sophisticated than it had been when Hegemann worked on his urban planning exhibitions.

Standardization of people's needs was essential, and translated in the standardization of space. Industrial building methods, needed to accelerate the pace of production, was perfectly suitable to provide this standardized environment. Neighborhoods were the basic modules of Megalopolis. They were the result of a building boom of unprecedented proportions. The expansion plans were conceived of as social catalysts that should enhance a strong sense of community and foster equality. That justified the unprecedented degree of standardization and uniformity of the newly built housing stock. From a hygienic point of view, the new dwellings were superior to what the inhabitants left behind. Running water, a shower, a private indoor toilet connected to a technically sound sewage system was part of the standard equipment. This was progress at a grand scale. Equally revolutionary was the setting of the new dwellings: usually they were located in standardized, collective buildings set in a lavish, green environment. Whether people lived in row houses, slabs of high-rise flats or, as was common in the Netherlands, in elongated three or four storied blocks with interior staircases that gave access to six or nine apartments (the so-called 'portico flats'), there was always a view on abundant greenery. Openness was key – the planners envisaged space without limits, a Cartesian field with loosely distributed volumes, grouped together in small units that had little in common with what was formerly referred to as cities or villages. Openness even got a metaphorical ring: it was supposed to symbolize an open, democratic society.¹⁰ Apart from zones with specific functions, the open field was spiced with special facilities.

The Randstad has all the characteristics of a Megalopolis. It is the anti-metropolis *par excellence*: an empty 'green heart' where the bustling, thriving urban core should be, surrounded by a built-up area consisting of low-density neighborhoods with the older historical centers as the struggling remains of the past (many lost substantial numbers of inhabitants who preferred the car-friendly suburbs). All this was radically new, marking the most pronounced breaks with the past ever. All major characteristics modern town planning developed in the 1930s – compactness, easy access to greenery by parkway systems that permeated the built-up areas,

protection of open landscapes – were suddenly abandoned. With it, the formal repertory of urbanism was discarded: streets and squares were no longer seen as places that needed careful design to disclose their aesthetic values for spend time on them for reasons of social interaction and entertainment. The planners of Milton Keynes, the famous English New Town, for example, saw the combination of public places and public facilities as characteristically European – and, therefore, as a thing of the past. Inspired by the American automobile society, they replaced the original ‘European’ network of main streets with access to the facilities that lined it by a grid of highways embedded in green belts, celebrating the transition from past to future, from yesterday’s cities to tomorrow’s Megalopolis.¹¹ Radical architectural movements – Archigram, Superstudio, Archizoom – only needed to extrapolate key tendencies underlying this concept to arrive at their ‘utopian’ projects. In Archizoom’s ‘No-Stop City’, for example, ‘the metropolis ceases to be a “place”, to become a “condition”’: in fact, it is just this condition which is made to circulate uniformly, through consumer products, in the social phenomenon. The future dimension of the metropolis coincides with that of the market itself.¹²

If Yury Slezkine interprets the Soviet experiment the Bolsheviks began after the October Revolution in Petersburg in 1917 as fundamentally religious, he provides an ideal template for understanding the modernization campaign that completely changed European society and European cities in the first three quarters of the twentieth century.¹³ Architectural and urban historians did not simply describe this campaign, they were part of it. Religion, in this study, is defined as the uncritical acceptance of facts that are not based on religion (and therefore cannot be facts), and reasoning based on false logic. It is made up of interpretations based on ideology rather than on empirical analyses, and statements based on convictions that defy factual scrutiny. This attitude defines most of the production of architectural and urban historians in the previous decades. Most of them revolved around the notion of modernism. Modernism has been the faith that sanctioned the megalopolis. While celebrating the Megalopolis – its openness, its egalitarianism, its democratic values – as the ultimate outcome of the Enlightenment, nearly all historians forgot its most essential quality: the need to be very, very critical. In the words of Kant in his ‘Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?’ (1783): ‘*Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbsverschuldeten Unmündigkeit. Unmündigkeit ist das Unvermögen, sich seines Verstandes ohne Leitung eines anderen zu bedienen. Selbstverschuldet ist diese Unmündigkeit, wenn die Ursache derselben nicht am Mangel des Verstandes, sondern der Entschließung und des Mutes liegt, sich seiner ohne Leitung eines andern zu bedienen. Sapere aude! Habe Mut, dich deines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen! ist also der Wahlspruch der Aufklärung.*’¹⁴ Kant had the general public in mind, but what he says is true for everybody, including scholars, among them architectural and urban historians. They, however,

preferred to behave like religious zealots. To their credit it can be said that history gave them several clues. Megalopolis does show many features that look modern. Much of the housing stock was industrially built, which implied a high level of standardization of floor plans and building materials. Transferring methods from industry to architecture had fascinated most pioneers of modernism since the 1920s. The mindset behind industrial production, which favored the elimination of everything superfluous (because it boiled down to wasting money), perfectly coincided with preference for abstraction. Industry gave birth to management as a new profession; originally it coordinated the use of manpower, later it developed into the science of streamlining everything that was needed for the optimization of production procedures, from the definition of individual tasks to the rationalization of transportation both within and between factories, and between supply and demand; modernists wished to be rational and managerial. Many favored a leading role of the state; an ideal that abruptly became reality after 1945. It was welcomed as kind of salvation. The *coup d'état* by the state suddenly liberated Cornelis van Eesteren, for instance, the master mind behind Amsterdam's general expansion plan of the 1930s, from the need to negotiate with private investors.¹⁵ Part of the architecture of Megalopolis perfectly reflects all these ideals. So does the urban layout with its dispersed neighborhoods in low densities. In the 1930s this decidedly anti-urban approach had been idealized in various studies, many of them leading up to the floating conference on board the *Patris II*, which hosted a group of modernists of the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM)*; though with very few exceptions all of them were architects, not urbanists, they tried to develop ideas on the future of the city.¹⁶

On a different note, the emergence of the modern world after 1945, epitomized by the Megalopolis, could be seen as inevitable. Modernists tended to see it as something that could not be stopped. It was predestined, determined by history. The vast majority of modern architects believed in the concept of an evolutionary development of the arts, which can be traced back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ J.J.P. Oud, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier cherished this idea. In 1941, Sigfried Giedion, secretary of the CIAM, summarized the gist of it in his *Space, Time and Architecture*.¹⁸ It's a historical overview that proves how architecture and urbanism, intimately linked as they are to social and economic trends, inescapably culminates in modernism. Industrialization, scientific and technological progress, the emergence of the masses, and the development of management – everything pointed in the same direction. In the 1950s and 1960s, these trends were believed to culminate in the social, democratic systems of the western world, an assumption that was underpinned by the fact that modernism had been banned by the Nazi regime in Germany and Stalin's communist rule in the Soviet Union. For modern architects, urbanists, critics, and architectural and

urban historians, Megalopolis was a dream come true: it represented the ultimate triumph of modernism, a victory that had been unavoidable all along.

Very soon, however, the dream turned into a nightmare. Megalopolis collapsed – not because the theoretical foundations were defective (which they were), but because it didn't work. It didn't work because the people who were enveloped by Megalopolis could not cope with it, least of all with the post-war housing estates. Whereas most of the new neighborhoods experienced at least some happy years after their completion, their fate quickly turned out to be very grim almost without exception. The dozens of case studies collected in *Neue Heimat* tell a sad story: hardly any of the large-scale settlements built in Germany by the largest housing corporation on the world (not including the Soviet empire) escaped deterioration, social decline and high levels of criminal behavior, that can at least in part be attributed to the way they were designed.¹⁹ Especially the two spatial phenomena that were most affected by the consequences of private car ownership, inner cities and the open landscape, were severely damaged. Since they stuck to the basis assumptions, reform movements within the modernism could do little to amend things. Neighborhoods inspired by their alternative visions suffered the same fate as their predecessors. Far from liberating their inhabitants, these housing estates forced them into a straightjacket that determined their lives.

What could have been more telling than the fate of these people? The masses of 'common men' Megalopolis promised to lead to paradise? Nobody wanted to listen to them, architectural and urban historians least of all. The believers in modernism did not want to see what happened. They virtually ignored the criticism of, for instance, public health experts, who already in the 1950s wrote extensively on the dramatic situation in post-war housing estates.²⁰ When design approaches emerged that contradicted their views, they were utterly shocked. What specifically stung them was the radical distinction between social conditions and design – the primary dogma of modernism had been that design should reflect contemporary society (an assumption that can be traced back the evolution theory of the arts). Neo-traditionalism manifested the departure from modern times most clearly – and caused reactions not unlike that of the catholic clergy when it confronted Protestantism or the Aztec religion of the sun in Binet's *Civilizations*. *Fuck the Zeitgeist* was Bernard Hulsman's ultra short summary of the essence of neo-traditionalism.²¹ Religion and science don't go together well. Blinded by faith, the flag bearers of architectural and urban history, today a very dead discipline, overlooked the immense gap that separates pre- and postwar modernism. In the 1920s, modernism was a design oriented, artistic movement – whatever form its representatives preferred, all of them abhorred shapeless cities and buildings. They turned a blind eye to one of the most fascinating and remarkable,

but from their point of view very problematic aspect of modernism's post-war breakthrough: the role of the United States in promoting it as the popular style of the free world. Prewar modernism had been elitist to the bone. It never appealed to the masses. It was utterly hopeless for propagandistic use – that was the main reason it was banned in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Stalin favored a style that oscillated between neoclassical megalomania and homely coziness, with national elements integrated in it that the people could easily associate with. Modernism should play a similar role, but could only do so if it shed its elitist, 'monastic' qualities. In the U.S.A., supported by state organizations, among them the CIA, the New York Museum of Modern Art and many other organizations, modernism transformed itself in a hyper attractive, consumer oriented style. The San Francisco Bay houses (building on the style of prewar Californian bungalows), the so-called 'bachelor houses', and the Case Study Houses are perfect examples: happy, convenient and appealing to the general public. Buildings for leisure (hotels, beach resorts, cinema's, theaters), shopping (department stores, malls) and everything associated with the car created an entirely new, carefree architecture. While most of the Megalopolis in Europe was dominated by austere, repetitive housing, it was spiced with numerous specimens of the new style. Far from merely reflecting contemporary society, this style was deliberately developed to convince the people in 'the West' of the superiority of the American way of life – it was a product of the Cold War.²² For decades, historians refused to see this. Moreover, they did not question the evolutionary concept of the arts and clung to the belief that modernism was inevitable. Obviously, this concept was the result of the transplantation of methods from the natural sciences to the humanities; allegedly scientific, it had all the characteristics of a religious creed, and those promoting it acted as representatives of monastic order. The evolutionary concept is, of course, utterly nonsensical. So is the one-dimensional connection between society and the arts. To justify the assumption that modernism must be democratic because the totalitarian regimes of the mid-twentieth century rejected it, is clearly a sign of fuzzy logic. (If one were to assess the behavior of modern architects during the Nazism, one would find out that they were at least as willing to collaborate than those who opposed modernism – this definitely was the case in the Netherlands.) Paradoxically, they also failed to notice that the times were changing, creating new conditions that highlighted their most dramatic fiasco: the refusal to analyze the performance of architecture and urbanism.

Megalopolis sadly failed. It was the urban representation, albeit formless, of facts and figures that qualified the first four decades after 1945. From yesterday's perspective, the new realities that have emerged are as alien as the ones Binet dealt with in his *Civilizations*; from the viewpoint of young scholars, on the other hand, the setting of Megalopolis may look like a wonderful, unrealistic fairytale. Even

from their perspective, however, yesterday's world may have had its appealing aspects. No wonder, then, that many comments about the emerging new order have a tendency to sound a bit worried. Nevertheless, some scholars claim that it represents the normal, natural order of things, implying that the previous phase was exceptional and artificial; this suggests, moreover, that there was no moral justification for it. For the time being, however, a distinct feeling of nostalgia permeates most analytical treatises. This appears to be especially true in the Anglo-Saxon world, where it is associated with its diminished role in world politics.²³ The economy has changed. What Karl Marx predicted has become reality at a scale not even he could have imagined: capital is concentrated in financial markets that appear to have a life of their own, independent from what now is sometimes referred to as the 'real economy', where the vast majority of the people still have to try to make a living.²⁴ Some links between the two are likely to remain, if only because the financial markets are not likely to let go of the opportunity to extract money from the real economy. In many countries, they now earn less money than their parents did, and they have to work longer days – leisure time becomes an unaffordable luxury. Abject poverty is still rare, but for the majority of today's citizens, the period of increasing prosperity is a thing of the past and access to the higher strata of society is cut off. Even if factory and office workers face decline, the economy as a whole may still flourish. The fragmentation in two or more separate economies, all operating on a global scale, coincides with rapidly growing inequality – which has also been recognized as the normal, 'natural' ways of things, the 'default setting of economic evolution.'²⁵ In 2018, the eight richest Americans owned as much as the entire bottom half of the American population; on global scale, the 62 wealthiest persons possessed as much as the 3.5 billion people who represent the poor half of the people. (Writing about these phenomena has become very popular, especially since the publication of Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* in 2013.)²⁶ The new realities may look abnormal, a deviation from ways of doing things we got used to and see as the norm. They are not. As stated earlier, it appears to be the other way around: a return to normalcy after a very exceptional phase in history. Throughout history, the existence of large, underprivileged classes who make up the vast majority of the population is the standard. It was like this in the Ancien Régime, it has always been the case in countries like India and many African nations, it used to be typical for the Netherlands in the nineteenth century, as Auke van der Woud has eloquently analyzed in *Koninkrijk vol sloppen*, which demonstrates the existence of a large part of the population who depended largely on charity for survival.²⁷ One of the most striking qualities of the new realities is the trend to analyze all human activities as if they take place on markets. If their value cannot be assessed or isn't recognized, they will be seen as useless. Value is expressed in metrics: what cannot be properly identified and quantified has no value and should not be financially supported. Quantifiable performance is all that

counts. This is also true for architecture and urbanism – and whatever can be said about the downside of this way of looking at things, here the focus on performance appears to be long overdue. What about the viability of the new – natural – way of the world? If the vast majority of today's citizens face decline – a fact nobody denies, except some of those who have to cope with it – why don't they use their democratic rights to correct things? Because they can't. The public has ceased to be a factor in politics – populism, does not affect the power structure of the new world in any way. Jeremy Rifkin, the guru of governments all over the world and much appreciated by the CEOs of major companies, thinks that in return for the instant and perfectly personalized satisfaction of their most personal needs thanks to the Internet citizens should give up their privacy and their role in politics.²⁸ Some commentators suggest that this deal is reminiscent of the one allegedly made in Megalopolitan times, when, in exchange for safety and wealth, people had to accept being encapsulated in organizational structures that were designed and supervised by managers. Whereas the deal back then had been concluded, however implicitly, between collective bodies – the state, labor unions, the institutions that ran social security systems – what has emerged now are billions of deals between individual citizens and the companies that are capable of catering for all possible needs. New realities emerge that are powered by the Internet, the Internet of Things and the companies that run it (Google, Facebook, Amazon, a handful of others). These are post-democratic times and they might be here to stay. The vested interests behind the new world don't have to worry about a thing: thanks to the Internet, the public has become disempowered and harmless, no matter how much noise it sometimes produces ('black lives': noise without the sustainable accumulation of power; the abolition of policies supporting low income people to move to richer neighborhoods: hard fact based on power). All key documents of, for instance, the European Union or the United States fully support the new conditions (or at least contain hardly any restrictions). So this is where we are now, or so it would seem. We live our own version of Binet's *Civilizations*...

Facts and figures clearly have changed and that is one reason why Megalopolis has lost its charm. Even worse: it has become an anomaly. The bottom line is that urban life is not an abstract condition. Urban form accompanies and partly even determines how people live. If Megalopolis performed very poorly, it is because of two principal factors that were deliberately banned from it: use and experience. These can only be assessed by analyzing everyday behavior (most importantly: daily living patterns) of the inhabitants. Urban form can have a profound impact on, among other things, people's lifestyles. If the term 'social' that figures so prominently in all modern documents really is supposed to mean something, the very least one would expect is that the opinions and experiences of citizens are somehow taken seriously. Their preferences are expressed in many ways, and one

of them is the market: suburbia, the low-density ‘tapestry’ that covers large parts of Megalopolis, is out: the disadvantages outweigh its positive aspects by far. The metropolis has returned as a powerful living ideal that, of course, is supported by cannonades of marketing. It is also supported by a huge body of expertise that proves that suburbia, the quintessential quality of Megalopolis, is detrimental in terms of the economy, wasteful in terms of travel time and infrastructure, leads to unfruitful competition between (sub-)urban centers that are in each other’s vicinity, destroys vast areas of open landscape – and to top it off, causes serious health hazards.²⁹ Megalopolis has become a ruin. We’re surrounded by a legacy of the past, and it will stay with us for decades. So far, rescue operations have sadly failed. They have failed because they need to comply with the markets, and the markets are not ready to declare their investments dead losses; moreover, they can still make money by pouring money in suburban development... For the time being, this leaves planners and policy makers few other options than invest time in money in rhetorical maneuvers. If the Megalopolis is dead (which seeing the fate of so many postwar housing estates, is hard to deny), and if the metropolis has become the form of the preferred lifestyle – what would be more appropriate than to simply endow parts of Megalopolis with metropolitan qualities? Of course, the words and images to do so cannot possibly refer to real physical, spatial conditions. This abstract way of doing things appears to hark back to the formless, ‘planological’ facts and figures of Megalopolitan times, when the links between abstract numbers and concrete form had also been severed – today, obsolete ideas float around like dead bodies after a flood and are reprocessed as propaganda tools in the best Rifkinian fashion... They result in ‘Amsterdam metropolitan region’ (with Zandvoort as ‘Amsterdam Beach’), or ‘Delta metropolis’, and dozens of similar concepts that ignore the essence of cities, which is that they accommodate urban life in a physical form that can be used and experienced by its inhabitants.

Clearly, marketing is useless if it comes to understand cities and urban life. As useless as architectural and urban history in the times of Herman van Bergeijk. If we think it somehow makes sense to understand cities, villages and landscapes, how they came into being and how they work, the first step is the elimination of whatever remains of yesteryear’s way of doing things, including a large part of the corpus of knowledge it produced. Thus, it can discard the many aberrations, distortions and fake assumptions of architectural and urban history – there are many more than the ones we discussed here: what about the virtual omission of Europe east of the former iron curtain? If medical doctors would base their expertise on half a body, would that make sense? Yet that is what historians have been doing for decades. More importantly, in the total void that needs to be made there is no place for religion. The successor discipline will have to come to terms with the new social and economic conditions in which it has to take shape, and here the

only things that counts is hard fact. One of the consequences is that it has to leave the framework of the humanities, or more precisely the section that deals with cultural phenomena. This section is stone dead, partly because it was slaughtered by politics and budget cuts, but mostly because it voluntarily committed suicide. It climbed the stakes and set fire to it. What did it in was the conviction, in itself rather religious, that social irrelevance was its most cherished quality. Untainted by social realities, the absence of practical meaning was cultivated as a sign of academic independence (which was true: it could be independent because nobody needed to rely on it). Then it tried to resurrect itself by copying methods and approaches that are partly alien to it. Metrics is one of them. Instead of using it as a tool, it cherishes it as a new religion, manifesting all the mistakes and disasters critics have pointed out for quite some time. 'It is commonly observed', Stefan Collini comments, 'that the rise of metrics is an expression of, and a response to, a decline in trust [...] At bottom, performance metrics operate through a culture of fear, but one in which the arbitrary whim of a lord or master has been replaced with the terrifying implacability of a row of figures.'³⁰ (Writing in 1973, Thomas Pynchon suspected that something similar was one of the objectives of the political establishment back then: 'One of the dearest Postwar hopes: that there should be no room for a terrible disease like charisma. That its rationalization should proceed while we had the time and the resources'.)³¹ How curious that the humanities, which should explain the world by focusing on what people have on their mind, has become so very keen on leaving the mind out of the equation – the humanities have dehumanized themselves, the successor discipline we're looking for cannot afford this. What would it be like? Surely, it needs a crystal clear signature – lest the people it addresses don't repeat what the Berlin based architect Paul Kahlfeldt stated at the 'Why History' conference Herman van Bergeijk organized in 2013. Is it useful for architects in any way? No, not at all, Kahlfeldt claimed.³² Nobody needs architectural and urban historians. What a useless discipline. The promoters of its successor discipline better make some clear decisions. First of all, its core business is designed space: objects (buildings), the way they are positioned in their urban setting (urban planning), the functions they have to accommodate and the ways of living they foster (but only if they determine the shape of buildings and cities). Facts and figures matter, but only if they are strongly embedded in buildings, cities or plans. Facts and figures without form – be it the abstract Megalopolitan cloud of the 'planologists' of those days or the metropolitan utopia's of their successors of today – have to remain outside the scope of the new discipline. Moreover, the undeniable fact, clearly recognized by Hegemann, that facts and figures define cities, cannot justify a shift in focus to the fields of scientific endeavor that study them – the new professionals we have in mind will never be able to beat experts in energy sciences, transportation, legal systems, financial constellations. They should start from the other end, from the formal qualities of cities. Then, whatever

this discipline will be like, it cannot be a design discipline. Its representatives should not claim skills they do not have; if they dream of glamour and want to walk around with Ray Ban sunglasses, please let them do so, as long as they don't begin to make drawings. Finally and most importantly: everything it does has to relate to fields of performance. If the new profession refuses to expand in this direction, the pioneering innovations of, among others Ed Taverne (Herman's 'Doktorvater'), who stressed the former field of architectural and urban history's autonomy relative to art history, incorporating many aspects art historians tended to ignore, will turn out to be in vain.³³ This expansion may require intense cooperation with other disciplines. Whatever can be measured should be measured, but only if it makes sense. All claims need to be assessed. Finding out what design does in terms of social cohesion, community building, sustainability, urban metabolism, financial feasibility, health – everything planners and politicians claim – is part of what the new discipline has to study (and that should also protect it from developing into yet another religion). Moreover, it should meticulously reconstruct design as well as (political) decision making processes. Only if it manages to achieve these goals can the successor discipline be successful. It can re-assume its role as one of the power packs of the design disciplines (which, at the turn of the new era, are in a deplorable state, its autonomy having been destroyed by a straightjacket of rules and regulations of the metrics type). The new discipline may even accumulate the scientific and practical power needed to position spatial issues at the heart of the healthy cities concept (for which the medical profession, rigorously framed by the religion of metrics, has very little understanding). It may, in the long run, even play a role as a catalyst of reform of the new realities (re-assuming a role once, in a completely different setting, played by Manfredo Tafuri, for example). For now, however, we have to be satisfied with the disappearance of the obsolete profession formerly known as architectural and urban history, a fact timely marked by Dr. Van Bergeijk's departure from Delft. To conclude in his style: the more people this little essay will infuriate, the more it suits a bulky volume in his honor. So, goodbye Herman – goodbye history.

Notes

- 1 Christiane Crasemann Collins, *Werner Hegemann and the Search for Universal Urbanism*, New York/London 2005, 51.
- 2 Michael Bienert (ed.), *Joseph Roth in Berlin. Ein Lesebuch für Spaziergänger*, Köln 2010, 163.
- 3 F. de Soet, 'Groenvoorziening en recreatie', *Bouw* 20 (1965), 17.
- 4 Walter B. Keeman, 'The Office of the Future', in Jean D. Wineman (ed.), *Behavioral Issues in Office Design*, New York 1986, 251.
- 5 W.H. Whyte Jr., *The Organization Man*, New York 1956, 7.
- 6 David Riesman, Nathan Glazer & Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd. A Study of the Changing American Character*, New York 1956, 37. Mores extensively explained in Cor Wagenaar (ed.), *Happy. Cities and Public Happiness in Post-War Europe*, Rotterdam 2004, 120.

- 7 J.M. de Casseres, 'Grondslagen der planologie', *De Gids* 93 (1929) 2, 367-394.
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- 9 Martin Wagner, *Städtebauliche Probleme in amerikanischen Städten und ihre Rückwirkung auf den deutschen Städtebau*, Berlin 1929, 5.
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- 17 Cor Wagenaar 'Towards and evolutionary theory of art', in Wagenaar, *Town Planning in the Netherlands since 1800. Responses to Enlightenment Ideas and Geopolitical Realities*, Rotterdam 2015, 185-187.
- 18 Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture. The Growth of a New Tradition*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1941.
- 19 Ullrich Schwarz (ed.), *Neue Heimat. Das Gesicht der Bundesrepublik*, München/Hamburg 2019
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- 23 Neal Ascherson, 'As the toffs began to retreat', *London Review of Books* 22 November 2018. Ascherson reviews two publications: James Hamilton-Paterson, *What we have lost: the dismantling of Great Britain* (2018), and David Edgerton, *The rise and fall of the British nation: a 20th-century history* (2018).
- 24 'A dangerous gap. The market v the real economy', *The Economist* 9 May 2020.
- 25 James C. Scott, 'Take your pick', *London Review of Books* 19 October 2017.
- 26 Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge (Mass.) 2013.
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- 28 Jeremy Rifkin, *The Third Industrial Revolution. How Lateral Power Is Transforming Energy, The Economy, and the World*, New York 2011; Sue Halpern, 'The Creepy New Wave of the Internet', *The New York Review of Books* 20 November 2014.
- 29 Stephen Verderber, *Sprawling cities and our endangered public health*, London 2012.
- 30 Stefan Collini, 'Kept alive for thirty days', *London Review of Books* 8 November 2018. The review analyzes two books: Jerry Z. Muller, *The Tyranny of Metrics* (2018), and James Wilsdon et al., *The Metric Tide* (2016).
- 31 Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, London 2000 (first edition 1973), 95.
- 32 Paul Kahlfeldt, discussion at the *Why History Conference*, Delft, May 30, 2013.
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Collage City? Visualising Theo van Doesburg's *Europäische Architektur*

The *Oeuvre Catalogue* of Theo van Doesburg contains a great many designs that he made for book and magazine covers, for either actual or planned publications.¹ These cover designs range across the entire period of his most active artistic career, from his demobilisation in 1916 to his untimely death in 1931. Their repeated presence in his work is indicative both of how crucial publishing was to Van Doesburg's artistic identity and how income from his work as a writer and graphic designer remained vital to him throughout.

Also scattered through Van Doesburg's *Oeuvre Catalogue* are collages, some but not all of which he signed with the name of his Dadaist persona, I.K. Bonset, their prevalence increasing following his active engagement with Dada in the early 1920s. Occasionally, these two types of object (collage and cover design) intersect, as in the case of Van Doesburg's design for the cover of a planned book titled *Werdegang der neue Malerei* [The Development of the New Painting], tentatively dated 1925-26 (OC 775). [1] Here Van Doesburg juxtaposed collaged images of one of his own recent paintings alongside the famous 2nd century B.C. 'cave canem' (beware of the dog) mosaic in the House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii. A similar use of collage can be found on the proposed cover for another planned publication, *Architecture nouvelle en Hollande* [New Architecture in Holland], dated 1928-29, onto which he collaged images of Cornelis van Eesteren's 1924 competition proposal for the redevelopment of the Rokin in Amsterdam and a photo of the *Ciné-dancing* room of the Aubette, the redecoration of which he oversaw in 1927-28 (OC 826a). [2]

Given the importance of cover design to Van Doesburg as an artist and writer, and the range of comparable examples to be found in his *Oeuvre Catalogue*, it is therefore surprising that it does not include a remarkably similar and fascinating item to be found in his archive, a collage made using the cover of an issue of *Het Bouwbedrijf*, the journal for which Van Doesburg produced a long series of articles on modern European architecture between 1924 and 1931.² [3] We know – because



FIG. 1 Theo van Doesburg, cover design *Werdegang der neuen Malerei*, 1925-26, pencil, collage and gouache on paper, 20 x 14 cm (OC 775), Centraal Museum Utrecht

it was announced more than once – that Van Doesburg planned to collect these articles into an edition to which he gave the title *Europäische Architektur* [European Architecture].³ The collage is actually to be found at the start of a group of Van Doesburg's articles for *Het Bouwbedrijf* he collected together into a single volume, including nearly all of those he published between 1924 and the spring

of 1927. The collage is made on the cover of the first issue of the fourth volume of *Het Bouwbedrijf*, 7 January 1927, which, correlated with the dates of the articles that follow it, suggests it was made close to the same moment. Could it therefore be a cover concept for *Europäische Architektur*? If so, what does it tell us about Van Doesburg's understanding of his series of articles as an intervention in the architectural theory and criticism of his day?

Some fifty-five years after his death, Van Doesburg's thwarted desire to see his articles brought together was realised in the form of the book *De Stijl en de Europese architectuur. De architectuuroopstellen in Het Bouwbedrijf 1924-1931* [De Stijl and European Architecture. The architecture essays in *Het Bouwbedrijf 1924-1931*], which was then further distributed in English and German editions with slightly adjusted titles.⁴ In his preface to this publication, Cees Boekraad intriguingly illustrated Van Doesburg's collage adjacent to his introductory analysis of Van Doesburg's critical project and an account of his aspiration for a single publication to unite his many articles on modern architectural trends across the European continent. Strangely, however, Boekraad made no comment on the collage itself, even though reproducing it in this context implies that it stands for Van Doesburg's ambition to produce a book appraising European architectural innovation of his day.



FIG. 2 Theo van Doesburg, cover design *Architecture nouvelle en Hollande*, 1928-29, collage, pencil and gouache on paper, 35.5 x 25.5 cm (OC 826a), whereabouts unknown



FIG. 3 Theo van Doesburg, cover design for a publication of his articles on modern European architecture between 1924 and 1931, RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History

While left undescribed, in one way Boekraad's inclusion of the collage as an illustration supported the change of title for this belated edition from the one Van Doesburg had originally proposed; *Europäische Architektur* became *De Stijl en de Europese architectuur*, which could be considered misleading. In only one of his fifty or more articles for *Het Bouwbedrijf* did Van Doesburg address his own practice. This took the form of a very matter-of-fact article on the Aubette project, published in 1929.⁵ And even in this instance, Van Doesburg made not a single mention of

De Stijl. Elsewhere, across the entire six years he was actively publishing in *Het Bouwbedrijf*, Van Doesburg made only the most fleeting of references to the likes of De Stijl architects such as J.J.P. Oud and Gerrit Rietveld, and again with barely a mention of De Stijl. Van Doesburg's task in these articles was precisely not to write about De Stijl, or even to comment very much on the architectural debates ongoing in the Netherlands. If we check the article on the Aubette, we find that its main title was 'Architectuurvernieuwingen in het buitenland' [Architectural Renewal Abroad]. The Aubette was presented as piece of foreign rather than domestic architecture.

If Van Doesburg's *Het Bouwbedrijf* articles are not really about his own practice or De Stijl, then, what are we to make of the very prominent place that Van Doesburg gave in his collage to a reproduction of the colour design for the great hall of the Amsterdam University building on which he collaborated with Van Eesteren in 1923, which he had previously reproduced both in *De Stijl* and his 1925 book for the Bauhaus series, *Grundbegriffe der neuen gestaltenden Kunst*? It is the largest single element in the collage, taking up the entire top left-hand corner. The strong diagonals that comprise the extraordinary design of its hexagonal ceiling rhyme with many elements of the visual organisation of the lower part of the page to draw our gaze continually towards them. By scale and composition, it is the dominant image on the page.

Increasing the local context for the Amsterdam University project, Van Doesburg kept intact below it a sequence of images of recent Dutch buildings broadly associated with the so-called Amsterdam School of architects. They include examples in The Hague, such as P. Kramer's Bijenkorf department store, H.F. Mertens's Rotterdamsche Bankvereniging, and J.H. de Roos and W.F. Overeynder's Petrolea office building, and others in Amsterdam, such as K.P.C. de Bazel's Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij building. Their circular arrangement is not something that Van Doesburg added to the collage himself but is how they originally appeared on the page as part of an advertisement for the Nederlandsche Aannemingsmaatschappij, a building contractor with close links to those architects and responsible for the construction of the buildings in question. The company also advertised regularly in *Wendingen*, the house journal of the Amsterdam School, the editor of which later published a book on the company.⁶

While journals such as *De Stijl* and *Wendingen* had strong editorial positions and clear aesthetic goals, *Het Bouwbedrijf* had been established to be non-partisan, with a focus primarily on building techniques and technologies, and of interest therefore not just to architects but to engineers, builders and tradesmen. Its editors included the professor of architecture at the Technische Hoogeschool Delft

(today the TU Delft) J.G. Wattjes, architect and former *De Stijl* contributor Jan Wils, and military engineer Captain P.W. Scharroo. Van Doesburg may well have been suspicious of Wattjes's sympathies, though. Indeed, in 1919 he published a critical review of Wattjes's inaugural lecture in his series 'Moderne wendingen in het kunstonderwijs' [Modern Tendencies in Art Education], punning on the name of the aforementioned rival journal to *De Stijl*.⁷ Projects by Amsterdam School architects featured heavily in the early years of *Het Bouwbedrijf*, such as large features on Kramer's Bijenkorf building and on the housing complex in Amsterdam known as the De Dageraad [The Dawn], on which Kramer collaborated with the recently deceased Amsterdam School legend, Michel de Klerk.

With his remit limited resolutely to international architecture, Van Doesburg had little opportunity in *Het Bouwbedrijf* to comment on those trends in Dutch architecture with which he saw *De Stijl* in direct competition. On only one occasion was he able to set his critical sights firmly on the Amsterdam School, when he wrote a damning assessment of the Dutch pavilion at the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris, an event which fell into his purview because it occurred outside of the Netherlands. Van Doesburg did not mention by name the architect of the pavilion, J.F. Staal (who happened to be on the editorial board of *Wendingen*), noting instead that 'the Netherlands section is a private undertaking, in the hands of a certain group of Amsterdam architects, and that this participation cannot actually be considered a representation of the tendencies of innovation in Holland. [...] "Holland ist durchgefallen" [Holland has Failed] – that is the opinion we hear repeated over and over [...].'⁸

Van Doesburg's positioning of the Amsterdam University project on the collage in such a clear relationship to the major rival tendency in Dutch architecture of the day does not, therefore, truly reflect the actual content of his articles for *Het Bouwbedrijf*. However, if the content of the articles is considered more closely, it can be suggested that it nevertheless indicates a purpose that Van Doesburg might have thought these articles served, that of enlightening his Dutch readership with counter examples to attempts made by the likes of the Amsterdam School architects to synthesise the latest building technologies with traditional craft practices or whimsical and historical architectural forms.

This suspicion becomes a little more likely when we consider the other items he collaged onto the page. In the top right we find a photo of the Villa Besnus in Vaucresson, one of the first of Le Corbusier's purist-style buildings, and in the very centre of the lower part of page, two drawings by the Czech architect Jaromír Krejcar, a section of an unrealised villa design and part of a perspective drawing of his Palác Olympic, a commercial and entertainment building in Prague

constructed in 1926. Van Doesburg discussed the Villa Besnus in an article in December 1924, where he praised its construction ‘with the simplest means and without preconceived effect,’ having just mentioned ‘traces of decay caused by esthetic intention’ as a symptom of some recent, unspecified Dutch architecture.⁹ Meanwhile, he used Krejcar’s villa design to illustrate an article where he directly compared the efforts of Czech architects to free themselves from tradition and influence to the current architectural climate of the Netherlands.¹⁰

Van Doesburg proposed the very generalising title of *Europäische Architektur* for his collected articles and frequently titled individual texts with the very broad heading of ‘Architectural Renewal Abroad’. When we look at his articles in detail, though, we find that there is a strongly nationalist aspect to his conception of modern architectural development. He grouped his articles broadly according to the analysis of the situation in individual countries, beginning with France, moving to Germany and Austria, then further east to Czechoslovakia and Russia. Van Doesburg then took his commentary south via Switzerland to Italy and Spain, with very interesting discussion in the later articles of the margins of European architecture, such as Spanish architects active in Morocco and the meeting of eastern and western architectural traditions in Serbia. Van Doesburg even mentioned Japan in the titles of several of his later articles, suggesting an ambition to look even further beyond Europe, although ultimately, he made no detailed commentary on the architectural development of that country.¹¹

The geographical arc of the first texts Van Doesburg collected together in the volume headed by the collage stretches from roughly from France to Czechoslovakia. This trajectory was to some extent already presaged in some of Van Doesburg first comments in his inaugural article for *Het Bouwbedrijf* in October 1924. Dedicated to the discussion of attempts at renewal in French architecture, Van Doesburg began with a discussion of the French ‘way of life’ (*levensvorm*) and the great resistance to change that it created, ‘for no country is as true to tradition as France.’ This he immediately compared to ‘countries lacking such a rounded-off way of life (for instance in Germany, Russia, Czechoslovakia etc.),’ where ‘it will be easier to introduce new forms of architecture.’ As an example of an architect fighting that resistance to change, Van Doesburg held out Le Corbusier, in a country where even his mentor, Auguste Perret, ‘has to battle at every new construction with an army of antagonists, who call his constructions – although tame to a northern mentality – now *trop boche* [too German], at another time *trop américaine*.¹² Van Doesburg used comment on Le Corbusier’s Villa Besnus to round off a subsequent article concerning plans for ‘radical innovation’ in French architecture, which he considered nevertheless ‘not inventions of the French spirit,’ having just previously

mentioned 'the influence which Holland [...] has had and will still have on these countries', i.e. France, Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.¹³

Having established these geographical parameters and national characterisations at the beginning, at the other end of the sequence of articles he gathered together in 1927, Van Doesburg opened his commentary on the architectural development of Czechoslovakia by contrasting the 'pampered tradition' of Spain, Italy and France with the 'new construction possibilities' in 'younger nations', out of which he foresaw the 'down-fall of Latin culture' and the ascendance of a northern one, describing this account of a 'battle between cultures' as virtually 'a synthesis of my previous essays published in this periodical.' As mentioned previously, this is the article from which the cross-section of a villa design by Krejcar is taken for the cover collage. When Van Doesburg goes on to write of Czechoslovakia, then, that in 'scarcely in any other country (except Holland) does one encounter such explicit striving for new forms of building and new construction possibilities,' he is effectively using it as a surrogate for his own domestic campaigns.¹⁴ And when Van Doesburg positioned these images of projects by Le Corbusier and Krejcar on the collage to chime with his own architectural innovations, it mirrored a fundamental contrast he was drawing continually in his articles between progressive forces (to be tacitly associated with *De Stijl*) and various revivalist and regressive ones, here visualised in the buildings of the Amsterdam School.

The tendency of collage towards visual juxtaposition worked well for Van Doesburg, therefore, as a cover concept for an article series which persistently and consistently used oppositional constructs at the core of its argumentation, whether between notions of old and new, modernity and tradition, north and south, and so on. There is not time to elaborate in detail, but very often Van Doesburg used the illustrations for his *Het Bouwbedrijf* articles to make visual arguments on their own rather than to support any of the very specific points that he raised. Frequently, the illustrations are not commented on specifically in the text at all. For example, the image of Le Corbusier's Villa Besnus does not appear together with the article in which the building is mentioned but as part of the following one where it is not.

The perspective drawing by Krejcar of his *Palác Olympic* used by Van Doesburg in the collage does not feature anywhere in his articles at all. With its inclusion of images of street advertising and motor transport, its purpose here was perhaps not only to contrast with the conventionally constructed photographs of the Dutch buildings around it, which show them in depopulated, decontextualized space, but also to register an important thematic concern that runs through all of Van Doesburg's series of articles, one which he frequently linked to his analysis of national trends, and that is contemporary architectural responses to rapid and increasing urbanisation.



FIG. 4 Illustrations accompanying Van Doesburg's 'Architectuurvernieuwingen in het buitenland. Frankrijk, Duitsland, Oostenrijk, Tjecho-slowakije etc.', Het Bouwbedrijf August 1926

Thus, one of Van Doesburg's very first articles was a lengthy and thoughtful analysis of Le Corbusier's 'Contemporary City for 3 Million People'. Finding to praise in Le Corbusier vision, Van Doesburg raised significant concerns that it still did not grasp fully enough the need for decentralization and was therefore too linked to a past urban model, such that 'the main center continues to exist, as in

the classic cities.¹⁵ The final article Van Doesburg gathered in the volume headed by the collage he returned to these questions with considerable intensity. On this occasion, Van Doesburg compared Le Corbusier's urban plans unfavourably to the more radical ones of the Futurist, Antonio Sant'Elia. Returning once again to his concern for the state of technical and spiritual development in different European nations, Van Doesburg described the advantage of 'younger countries' in their ability to experiment and 'compete with old cultures,' naming as example Germany, Czechoslovakia and Russia. In a remarkable comparison, Van Doesburg began his article with two photographs side by side of the famous circular test track on the roof of the Fiat factory in Turin and a Roman amphitheatre in Pompeii and ended it with a pessimistic comment on the current situation in Italy by likening them: 'Two historical documents, separated by a human culture of 20 centuries, without any noticeable essential change in mentality.'¹⁶ [4]

In the case of the object that has prompted this essay, then, collage, it seems, served Van Doesburg not only to make a quick mock-up of a cover design but also to prepare the reader for the kinds of rhetorical strategies he would use in his articles. In conclusion, we can make our own juxtaposition in order to determine a little further the specificity of his use of it for purposes of critical juxtaposition. In 1926 *Het Bouwbedrijf* published an article by Van Doesburg's constructivist associate El Lissitzky on 'Modern Russian Architecture,' which took a very similar position and described modern architectural development in that country as embroiled in an existential struggle with the regressive forces of tradition.¹⁷ To set his argument up, El Lissitzky used a collage of images of buildings and plans from the *First All-Russian Agricultural and Handicraft Exhibition*, held in Moscow in 1923. [5] Similarly using antiquity as a reference point, El Lissitzky wrote that the chaotic confabulation of period styles he thereby assembled was 'not Dadaism. This is no excavation of the Forum Romanum. Nor is it a reconstruction of Pompeii,' but designs by 'degenerated Palladio-pupils and impotent architects.'¹⁸

While the point El Lissitzky wanted to make concerning the clash of old and new cultures was very similar to Van Doesburg's, the visual approach he took was quite different, trading on association with Dada nonsensicality and architectural eclecticism. By contrast, Van Doesburg's collage has a much clearer sense of visual organisation and, as much as it critiques Amsterdam School architecture through comparing it to more daring examples of architectural modernism, it also appropriates it in a very interesting fashion, repurposing these buildings from their original presentation as the architectural monuments of urban centres to objects being pushed to the periphery of a decentralised space, the focal point of which he made the void at the heart of Krejcar's villa design, representative of the kind of design process from the inside outwards that Van Doesburg regularly promoted

MODERNE RUSSISCHE ARCHITECTUUR
door El. Lissitzky.



Abb. 1. Dit is geen dadaïsme. Dit zijn geen uitgravingen van het Forum Romanum; ook niet de reconstructie van Pompeii. Het is de architectuur van de „Eerste Landbouwkundige Tentoonstelling” in SSSR, 1923, ontworpen door gedegenereerde Palladio-liefhebbers en impoetische architecten. Een meertal is herkenbaar gemaakt, 3.000.000 kubiek voet boomhout zijn gebruikt, 7.000 man hebben in juli 1924 dag en nacht gewerkt. De boeren hebben daarbij zeker veel geleerd. Of de bouwheren geleerd hebben, hoe zij een volgendes keer niet bouwen moeten?

MODERNE architectuur in Rusland?
Dat bestaat niet. Er bestaat in Rusland een strijd om de moderne Architectuur, zoals op 't oogenblik overal in de wereld. Nog nergens is een nieuwe architectonische cultuur. Enkele werkelijk moderne bouwwerken heeft slechts de naamloze, de ingenieur, over de hoofden van gediplomeerde kunstenaars heen, uit den nood der tijden tot stand gebracht.

En daarbij strijden reeds tientallen van jaren de moderne architecten in verschillende landen voor een nieuwe technische cultuur. De uitgangspunten blijven dezelfde:

Doelmatig, juist in het materiaal, constructief.

In dezelfde begrippen legt iedere generatie een andere betekenis. Voor velen ontwikkelt zich het proces niet vlug genoeg. Ik geloof niet, dat het aan krachten ontbreekt; het ligt aan de economische abnormiteiten van dezen tijd en aan den chaos van hun willen. Het nieuwe Rusland beweegt zich thans met record snelheid. Zelfs in de namen van het land komt dit tot uitdrukking: Rusland — RSPSR ¹⁾ — SSSR ²⁾

Met hetzelfde tempo ging ook de kunst voorwaarts. Met de vormgeving der elementen van den tijd, de ruimte, het tempo en het ritme van de beweging, is daar de revolutie van de kunst aangevangen. De kubisten in Frankrijk en de futuristen in Italië hebben voor den oorlog nieuwe thesen in de kunst gesteld. In Rusland hebben zij grooten weerklink

gevonden. Maar reeds in de eerste jaren der isolatie hebben wij zelfontdekte wegen betreden en hebben anti-thesen gesteld. De Europeesche these luidde: *Vóór alles, de schoone kunst!* (beaux arts). Zoo heeft men de kunst tot een geheel persoonlijke, subjectief-aesthetische aangelegenheid gemaakt.

De anti-thesen luidt:
Weg met de schoone kunst!

Het algemeene en het onveranderlijk absolute. Een kwadraat is absoluut en een glascylinder.

Uit is het met de schilderij-kunst!
„De toekomst behoort aan hen, die buitengewoon ongevaarlijk zijn voor de schoone kunsten.” Onveranderlijk absoluut is het organisch groeien, het bouwen, de architectuur. Dit is een korte aanduiding van een componente.

En dan vervolgens: naar het oude recht in Rusland hadden alleen gediplomeerde architecten, staatsbeambten, het recht om te bouwen, wat dit glide tot een levend ijk maakte.

Al deze dingen voerden daartoe, dat de actie van de schilders en beeldhouwers uitging.

In 1917—18 vormden jonge architecten, Ladowski, Krinski e.a., schilders, Rodtschenko, Schewtschenko, e.a. en beeldhouwers, Kolosow e.a. een groep, die, als een recept, een synthese

ARCHITECTUUR
+ BEELDHOEWKUNST
+ SCHILDERKUNST
= SYNTHESE

¹⁾ RSPSR — Russische Socialistische Federatieve Sowjet Republiek.
²⁾ SSSR — Unie der Socialistische Sowjet Republieken.

trachten te stellen.

FIG. 5 Collage accompanying El Lissitzky's 'Moderne Russische architectuur', Het Bouwbedrijf March 1926

not just in *De Stijl* but in his articles for *Het Bouwbedrijf* as well. Van Doesburg utilised collage not just for purposes of comparison, then, but also to make a point about the applicability of new forms of spatial organisation more familiar in the discourse of the fine arts to architecture as well.

Clearly, therefore, this collage belongs in Van Doesburg's *Oeuvre Catalogue*. It is at least as interesting as many others that have been included and tells an important story concerning his theorisation of contemporary architecture and urban planning. The reasons for its exclusion are unclear. It may have been a simple oversight, but perhaps it also indicates how his reputation as an architectural critic and theorist unfortunately still lags behind that as an artist, publisher and propagandist.

Notes

- 1 Els Hoek et al., *Theo van Doesburg. Oeuvre Catalogue*, Utrecht/Otterlo 2000; henceforth OC.
- 2 RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, Theo and Nelly van Doesburg Archive, 0408/794.
- 3 See the discussion of this project by Cees Boekraad in his preface to Theo van Doesburg, *On European Architecture. The Complete Essays from het Bouwbedrijf 1924-1931* (trans. Charlotte I. Loeb and Arthur L. Loeb), Basel-Berlin-Boston 1990, 7-12.
- 4 *De Stijl en de Europese architectuur. De architectuuroopstellen in Het Bouwbedrijf 1924-1931*, Nijmegen 1986; *On European Architecture. The Complete Essays from het Bouwbedrijf 1924-1931; Über Europäische Architektur. Gesammelte Aufsätze aus Het Bouwbedrijf 1924-1931*, respectively. The German description of these as 'collected essays' rather than the 'complete essays' from *Het Bouwbedrijf* is more accurate, as the editors excluded an article on stained glass that Van Doesburg published in the journal in 1930.
- 5 Theo van Doesburg, 'Architectuurvernieuwingen in het buitenland. De ombeelding van de Aubette in Straatsburg', *Het Bouwbedrijf* 6 (1929) 6 (15 March), 116-122; *On European Architecture*, 213-221.
- 6 H.Th. Wijdeveld, *N.V. Nederlandsche Aannemingsmaatschappij*, Den Haag 1934.
- 7 Theo van Doesburg, 'Moderne wendingen in het kunstonderwijs', *De Stijl* 2 (1918-19) 6 (April 1919), 66-68 and 8 (June 1919), 91-94.
- 8 Theo van Doesburg, 'Het Hollandsche paviljoen op de Exposition des arts décoratifs te Parijs', *Het Bouwbedrijf* 2 (1925) 6 (June), 221; *On European Architecture*, 53-54. Van Doesburg's antagonism to the Dutch pavilion was no doubt increased because of his failed ambition for *De Stijl* to represent the Netherlands at the exhibition. For further discussion see *De kleur lost de architectonische ruimte op: de briefwisseling tussen Theo van Doesburg en architect C.R. de Boer, 1920-1929* (ed. Sjoerd van Faasen and Herman Bergeijk), Haarlem 2019, 73. I considered the coincidence of this situation with Van Doesburg's first contacts with the Czech avant-garde, relevant to the subsequent discussion of this essay, in my article 'Spiritual Hygienists: van Doesburg, Teige and the concept of progress', *Umeni* XLIII (1995) 1-2, 63-65.
- 9 Theo van Doesburg, 'Vernieuwingspogingen in de Franche architectuur [2]', *Het Bouwbedrijf* 1 (1924) 6 (December), 262; *On European Architecture*, 30.
- 10 Theo van Doesburg, 'Architectuurvernieuwingen in het buitenland. Frankrijk, Duitsland, Oostenrijk, Tjecho-slowakije etc. [5]', *Het Bouwbedrijf* 3 (1926) 8 (August), 296-298; *On European Architecture*, 106-110.
- 11 Japan does get a very interesting reference though in the article 'Architectuurvernieuwing in het buitenland. Frankrijk, Duitsland, Oostenrijk, Tjechoslowakije, Italië, Zwitserland, Rusland, Polen [5]', *Het Bouwbedrijf* 4 (1927) 9 (29 April), 218; *On European Architecture*, 149, as a country introducing 'new style' European architecture, without fear of the destruction of its traditional architecture.
- 12 Theo van Doesburg, 'Vernieuwingspogingen in de Franche architectuur [1]', *Het Bouwbedrijf* 1 (1924) 4 (October 1924), 173, 176; *On European Architecture*, 15, 19.
- 13 Van Doesburg, 'Vernieuwingspogingen in de Franche architectuur [2]', 260-261; *On European Architecture*, 25-26.
- 14 Van Doesburg, 'Architectuurvernieuwingen in het buitenland. Frankrijk, Duitsland, Oostenrijk, Tjecho-slowakije etc. [5]', 296; *On European Architecture*, 109.
- 15 Theo van Doesburg, 'Vernieuwingspogingen in de Franche architectuur [3]', *Het Bouwbedrijf* 2 (1925) 1 (January), 32; *On European Architecture*, 33.

- 16 Van Doesburg, 'Architectuurvernieuwing in het buitenland. Frankrijk, Duitsland, Oostenrijk, Tjechoslowakije, Italië, Zwitserland, Rusland, Polen [5]', 218, 220; *On European Architecture*, 149, 152.
- 17 The article had been first published in *Das Kunstblatt* 9 (1925) 2 (February), 49-53, with the title 'SSSR's Architektur.'
- 18 El Lissitzky, 'Moderne Russische architectuur', *Het Bouwbedrijf* 3 (1926) 3 (March), 32.

Delft, city of art: Herman Rosse's restoration plan for the seven-centuries- old Prinsenstad

In 1932, Herman Rosse (1887-1965) was appointed professor at the decorative arts department of Delft University of Technology. For most of his career, Rosse worked in the United States, and was successful as, among other things, a set designer for theatre and film. His professorship in Delft, from 1932 to 1948, was an intermezzo to his design career. In the field of education, his contribution was hardly remarkable; Rosse seems to have focused his creative energy on other matters, such as theatre set design.¹

In 1936, early on in his professorship, Rosse proposed setting up an architecture museum in Delft. During the remainder of his appointment, he expanded on this idea, developing a plan for the entire inner city of Delft, which he published in 1946. The plan presents Delft as an open-air museum, with an important role reserved for the craft industry. It contains detailed suggestions for the architectural fabric of the inner city, with facades adapted to the desired cityscape. At an urban planning level, the plan addresses modern traffic problems by constructing a ring road around the historic city's core. What is remarkable about this project is that, as a professor, Rosse was not responsible for restoration or urban planning, but rather for decorative art. His interest in an architecture museum therefore seems implausible, but it can be explained on the basis of the history of education in the department of decorative art.

After studying for some time at the Academy of Art in The Hague and continuing under Th. K. L. Sluyterman in Delft, Rosse attended the Royal College of Art in London, graduating in 1907. Rosse then travelled the world, studied in the USA at Stanford University, in California, and obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in architecture there in 1911. Back in the Netherlands, Rosse designed and decorated private homes and was commissioned to decorate the interior of the Peace Palace (1913), based on work he did for his degree in London.² After his work at the Peace Palace had been well received, Herman was commissioned to design the decoration for the Dutch pavilion at the world's fair in San Francisco in 1915, [the Panama-



FIG. 1 Set design for the film *King of Jazz* (1930) [<https://harvardfilmarchive.org/calendar/king-of-jazz-2016-12>]



FIG. 2 Set design for *Elizabeth, de vrouw zonder man* by Toneelgroep Het Masker, 1936 [Allard Pierson, University of Amsterdam, Theatre Collection, t004206]

Pacific International Exposition]. Rosse then stayed in the USA, where he taught at Stanford and taught summer courses at the University of California. In 1918, he was appointed head of the Department of Design at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In addition to his teaching positions, Rosse also made interior designs, textile designs for Marshall Field's department store, book illustrations and theatre designs.³

Rosse made a name for himself with his innovative theatre designs, and in 1923, he moved with his family to New York, where his involvement with the stage increased. In 1929, he was offered the position of art director for John Murray Anderson's film *King of Jazz* and moved to Hollywood. In 1930, he received the Academy Award for Art Direction for his work on the film. This made Herman Rosse the very first Oscar winner from the Netherlands, and to this day, Rosse remains the only Dutch professor to have won an Oscar. [1]

The Depression put a temporary halt to Rosse's successful career, because it was impossible for him to find work in the theatre and film industry in the United States. By that time, Rosse had nine children to support, so the opportunity to become a professor in Delft was just what he needed. The choice of Rosse as professor at the decorative arts department may seem surprising, but in the 1920s and 1930s, designers were often involved in set design as well as interior and industrial design. Prominent American designers, like Norman Bell Geddes, also combined interior and industrial design with set design.⁴ Queen Wilhelmina (who had opened the Peace Palace in 1913) reportedly had a hand in Rosse's appointment.

Judging from the 1933 and 1948 course catalogues of TH Delft [(or Technische Hogeschool van Delft, as Delft University of Technology was then known)], the course offerings did not change during Rosse's tenure. Drawing ornamentation for the interior and exterior of buildings remained an important subjects. The method that Le Comte had introduced as early as the 19th century, in which measuring and copying models were important educational activities, was still in use.

While Rosse does not seem to have been a radical innovator during his professorship, he did develop other activities while at Delft. In line with his work in the USA, and previously in the Netherlands, he designed stage sets, and Dutch pavilions for the Brussels International Exposition (1935) and New York World's Fair (1939). [2]

A striking new activity for Rosse was the development of a number of urban planning proposals. Rosse published the first, a redevelopment plan for The Hague, in 1935, in collaboration with the architect Jan Wils. A 100-metre-wide traffic

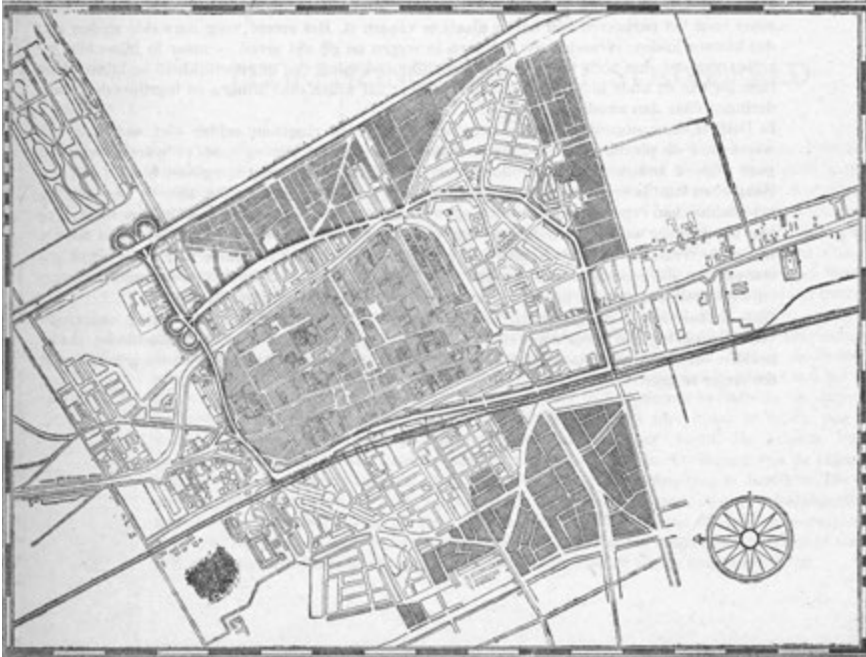


FIG. 3 Map of the plan for Delft, with the ring road for traffic, and adjustments to rail and canals [from: *Delft kunststad*, 99]



FIG. 4 The facades of the buildings along Wijnhaven from Boterbrug to Nieuwstraat; below, the existing situation; above, the proposed changes [from: *Delft kunststad*, 109]

artery, cutting through the city, from the Binckhorstlaan to the square in front of the Kurhaus in Scheveningen, is characteristic of the New Objectivity design.⁵ The Scheveningen reconstruction plan published by Rosse in 1945 shows a similar approach to urban planning.⁶ In contrast to the proposals for The Hague and Scheveningen, however, Rosse published a plan for Delft in 1946 focused primarily on maintaining and even enhancing the city's historic value.⁷

The essence of this plan was the transformation of the historic core of Delft into an open-air museum. In his introduction, Rosse writes that it was developed from a 1936 plan, on a much smaller scale, for an architecture museum in Delft. [3]

'Gradually, the plan has now been developed into a different plan, namely the preservation of an entire city as an urban development monument. So many cities have succumbed in recent years to modern traffic that the preservation of a single example from the days before combustion engines is beginning to take on historical and cultural importance.

In the case of the city of Delft, it would be possible to preserve an entire old city, since no major changes have taken place there over the last few hundred years. Maintaining the city in this form would place it over the next few years in a unique position as an urban monument. The city as a whole would thus become a kind of open-air museum of quite considerable dimensions, because according to the plan, the entire area within the old city walls would be included, and even a small area on the south side of the old city ring canal.⁸

The entire historic centre would be stripped of the majority of its inhabitants, who would be exiled to newly built suburbs. Around the old city centre, a ring road would have to deflect all motorised traffic. Buildings in the centre that did not fit in with the desired (late Gothic or early Renaissance) image would have to be rebuilt or even replaced by facades of houses demolished in other Dutch cities. [4]

The demolished historic city gates would need to be replaced by appropriate new buildings in order to close the canals visually. It constitutes a marriage of urban ideals; tradition in the centre, modernism outside. [5]

The interior of the buildings would have to harmonise with the exterior setting. In the historic centre, Rosse wanted small artisanal businesses, student accommodation and shops with historically designed shop windows. After sketching his physical plans for Delft, Rosse addressed the economy of the museum city. Tourism and the production and sale of industrial products would be the museum city's main sources of income. Rosse includes a long list of historic crafts important to Delft in

the past. On this basis, he compiled a list of crafts that could be practised in small workshops in the buildings of the city centre. Although Rosse realised these small-scale industries could never replace mass production, he pointed out their value both for the quality of the products and for the happiness of the craftsmen who worked there, in the spirit of William Morris.

An amusing observation is that time has proved Rosse partly right on a number of points, although his plan received little attention at the time.⁹ The current traffic plan is more in line with Rosse's ideas than with the 1956 *Kom* (or city centre) plan by Delft professor of urban design J.H. Froger and architect S.J. van Embden. Delft can still boast a relatively well-preserved historic city centre within its old walls. And, although the economic interpretation of Rosse's plans might seem rather naive, 'old Dutch' products are offered in abundance in Delft's tourist shops.

At first glance, it is difficult to understand why Rosse, so progressive in his other designs, made a historicising plan for Delft. The educational views of his predecessors at the decorative arts department seem to have influenced his views on Delft. Rosse's plan for Delft appears to be a return to older plans for an architectural museum in Delft, which have been recurring ever since Eugen Gugel served as the first professor of architecture in the Netherlands.



FIG. 5 In order to close off the streetscape and achieve '17th century urban planning effects', the Binnenwatersloot has been visually closed by building a new town clerk's office [from: *Delft kunststad*, 102]

Appointed to the Delft Polytechnic School in 1864, Gugel wanted to model his educational curriculum after the most progressive examples of his time, such as the South Kensington Institute, in London. According to the method used there, students had to learn design by studying good examples in an educational collection. For this educational method to be most effective, an arts and crafts museum was indispensable, because in such a museum a collection of sufficient quality and size could be built up. The museum would be a means of improving national design, not only by educating the designers of the future, but also by educating the general population. The first decorative art instructor, Adolf Le Comte, actually started to build up a collection of furniture, utensils and architectural fragments for his students, but was hindered in his endeavours by the constant lack of financial resources and space.¹⁰

An object was important not only in isolation but as part of an ensemble in its surroundings. Collections were preferably housed in period rooms: complete interiors in a comprehensively realised historical style. The period room did not function as an ethnographic document, but as an immersion bath, in which the student was permeated with 'the right ideas'. Once thoroughly permeated with healthy principles, the young designer could meet the challenges of shaping his or her own time. A well-preserved historical urban environment was also expected to have a beneficial effect on the development of taste. This also made the preservation of monuments relevant not only for the education of architecture students, but also for the education of the general population. Le Comte took a seat in the city council of Delft in order to have a say against the proposed filling in of the canals, and to advocate an inventory of monuments.

When the department moved to Huis Portugal, Sluyterman, Le Comte's successor, was given the opportunity to furnish a number of period rooms for instructional purposes with objects from the educational collection. In his speech at the opening of the house in 1917, Sluyterman expressed educational views largely corresponding with those of Le Comte. His teaching remained very much focused on examples from the past, with seventeenth-century Dutch interiors as the ideal image.¹¹

Rosse did not change this either; in his inaugural speech, he announced he would take good care of Sluyterman's department, but in fact he seems to have adapted himself to the collection and the setting of the department in Huis Portugal.¹² The teaching method that came into being around 1870 with Le Comte at the decorative arts department was passed on from teacher to teacher and lasted for about eighty years.

Notes

- 1 As can be seen in the entries on Rosse in the Dutch online theatre encyclopedia: <https://theaterencyclopedie.nl/w/index.php?search=herman+rosse&go=OK&fulltext=1> (Allard Pierson & Stichting TiN) (date of access 3 April 2020).
- 2 Christien Uringa, Marjan Groot, Anne Okkerse, Gradi Nitert, *Herman Rosse: design, art, love, architecture, film, theatre, history*, Den Haag 2017.
- 3 'Biographical Sketch of Herman Rosse', Herman & S. Helena Rosse Archive (date of access 30 May 2016).
- 4 Martin Battersby, *The Decorative Twenties*, London 1988, 21.
- 5 'Den Haag heeft geen behoefte aan een centralen verkeersweg' [The Hague does not need a central traffic artery], *Haagsche Courant* 2 April 1935.
- 6 Herman Rosse, *Plan voor den wederopbouw van de badplaats Scheveningen. Een ontwerp van Prof. Herman Rosse* [Plan for the reconstruction of the seaside resort of Scheveningen. A design by Prof. Herman Rosse], The Hague 1945.
- 7 Herman Rosse, *Delft kunststad. Restauratieplan voor de zeven eeuwen oude prinsstad. Een ontwerp van Prof. Herman Rosse* [Delft, art city. Restoration plan for the seven centuries old princely city. A design by Prof. Herman Rosse], Delft 1946.
- 8 Rosse, *Delft kunststad*, 7.
- 9 Willemijn Wilms Floet & Leen van Duin, 'Spoorzone Delft', *OverHolland* 5, 97-105.
- 10 Even today, artifacts are still used in education: the Faculty of Architecture has a chair collection of 387 pieces. However, teaching methods have changed. In 2020, Museum Paul Tetar van Elven organised an exhibition in which the development in the use of objects in education by Herman Rosse's predecessors was compared to current practice. The exhibition can still be seen online: <https://tetar.nl/lumos-delft-in-de-kijker/tentoonstelling-drawing-rooms-tekenenonderwijs-verbindt-tu-delft-tetar/>
- 11 Karel Sluyterman, *Het huis van ouds genaamd Portugal te Delft, ingericht voor het onderwijs in de decoratieve Kunst aan de Technische Hoogeschool, Delft 1917.*
- 13 Herman Rosse, *Decoratieve kunst en praktijk. Rede uitgesproken bij de aanvaarding van het ambt van hoogleeraar aan de Technische Hoogeschool te Delft op donderdag 28 september 1933 door H. Rosse*, Delft 1933.

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Dietrich Neumann is a professor for the history of Modern Architecture and Director of the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage at Brown University. He was trained as an architect in Munich, Germany, and at the Architectural Association in London and received his PhD from Munich University. His publications have dealt with the history of skyscrapers, movie set design, architectural illumination, building materials and in particular with the work of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. He has held fellowships at the Canadian Center for Architecture in Montréal, the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, at the American Academies in Berlin and Rome and won the Founder's and Philip Johnson Awards from the Society of Architectural Historians, where he served as president 2008-2010 and was named a fellow in 2018. He was the first Vincent Scully Visiting Professor at Yale and is a member of the Committee on Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art.

Phoebus Panigyrakis is an architect and academic based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. He holds a professional degree from the University of Patras (2014) and a doctoral degree from TU Delft (2020). He is currently teaching History and Theory of Architecture in the Master's programmes of TU Delft and Fontys Academy while holding a lecturer's position at HZ University. He has received research fellowships from the Andrew Mellon Foundation, Limmat Foundation and Creative Funds NL, as well as architectural design awards from the Greek government and the Onassis Foundation. He has also been awarded research fellowships at MIT and the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) during his doctoral studies; his dissertation topic was the mid-century history of the architectural magazine *Architectural Record*.

Alan Powers has published widely on British architecture of the mid-twentieth century, including the survey volume *Britain* (2007) in the Reaktion book series *Modern Architectures in History*. His most recent book, covering architecture, design and theory in Britain and the USA in relation to the Bauhaus, is *Bauhaus Goes West* (Thames & Hudson, 2019). He is History Leader for the London School of Architecture, and also teaches at New York University in London and the University of Kent. He is an artist and printmaker, and Master of the Art Workers' Guild in London 2020-2021.

Timo de Rijk is an art historian and has been director of Design Museum Den Bosch since 2016. Previously, he was professor of Design History at the TU Delft and Leiden University, and professor of Design Cultures at VU University, Amsterdam. He has organised several exhibitions and has many publications in the field of historical and contemporary design. De Rijk was editor-in-chief of the *Dutch Design Yearbook* and chairman of the Association of Dutch Designers (BNO).

Mienke Simon Thomas studied at the Akademie Industriële Vormgeving (now the Design Academy) in Eindhoven and subsequently read art history at Utrecht University. In 1996 she received a doctorate at the VU in Amsterdam for her dissertation *De Leer van het Ornament. Versieren volgens voorschrift 1850-1930*. Since 1993 she has worked as curator at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. There, she has organised a score of exhibitions, recently including *Hand Made* (2013), *Design Derby. Nederland-Belgie* (2015) and *nederland <=> bauhaus pioniers van een nieuwe wereld* (2019). Presently, she is working on a study of the history of the Design collection in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. In 2008 she published *Goed in Vorm. Honderd jaar ontwerpen in Nederland*, which also appeared in English, entitled *Dutch Design. A History*.

Adrian Täckman is an architect, editorial designer, photographer and researcher. The focus of his research is the oeuvre of the Danish-American architect Knud Lønberg-Holm (project team: Herman van Bergeijk, Allegra Fuller, Donlyn Lyndon, Dietrich Neumann and Kjeld Vindum), which is supported by, among others, the Danish Art Council, Getty Research Institute and the University of Michigan.

Ed Taverne is emeritus professor of the history of architecture and urban development at the University of Groningen. Besides publications on the oeuvre of J.J.P. Oud, in the past decades he has written in particular articles and books on the history of the architecture and spatial development of the Dutch city since the Republic.

Wolf Tegethoff was director of the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich from 1989 to 2017. He has lectured at the universities of Innsbruck, Haifa, Bonn, and Venice, and, since 2000, has been honorary professor of the University of Munich. He currently lives and teaches in Dresden.

Marcel Teunissen works as an independent architectural historian specialising in the architecture and urban development of The Hague in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is active as a researcher, teacher and publicist. Among his publications are *Wonen in Den Haag* (2002), *Schoone Eenheid* (2008), *De Papaverhof van Jan Wils* (2017) and *100 jaar Nieuwe Haagse School* (2018). *100 jaar modern Den Haag* has just been published.

Huub Thomas worked as an architect in the area of restoration and the adaptive reuse of buildings for thirty years. Since receiving his doctorate at the TU Delft in 2014, his research has increasingly focused on architectural history. In 2018 a commercial edition of his dissertation *Het bezield modernisme van A.H. Wegerif. Architectuur als beschavingsideaal* appeared. In cooperation with Kunstmuseum Den Haag, he is currently preparing a project on the role of the couple Chris and Agathe Wegerif in the renewal of the arts around 1900.

Marie-Thérèse van Thoor is associate professor in the section Heritage & Architecture, at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft. She trained as an architectural historian, and gained working experience at the university (Utrecht University and TU Delft) and in a professional heritage organisation (Heritage Department of the City of Amsterdam/BMA). Her publications, education and performances expose theory and practice both in architectural history and heritage studies. She participated in the exhibition *Rietveld's Universe* at Centraal Museum Utrecht 2010 (venues in MAXXI Rome 2011, and Vitra Museum Weil am Rhein 2012), and was one of the main editors of the

publication *Rietveld's Universe* (2010). She co-edited and contributed to *Sanatorium Zonnestraal, the history and restoration of a modern monument* (2010), and *Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Restoration and Transformation of a National Monument* (2013). In 2019 *Colour, Form and Space: Rietveld Schröder House challenging the future* was released, as a result of a research project financed by the Getty Foundation. Until 2020 she was editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed journal *Bulletin KNOB*.

Bart Verbrugge has worked predominantly in publishing since receiving his degree in architectural engineering from TU Delft; most recently as publishing director at Van Haren Publishing. He is the author or co-author of various books and articles in the area of architecture and applied art, among others, *Geschiedenis van de bouwkunst*, with Wim J. van Heuvel (several editions since 1991), *Belgische Art Nouveau en Art Deco wandtegels 1880-1940*, with Mario Baeck (1995), *Art Nouveau Tiles*, with Hans van Lemmen (1999), *Architectuur- en bouwgeschiedenis in perspectief*, with Marcel Teunissen (2017) and *Johannes Mutters jr. 1858-1930 – bedreven in vele bouwstijlen* (2019). When young, he doubted whether he should be a car designer or an architect. He owns and drives classic cars, including a Panhard 24.

Kjeld Vindum is an architect and assistant professor at The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, Copenhagen. He has been editor of *SKALA – Magazine of Architecture and Art*, as well as *Arkitekten* and *Arkitektur M*. He is co-author, with Carsten Thau, of a monograph on Arne Jacobsen (1998), published also in German and English by *Arkitektens Forlag*, Copenhagen.

Wolfgang Voigt studierte Architektur an der Technischen Hochschule Hannover. 1986-95 war er wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter an der Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg, hatte dort 1993/94 eine Vertretungsprofessur für Architekturgeschichte. Durchführung von Forschungsprojekten unter Leitung von Hartmut Frank und Jean-Louis Cohen, freier Mitarbeiter beim Denkmalschutzamt Hamburg und The Art Institute of Chicago. 1997-2015 stellvertretender Direktor am Deutschen Architekturmuseum (DAM) in Frankfurt am Main. Dort Kurator von Ausstellungen und von Katalogen u.a. über das architektonische Werk von Heinz Bienefeld, Helmut Jacoby, Paul Schmitthenner, Dominikus Böhm, Gottfried Böhm, Sinan, Paul Bonatz, Ferdinand Kramer. Im DAM zuletzt die Ausstellungen *Frau Architekt* (2017) und *New Human, New Housing. Architecture of the New Frankfurt 1925-33* (2019). Zahlreiche Veröffentlichungen zur Architekturgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, siehe www.voigt-architektur.com.

Cor Wagenaar studied history at the University of Groningen before specialising in the history of architecture and urbanism there. In 1993 he published a doctoral thesis on the reconstruction of Rotterdam. In 1995 he joined the University Medical Center of Groningen, where he was in charge of various research projects in healthcare architecture; these culminated in a number of books. In 2000 he joined the TU Delft, where he still works as an associate professor. In 2014 he was appointed Thomassen à Thuessink Professor at the University of Groningen, which focuses on the relation between architecture, urbanism and health, and in 2016 he was appointed to a full professorship in the history and theory of urbanism at the same university; these two chairs merged in 2019. He is head of the Expertise Center Architecture, Urbanism and Health (a-u-h.eu), the unique quality of which is that it starts from the perspective of architecture and urbanism, instead of public health. He lives and works in Groningen and Berlin.

Michael White is a Professor of History of Art at the University of York, UK, where he specialises in the history and legacy of the European artistic avant-gardes, particularly Dada and De Stijl. He wrote his doctoral thesis on Theo van Doesburg and has long-standing interests in the modern art and architecture of the Netherlands. His scholarly publications include *De Stijl and Dutch Modernism* (Manchester University Press, 2003) and *Generation Dada: The Berlin Avant-Garde and the First World War* (Yale University Press, 2013). Together with Hans Janssen, he co-authored the publication *The Story of De Stijl: Mondrian to Van Doesburg* in 2011 to accompany the permanent Mondrian & De Stijl display at Kunstmuseum Den Haag, and was part of the curatorial teams of the exhibitions *Van Doesburg and the International Avant-Garde: Constructing a New World* (Tate Modern 2010) and *Mondrian and his Studios* (Tate Liverpool 2014).

Charlotte van Wijk works at the History of Architecture and Urban Development department at the Faculty of Architecture at the TU Delft. Her activities include curating the Faculty's Chair Collection and her primary research interest is the use of collections in education. Her contribution to this volume is the result of research on the origins of the Chair Collection, in which the historic use of objects was thematic in the educational programmes of several professors of decorative art. In 2020 Van Wijk curated an exhibition at the Museum Paul Tetar van Elven concerning, among other things, the development in the use of objects in education by Herman Rosse's predecessors. This exhibition can still be viewed online: <https://tetar.nl/lumos-delft-in-de-kijker/tentoonstelling-drawing-rooms-tekenenonderwijs-verbindt-tu-delft-tetar/>.

