An almost faultless Parisian machine for living

→ page 29
The future as a turtle

INDIRA VAN'T KLOOSTER

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

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

After the Orange Revolution in 2004 there was a building boom, but it meant a very fast and unreflective consumption of imported products and technologies, rather than a gradual and sophisticated breeding of architectural culture. The situation worsened because of the corruption of state and city authorities, a lack of open educational policy and a monopolized building market. And now that the most important and urgent architecture made in the Ukraine consists of barricades and road blocks, the PinchukArtCentre (PAC) in Kiev scheduled a debate about the role the first generation to come of age in a free and independent Ukraine could play. ‘Are they prepared to shape their own future? Or will [the future] just slowly ride towards eternity as if on the shell of a mythological turtle?’ Architect Anton Oliynyk (Buro O) is positive: ‘I know that contemporary architecture is possible in a democratic society without corruption. I know a lot of Ukrainian architects who take part in peaceful protest.’ Possible? Yes? No?

So, says Kseniya: ‘Among the young generation we have promising practices, like FORMA and Buro O, Drozdov&Partners, Yuriy Rynbovt and Zotov & Co. The latter initiated an international architecture festival, CASactions, which is now the main public educational event in Ukraine. But the local young scene is weak, and I am not sure that the situation will change in the next decade.’ PAC itself decided to cancel the debate because of the protests in the streets. Gradually, Ukraine must find new roots, or the future will remain stranded under the turtle’s shell.

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www.a10.eu
TBILISI (GE) — This private villa is currently under construction in Tbilisi, the political, cultural, economic and social hub of Georgia. It is just one of a dozen ambitious projects that Jürgen Mayer H. has been commissioned to build in the South Caucasian nation since 2009. Having seen images of his Metropol Parasol in Seville, the Georgian government invited the German architect to discuss a project in the center of Tbilisi. Although the project never reached fruition, there...
Shining peninsula

October saw the opening of a new cultural park located in the former Barracks of Košice. Architect Eristavi and his team, Zerozero studio, have spent the last few years planning, designing, supervising and, to a great extent, fighting for this space (see A10 #136). The decaying complex is now successfully transformed into an arena that has the potential to become the new social and cultural centre of the city.

The vision of a cluster with an 8 × 8-metre module, which the architects abstracted from the historical structures of the barracks stores and from which the individual new structures have emerged, is intended to define one consistent unit, an island of public space surrounded by the white, reconstructed facades of the historicized barracks stores that are reflected in the shining, mirrored camouflage of the simple new pavilions. With the strikingly pure white reconstructed facades of the recently completed Kulturpark in Košice. The dazzlingly white concrete area, the centre point of the investments intented to define one consistent unit, an island of public space surrounded by the white, reconstructed facades of the historicized barracks stores and from which the individual new structures have emerged, was to the architects abstracted from the historical structures of the barracks stores and from which the individual new structures have emerged, is intended to define one consistent unit, an island of public space surrounded by the white, reconstructed facades of the historicized barracks stores that are reflected in the shining, mirrored camouflage of the simple new pavilions. With the strikingly pure white reconstructed facades of the recently completed Kulturpark in Košice. The dazzlingly white concrete area, the centre point of the investments.

info www.zerozero.com

Serious playfulness

On the spot

On the spot

(No facilities)

Then buildings he designed have been sprouting all over the country including a border crossing (Kályhoskoczk, 2012) and airport (Eger, 2015). Yet it is certain that the architect's design of the prominent "Gateshead Millennium Bridge" at the end of the recently decommissioned Roker Infinity Bridge is one of the most outstanding contributions to the process of the renewal of cities. Perhaps the most striking of such bridges is Wilkinson and Eyre's Millenium Bridge in Gateshead. But a new bridge in Hull – like the Gateshead bridge, both a striking object in itself and a new route – may also have a big impact.

Designed by McDowell+Benedetti, with Alan Baxter Associates as structural consultants, the bridge connects the developed west side of the River Hull to the lesser developed east side. Approaching from the west down Scale Lane, a new series of stepped gardens (designed by Groundlevel) lead to a public square at the river's edge. From here, either a short flight of steps or a sweeping walkway, both wrapping around the bridge's pivoting hub, take you up to the deck of the bridge. The slight arch of the bridge's 35-metre cantilevered steel arm allows small boats to pass underneath, but for larger craft the entire span can swing round completely. The movement is so gentle that pedestrians can not only remain on the bridge whilst it swings but also stay on and off (at its end west). The impressive movement of the bridge is announced by a sequence of the sound and light work installed as part of the bridge by artist Nayan Kulkarni. The structural spine of the bridge's steel is not just a functional beauty for the newlyweds' home, which was not as pleasant or easy to build as it seemed, and was very nearly in strain in tendril. Beautiful as it is, the appeal of The Factory lies not in its aesthetics, but in the reminder that architecture is actually not really about conventional aesthetics, in the same way it is not a metaphysical craft accessible to a select few. A de-spiralization, perhaps, of the status of the architect in society that could sometimes help architects to position themselves in the context of their practice, unlocking a world of possibilities for creativity in the process.

info www.mcdowellbenedetti.com

Gira Event Clear

The Factory Clear switch range unite modern design with innovative technology: more than 300 functions for convenient, economical and secure living can be integrated. In addition to socket outlets and light switches, door communication devices, audio systems and many solutions for intelligent building control are available.

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

info www.gira.com/event

Modern design and diverse colours

Gira Event Clear

Going places

On the spot

On the spot

Go to www.a-bureau.com

Exclusive appearance

With transparent, high-gloss surfaces and coloured elements below, Gira Event Clear offers an exclusive appearance with a distinctive depth effect. The colours white, black, green, brown, aubergine and sand are available. Combining them with inserts in pure white, cream white, colour aluminium and anthracite makes a wide diversity of variants possible.

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

info www.a-bureau.com
An unexpected museum

...Moments, tourism and a very muse-
...an unexpected museum seems like the most unusual combination that could be found in a small Bulgarian village of less than 3000 residents. But Dorkovo boasts all of the above, and has unexpectedly become the buzz of the surrounding Pazard- zhik region. While the five million-year-old Dorkovo Paleontological Museum has drawn tourists for years, now people are trav-
...the result is a small but highly detailed, modern and secure museum where archaeological objects are the main attraction. The museum features an exhibition of fossils from the Dorkovo paleontological site, which dates back to the Miocene period, about 23 million years ago. Visitors can see the remains of various animals, including mammoths, rhinoceroses, elephants, and horses. The museum also includes interactive exhibits that allow visitors to learn more about the prehistoric world. The Dorkovo Paleontological Museum is a great destination for anyone interested in prehistory and paleontology, and a must-visit for tourists visiting the region.

Ultimate geek tour

...tourism was the theme of the movie. Instead, there was an erasing of the screen of the eponymous piece of architecture on the hill. The movie was a parody of the original, which was set in the same location, and featured a group of friends solving a mystery. The film was directed by the German director Werner Herzog, who is known for his work on documentaries and films about the natural world. The movie was released in 2002, and has since become a cult classic. The Dorkovo Paleontological Museum is a great destination for anyone interested in prehistory and paleontology, and a must-visit for tourists visiting the region.

Update: Kindergar-
tens

...across Eastern Europe, new preschools are popping up, signaling a renaissance in kindergarten architecture. Social change, updated regu-
...the kindergartens in the northern region of Bulgaria offers a new perspective on childhood and educational design. The kindergartens have been designed to meet the needs of modern families and to provide a stimulating and engaging environment for children. The kindergartens feature large indoor and outdoor play areas, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. The classrooms are equipped with modern teaching aids and technology, and are designed to be flexible and adaptable to changing needs. The kindergartens also feature a variety of educational programs, including music, art, and physical education, to promote the holistic development of children. The kindergartens in the northern region of Bulgaria offer a new vision for childhood and educational design, and are setting a new standard for kindergarten architecture in Eastern Europe.

www.a10.eu/order
**Terrace concept**

**Grow House**

For the first phase, the terrace of ten homes on a side street. The ‘SET’ design by the architecture firm Luud van Ginneken, which costs about the same as ‘Brickhouse’ and is similar in size, will be located in the lower floors and occasional wooden furniture. The terrace was created for the last instalment of this film. For the second phase, the terrace of five separate houses will be built. The ‘Grow House’ design, also created by the same firm, will be built in the first phase as an extension.

**Green strangeness**

**Torre David:**

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

**Moviegoer 2**

In 1988, an Austrian television crew filmed Hong Kong’s Kowloon Walled City, an informal settlement on a plot of land that evolved over several decades from a fort into the most densely populated city in the world, a three-dimensional, 20-storey labyrinth full of crammed, poverty-stricken and war-torn buildings. A few years after filming, the city was razed to the ground, leaving the television crew with unique historical footage of a city that had never been filmed before (other than for a chase scene in a Jackie Chan movie).

Informal vertical cities capture the imagination. How does a city like this come into being, without plans, organization or money? And what kind of fascinating building is created without an architect-approved plan? How does this happen at the Terra-Corpus concept? Since in a small municipality of the Jura Canton close to the Swiss-French border, the house renovation by 2dB relies on the conceptual principle of minimal interference, where facades interpret the materiality of their immediate surroundings. A thin fiber-cement cladding covers the roof and all facades visible from the road, with heavy frames surrounding the windows. Artificial turf and simple glass planes face the gardens at the back.

While the green coating’s purpose is quite clear, the grey material covering the remaining facade draws inspiration partly from the adjustment, but also from the region’s contemporary farm sheds. It is a gesture that reflects upon the urban development of an area once marked by the traditional farm typology of the mountains.

Interiors, on the other hand, are in strict contrast with the emptiness of the house’s appearance. White coating, light floors and occasional wooden furniture effectively seem unexpected in such an unfamiliar domestic image.

As a result of this approach, in the words of the office, the construction distances itself from the rural-dominantly expected from residential buildings in the Jura, which often draws from the traditional aesthetics of the mountain forms. The result is rather unconventional, as if absorbing the quickly changing nature of its surroundings; it could not help becoming the very strangeness of what is happening around it.

**Image 334x557 to 624x736**

**Image 335x362 to 623x541**

**Image 691x-8 to 1409x944**

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integrated urban

New campus
core, Espoo

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Integrated urban
faculty, Varaždin

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Under one roof,
Lausanne

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Old brick and modern media, Katowice

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

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

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

The Faculty of Radio and Television will educate film directors, cameramen, producers, and other industry roles. As with many educational facilities, contact with natural surroundings is valued for its beneficial effects on the concentration and productivity of both students and professors. The building itself is original and perfectly illustrates what we expect from modern media. Not too far away, a manifestation of new architecture, a dark brick widely used in old buildings in the city – allows us to keep the soul of the street without changing the spirit of the place too much. This is the way we love creating architecture; analyzing a place and trying to find solutions that can be seen in the logical and clear functional aspect of the building, and its attempt to capture the character of the old. This becomes evident for them, I think, was the decision to maintain the old, existing building, which the rules suggested demolishing. Again, it is a decision to maintain the old, existing building, and its attempt to capture the character of the old. This becomes evident what we expect from modern media. Not too far away, a manifestation of new architecture, a dark brick widely used in old buildings in the city – allows us to keep the soul of the street. A few people from the jury told us that their proposal was the most `Polish’ project. This is probably the most important comment the project received.

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

Quite important for them, I think, was the decision to maintain the old, existing building, which the rules suggested demolishing. Maintaining it and materializing the rest of the new volume using the same material – a dark brick widely used in old buildings in the city – allows us to keep the soul of the street without changing the spirit of the place too much. This is the way we love creating architecture; analyzing a place and trying to find out what is the exact piece of the puzzle we need to complete within that part of the city. For that reason, the overall shape adapts to its neighbours, aiming to keep the continuity of the two roofs and, ultimately, that of the street. A few people from the jury told us that our proposal was the most ‘Polish’ project. This is probably the most important comment the project received.

Many people in Katowice are critical of their city. They think that it is an industrial city without a special interest. With this project, we are trying to tell them that this is not true. We try to work in the same way we do in other countries with the same strategy. (MGA)

What has been the main challenge when designing a contract that is different than that of previous projects, in this case, the Faculty of Radio and Television?

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

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

Brave gestures have been made on the campus before. The expansionist Gropius building by Reima and Raili Pietilä was, for some extremely purist architect colleagues, a true disgrace. The Otaniemi campus, how variable, a city 81 kilometres north of Zagreb, Vanja Rister and Tin Sven Frančić have won a public competition to design a new building for the faculty of Organization and Informatics (FOI) of the University of Zagreb. They triumphed over 25 entries from Croatia and one from Slovenia in the competition, which was launched in summer 2013. The winners, who happen to be assistant professors at the University of Zagreb, have worked together for the past ten years, already gaining some experience in planning for educational institutions. Then design for a building housing both the faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences and Teacher Education recently saw completion in Rijeka.

According to the jury, the architects were exceptionally successful in their perception of the locational wider context, and sensibly considered the building's connection to the existing surroundings and urban paths. The dominant idea in the awarded project is utilization of the site, which, unlike the existing FOI building, is located outside Varaždin’s city centre. The area where the new university faculty will be built is isolated and 'enclosed' in the city's existent configuration. The architects turned this fact into an advantage through their decision to use a maximum amount of space for open spaces and its ambiance.

Integrated urban faculty, Varaždin
Vanja Rister and Tin Sven Frančić incorporate openness, infrastructure and green public space in a balanced ensemble.

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

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

A10 #55 Start
New campus core, Espoo

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4500 students.

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Brave gestures have been made on the campus before. The expansionist Gropius building by Reima and Raili Pietilä was, for some extremely purist architect colleagues, a true disgrace. The Otaniemi campus, how
Recently, the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) has been challenging our notion, if not our image, of what higher education should be. Pushing the boundaries of scientific research, it recognizes the need to attract the very best scientists from around the world. One of the university’s strategies to do so is by incorporating high-profile architecture, including the Rolex Learning Centre by Japanese office SANAA (2010), the EPFL Innovation Park (2011) and the Swiss Tech Convention Centre, set to open in spring 2014.

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

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

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

Understanding that the best way to coordinate the three pavilions was to unite them ‘under one roof’, Kengo Kuma and Associates secured unanimous support from the jury. The project has since been developed in collaboration with Zurich-based Holzer Kobler Architectes, who have helped in aligning the concept with Swiss norms and acted as liaison between all parties involved.

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

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

**Under one roof, Lausanne**

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

**Project**

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**Notable Features**

- A single, bold gesture
- A metaphor of the vernacular Swiss roofscape
- Designed to bring closer the Esplanade and the South Access
- Punctuates pedestrian experience
- Orientation makes approach gentle
- Scale disguised in a certain domesticity

**Client**

École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL)

**Address**

Route Cantonale, Lausanne

**Info**

www.kkaa.co.jp, www.holzerkobler.ch
November 2013
Inside/Outside the system

The Institute of Advanced Architecture in Catalonia (IAAC) set up a self-sufficiency lab in the hills of Valldaura, some 20 kilometers outside Barcelona. Eight young Dutch professionals in the building industry met eight Spanish counterparts to see whether the Valldaura principles could be implemented in Dutch building practice.

“We live in an age of non-linear and illogical order in which we explore new eco-renovating and interactive environments,” said Manuel Gausa (Dean of IAAC), while explaining the context of the Valldaura territory that was bought by the institute to test the possibilities of self-sufficiency first-hand. “I don’t believe in autarchies, but we have to find out more about the metabolisms of urban areas.”

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

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

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

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

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

The project is not only a new headquarters, but also a shared space for the community. In fact, the MAST Foundation is a cultural and philanthropic institution that focuses on art, technology and innovation, fostering the development of creativity and entrepreneurship while also cooperating with other institutions in order to support economic and social growth. In a way, the project carries on the tradition of important Italian entrepreneurs who pushed and supported growth during the economic boom in Italy following the Second World War. The most influential figure of this generation was Adriano Olivetti (1901-1960). His experiment in Ivrea, a small town near Turin where Olivetti set up his manufacturing company headquarters, remains the cutting-edge of a perfect mix of clever business politics, great architecture and a positive urban and social impact. Today, what the MAST Foundation shares with Ivrea is a public aspect and the strategic choice for a contemporary architectural language. But the social aspects of the project still remain in doubt due to the period of prolonged crisis in which this laudable business and social venture is set.

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

A10 # 55 Ready

North-west elevation
South-west elevation

3
4

(89x23) A10 # 55 Ready

North-west elevation South-west elevation

A continuous path runs through the entire building.

A10

North-west elevation
South-east elevation

SEZIONE CC

SEZIONE DD

LAN

Housing by consultation, Hamburg

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

GERMANY — TEXT: CHRISTIAN NIELSEN; PHOTOGRAPHY: JULIEN LANOO

People getting involved in the building of their own home is a phenomenon with a long history, and not just among the upper classes. In Germany and other European countries, housing cooperatives had their golden age in the 1920s. In the 1980s, architects opened up to their clients, allowing them to join the planning process. Participatory ideals of this kind were built as part of the famous International Architecture Exhibition (IAIA) Berlin, 1984/85) using planning procedures that still serve as models today.

Over the last fifteen years, however, the trend in Germany has turned towards the ‘Baugruppe’, a cooperative requiring a minimum of management, founded for a single, usually small-scale project, and built for its own members (see our Guide in A10 #48). The model can also be встретил architects join with business partners to acquire a plot specifically for a Baugruppe-type project, develop the property, and then look for the right perspective for it.

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

After Berlin, where there are several notorious Baugruppe developments (although the city authorities imply frustration is also available for their clients, Germany’s second-largest location for such projects. The recently completed Teufelsberg Kirchhain shows that Hamburg, too, is interested in updating the Baugruppe model as a contemporary form of living, and included the project in the current IAIA Hamburg 2013. Paris-based LAN (Local Architecture Network) won the competition in 2008, and building work began in 2010, which was completed on time with the framework of the IBA.

The paintings of three-flour-storied U-shaped blocks, all clad in wood, comes as a relief in this heterogeneous suburban setting (a caricatured by a sprawl of detached houses. The plain...
facades – their strict rows of upright windows looking almost like military barracks on the plans – underscore the architects’ desire to design flexible units (33 in total) to house apartments of different sizes and layouts to satisfy various requirements and budgets. As well as smaller units grouped together on one storey, there are maisonettes and town houses (integrated into the block) with floor spaces ranging from 55 to 138 square metres, plus garage, loggia and small garden. This complex outcome was achieved in consultation with the inhabitants, modifying the architects’ original plan for a simple row of townhouses. 

Visually, the ensemble is striking. In spite of the significant differences in the form of the individual units, the overall architectural concept works like a uniform: a compact form (widespread in detached housing in Hamburg’s inner city since the late 19th century) which is entirely suitable in such a densely developed urban setting (thus sending the right signal), and only appears peculiar at this location, among the urban sprawl. This also means that supposed differences are aesthetically levelled, inevitably leading to a slight homogenization of the way it feels to live in the complex, hopefully in a positive sense. The open spaces around the building could be used exclusively for access routes and thoroughfares, simply because the site borders on that of the International Garden Exhibition, due to open this year as a park. But the complex will nonetheless remain an enclave because, even today, the Hamburg suburb of Wilhelmsburg is an industrial quarter, beginning just a few hundred metres away from the development on the banks of the Süderelbe, where an imposing harbour basin has been dredged. The choice of such a location as the site for a Baugruppe project as part of the IBA is thus ambivalent. On the one hand, it is about filling neglected parts of town with new life. On the other, astronomical prices for plots of land within the city would have rendered such a project unthinkable. After Munich, Hamburg is the second most expensive place to live in Germany, with most people spending over half their income on rent. In the case of the members of this Baugruppe, that money will now flow into paying off a mortgage. Here, too, the main beneficiary of citizens participating in the building of their own homes is an institution – the bank.

The location of each stairwell and its material structure was chosen by the individual occupants. Each housing unit is singular in its layout. The location of each stairwell and its material structure was chosen by the individual occupants.
When approaching Pijacal, formerly a large industrial mining site in the city of Labin, what is most striking is the colossal ‘Shaft’, a huge, neglected object that once served as a lift lowering miners into the mine. Its dominance recalls a time in the 20th century when Labin was the hub of Croatia’s coal mining region. What once was an important centre of economic prosperity for the broader area has since been shuttered and almost forgotten. Somewhere in the ‘plinth’ of this Shaft, not very visible at first, lies a building that once served as above-ground administrative space. This enclosed structure is where a new public library has emerged, designed by a group of young architects headed by Margita Grubiša and Ivana Žalac. In the context of Croatia and abandoned factory premises, it represents a brave and progressive interior design. ‘Brave’ due to the fact that the project’s architects are fresh and relatively inexperienced, and ‘progressive’ with respect to the context where it evolves, and the potentials it might hold.

The project is the first phase of a public competition won by the architects that will hopefully turn Pijacal into a new generator of urban culture in the Labin area. How was it for these ‘youngsters’ to build inside of an ex-mining facility? ‘To build inside a preserved location, being architectural heritage, is never an easy quest, particularly in the zone where we had to fight conservationists and limited budgets, accustomed to newly built cultural facilities inside Croatia,’ explains Grubiša. The architects pointed out in their competition proposal that this zone should not be treated separately, but as a whole, functionally connected and programmatically thought out regarding both the city and time needed for the entire area to reactivate. What we found extremely important while dealing with the project in the first place was not to think and act one step at a time, but to design while keeping in mind the entire context of the zone, and to presume all the segments and stages the project might have in its development.

Apart from smaller projects, architects Grubiša and Žalac had never before completed a public building or project of this size and importance. That said, the evaluation of their project is expected to be extraordinary. The story begins a bit prior to the competition awarded in 2007. Žalac explains, ‘We should probably thank the Croatian Archipelago New Lighthouses project initiated by Vedran Mimica, the Berlage Institute and MATRA programme, together with the Croatian Architects’ Association, back in 2005. They are the ones to blame in the first place, because as part of their project, which focused on researching alternative development concepts on the Croatian coast, one of the working groups, Platforma 9.81 [a non-governmental Croatian organization of architects, theorists, designers and urban planners, ed.], explored Pijacal and its potentials, and developed a new library proposal in 2007. When it then was re-launched during the 2007 competition, we participated, as we felt it was the right thing to do, and were lucky enough to win.’
The project was won by the team of Chartier Dalix Architectes and Avenier & Cornejo in 2010 and has lived up to its promises. More faithful to the 3D renderings from the competition entry, it has just been delivered on time and on budget. ‘A risk-free construction,’ the architects say simply in front of their building, whose silhouette stands proudly like an ocean liner in the 20th arrondissement just beyond the Boulevard Périphérique. Playing with the site’s varying elevations, its urban balconies offer panoramic vistas over the area like the decks of a metropolitan cruise ship.

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

With a total surface area of 9300 m² and a cost of 19.6 million euros, excluding tax, this project might be termed ‘almost faultless’. However, it does have two ‘faults’, formed by the lines that break up its impressive volume. It presents the contrasting effects of a density created by an extremely rational plan (distribution and arrangement of the studio flats) and a double cut that lightens the volume on the street side. An initial
The eye-catching block has a skin of anthracite brick accented with gleaming copper.

Interior hallway showing continuation of the exterior accent.

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

Studio apartments with custom-made furniture offer spatial versatility.

Diagram of the volume’s double caesura.

Sixth floor

Third floor

Ground floor

Section

Elevation

Residential Building, 2010–2013
Architects: Chartier Dalix Architectes and Avenier & Cornejo Architectes
Client: Régie Immobilière de la Ville de Paris (RIVP)
Address: 16-30 avenue du Docteur Gley, Paris

(Contemporary machine for living, Paris)

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

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

In the hostel, the ‘standard’ apartment is designed to make the absolute most of the space and offer spatial versatility. The furniture designed by the architects has been custom-made: movable shutters close off the kitchenette, the table has integrated drawers, and the bed is either a pull-out bed or there is a sofa-bed available. The vertical circulation spaces have not been forgotten, and are remarkable. All the stairwells are bathed with natural light and conceived as high-quality spaces in order to encourage people to use them as much as possible, in preference to the lift. Indeed, this building has been designed from the point of view of sustainable energy, with two vertical-axial wind turbines installed on the roof to supply power to the château during the day and to the hostel accommodation in the evening. The compensation, estimated at 25 kwh/m², is a beneficial response to the Paris Climate Protection Plan. This choice of energy production, still experimental in an urban setting, is particularly justified in a building with high elevations that is situated in a windy corridor, and where the solar panels on the roof provide 30 per cent of the building’s energy needs.

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Forest retreat, Sedlčany

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

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

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

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

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

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

The interior offers a single room that can be adapted to several purposes. The space is basically shaped by four oversize steps that lead from the entrance level to the large sleeping platform can easily be created by opening the steps.

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

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

As a profession, architecture is characterized by devotees. And it’s not that White isn’t devoted – he worked for Fosters + Partners for ten years and Make for six – but he has a wider perspective. There is something different about White’s buildings. Something fun and glibby. He tells me that this difference means his first house, Number 23 in West London, built for himself and his family, is not taken seriously as architecture. Apparently it is more a ‘lifestyle home’, approved by the likes of The Sunday Times’ British Homes Awards. Yet I don’t see why characters that ‘want to make things happen’ and design houses that are lively can’t be included under the umbrella of architecture, too. After all, it takes a talented architect to get planning permission for a 159 m² house at the top of an avenue of stuccoed town houses in this part of the city.

The story of Number 23 began in 2007. White had bought an end terrace house on Keith Grove with an adjoining garden. The garden had a separate legal title, which meant any proposal could avoid garden-grabbing rules. White lived in the house while planning was in progress, a process that took a year and a half. But the resulting house is nothing like the one for which White received planning permission. Like every architect practising in London, White played the game, outmanoeuvring planners by designing an initial facade to resemble what was already there: timber cladding at ground level for the wooden fence and a green wall at first floor for the trees.

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

At ground level, the hallway leads onto an L-shaped kitchen, living and dining space, with a half-glazed, half-masonry wall overlooking a courtyard (part of which plunges into the basement). The stair upwards is in the centre of the house, as it was the only way three bedrooms and a bathroom could be placed without violating planning regulations.
be arranged above. The basement stair forms part of a more spacious well off the hall at the front right corner of the plan, creating a more stately entrance to the party/play room below. There is even a niche for a statue. But the recessed handrails and shadow gap detail flush skirting are ultimately a way of ‘having it all’ in a tiny space. The gold leaf bar that curves on the outside of the stair behind a cupboard door in the living room is just another example. After his childhood ambition, White is a dab hand at space, fitting a 30 per cent bigger house on a 20 per cent smaller plot than neighbouring properties. But at Number 23, he captures some of the essence and ambiance in the other sense of the word, too. Number 23 is incredibly gadgety – it practically buzzes like an electricity substation. There is a neon ‘Hello’ sign that lights up when someone presses the doorbell (it gets a lot of laughs). The house, inside and out, has the ability to glow in different colours. And the street elevation window is fitted with smart glass that, when activated, changes from transparent to translucent.

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

NUMBER 23, 2013
Architect: MATT architecture
Client: Self-build
Address: Keith Grove, White City, London
Info: www.mattarchitecture.com

Norway is situated on the northern periphery of Europe, stretching beyond the Arctic Circle, with a long coastline, vast mountains and forests. The total population is five million, with Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Stavanger being the major cities. Since the 1950s, Norway has experienced strong economic growth due to its offshore oil reserves. The construction economy has benefited from this, with the Norwegian state being an important stakeholder and developer. Still, a fair share of our newly built architecture is created in rural areas. Simultaneously, there is rapid urban growth. One fourth of the country’s population lives in the Oslo region, where most of the urban area has a density of 130 inhabitants per square kilometre. By contrast, the municipality of Kaalkeving, in the remote county of Finnmark, has only 0.6 per square kilometre.

Architects work within this twofold situation of urban and rural conditions and traditions, which may even become threefold, as interest in the outer northern periphery emerges due to the ongoing quest for natural resources and changing geopolitics. Are rural, urban and ‘far out’ features expressed in architecture? How do these different approaches to architecture? There are arguably two main tendencies. We find architecture using wood and rare materials, emphasizing spatial and contextual qualities. These are often carefully detailed and well-crafted, small-scale projects in rural and semi-rural areas, where innovative architecture and local identity intersect—often with private commissions where young architects can prove their talents. On the other hand, we find projects engaging in the urban environment, handling issues of density, social structures, infrastructures and involvement. Yet young architects more easily balance the two approaches—and between politics, ethics and aesthetics. They base their work on a profound interest in people, dealing with questions of how their surroundings can provide the best possible living conditions. In different, often unconnected ways, they use new materials and experimental aspects, create encounters and challenge the conformities of architecture.

Norwegian wood, Norwegian oil

The Oslo Architecture Triennale left us wanting to know more about young architects practicing in Norway. The projects that it presented confront and contextualise the contemporary architectural scene, and express a strong sense of environmental and social responsibility. To follow up on this, we have collected examples showing how Norwegian architects still very much work with the geography and topography of their niche land, but even more with the demographics, ecosystems and economics of Norwegian landscapes.

The Norwegian Architectural Policy

In 2009, the Norwegian government launched Norway’s first unified architectural policy, ‘Architecture. The Foundation for Design and Architecture in Norway has a key role in its implementation. The aim is to increase awareness towards high-quality architecture and its physical environment, and to create more clarity regarding the government’s sectorial responsibilities. Through various tailor-made architecture routes aiming at securing a more holistic and better governed political practice, the concept of ‘quality’ is here regarded as a mixed, often interlaced quality that requires an engaged, critical and ongoing discussion about quality criteria. The follow-up of architecture routes on an annual basis, the last report being published in 2015.

The Wildcard Programme

The Wildcard Programme is a cross-sectorial, complex and skill-demanding discipline. The business structure is increasingly divided in two: a few large, interdisciplinary concerns and a multitude of small, often younger practices. Clients rarely take the risk of engaging young architects. Competition directives make it even more difficult to establish new offices and enter the market of commissions. Both innovation and quality suffer without the regeneration of young and alternative practices. The Norwegian Wildcard Programme has been running since 2009 as an initiative within the architectural policy, and includes wildcard competitions and introduces them in different contexts. The programme prepares the next generation of architects and architecture through various projects, ranging from education to alternative procurements, from networking and mentorship to exhibitions casting light on the valuable competence of young practitioners.

Norsk Form – Foundation for Design and Architecture in Norway

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

The Most Beautiful House in the World by Einar LUIS FONSECA

The Wildcard Programme

The Wildcard Programme

The Wildcard Programme

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

Dealing wildcards

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

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

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

But...: The ministries themselves don’t give it much priority, and the last elections it’s uncertain whether the new government will promote the policy.

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

Andreas Vaa Bermann: Much. The architecture policy is a part of continuous effort from many actors and authorities. The state authorities for railway and road building are developing architecture strategies. Local policies are being drafted in several municipalities, like Bergen and Trondheim, and urban policy is lifted into the national political debate.

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

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

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

Will the 2016 edition be an international open call again?

Andreas Vaa Bermann: This international acclaim and the international network that came with it has been very positive indeed, but we haven’t concluded so far whether to engage the next curator yet.

The Behind the Green Door exhibition refers to 1987, when the Brundtland Commission presented a new concept of sustainable development. The report defined sustainable development as ‘that which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ It stuck immediately, but was also critiqued for being a bit vague – the concept could be interpreted in multiple ways. Does this explain the 62 visions on sustainability in the exhibition?

Håkon Maria Eriksen: Yes, but a broad and open approach may be better than being exclusive. Both global and local questions can be addressed, individual efforts as well as international treaties. The idea programme of the Triennale debated sustainability within a Norwegian context, we depend on the oil economy. Can the headquarters of Statkraft be labelled sustainable? Are passive houses sustainable at all? The main conclusion was: Can we go on living the way we are doing now? Personally? As a nation?

Can architects influence this, and how? Should we give up our holiday homes and cottage culture to reduce our ecological footprint? We have touched upon many sensitive subjects.

Do architects engage in social and economic issues?

Andreas Vaa Bermann: After a period of high awareness for environmental and energy matters, we have seen a change towards more social awareness. This seems to be spreading from the small practices, to the public organizations to take part.

Do established and young practices work together?

Andreas Vaa Bermann: Yes! Established practices serve as mentors, and young practices are much of the community. They are open-minded and always bringing values other than economic – like recycling, new typologies, new sustainability – into their projects. They manage to convince private developers to rethink housing and design new collective concepts.

So, there is an architectural brotherhood of sorts in Norway?

Håkon Maria Eriksen: Yes, at least a growing number of collaborations to deal with the tough criteria of competitions, allowing only experiences to enter. Oslo Architectural Biennale together with Lund Hagem, who were actually their former colleagues, initiated the Wildcard Programme, and others are working with experimental use of materials and crafts, including museum and exhibition design.

Andreas Vaa Bermann: The Wildcard Programme is quite pragmatic, when it comes to commissions. But they are committed as well. An example is Sunderland, where a group of ten to twenty architects can afford to be critical? Helen & Hard, based in Stavanger, are excellent at that. We also have some companies and offices that work with experimental use of materials and crafts, including museum and exhibition design.

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In the winter of 2009, Atelier Oslo made a small but noteworthy exhibition in Oslo. The gallery was empty except for a couple of trees and a thick layer of sawdust covering the floor. A press photo from the exhibition shows the deep green moss against the white gallery walls, with an electrical socket cunningly set into the floor in the corner. The image is delightfully, and captures the paradoxes of new Norwegian architecture. It speaks of an ambiguous perception with nature, but more importantly of the uneasy relationship between young Norwegian architects and the tradition into which they are often inscribed. In fact, the moss-plug juxtaposition is an apt comment on the bounding of Norwegian architecture in the first decade of the 2000s, with its fetish for the natural and the Nordic. The young generation of architects seemingly aproveches this fetish with humour and irreverence. They know the qualities of moss, yet they also make use of electricity to create.

Contemporary Norwegian architecture is too often praised in terms of its relationship to the Nordic landscape, marketing itself as a pocket of space-specific authenticity in an increasingly generic world. Enterprises such as the Norwegian Tourist Routes Project continue to present images of spectacular landscapes framed by tasteful but discrete design objects, perpetuating the myth of Nordic architecture as a pristine, natural product. And yet, looking at the recent work of Chivad-Kihlén, Schødtseng-Trandahl architects, Proulx, Manthey Kula, René & Drage, or Atelier Oslo (all featured in these pages), a far more diverse agenda becomes apparent. Admittedly, you will find the blonde birch plywood and the serpentine string, but you will also encounter a curious mix of pragmatism, realism and deadpan humour that allow these architects to make sense, or at least laugh, the clichés of Scandinavian design.

Take René & Drage’s sculptural electricity pylons, for example, submitted for a competition in 2003. Massive electricity infrastructure is prevalent in Norway, whose domestic energy is largely hydroelectric. Such installations are controversial, because of the industry and accusations of landscape destruc- tion with every new hydroelectric power line planned. René & Drage tackled the challenge unapologetically and with a good deal of wit. Their giant pylons tip-top through the landscape on spindly legs, taking on a quite anthropomorphic quality. Yet, looks like an architectural equivalent of Norway’s Ministry of Silly Walks; they were no joke but instead a potentially influential contribution to the Northern landscape.

Similar irreverence is also found in the more conventional commissions that make up the broad and better of many young Norwegian practitioners: single-family houses and cottages. Norway is a sparsely populated country where most people dream of building their own house and garden, and where tax incentives and ownership structures encourage them to do so. While many of these projects are either self-built or catalogue homes, single-family houses form a substantial part of small and medium-sized architects’ portfolios. Most of these are built with beauty and comfort, safely within the tradition of Scandinavian modernism. Some, however, break the mould. Take Manthey Kula’s single-family house in Brystad, an agricultural area along the lake Næpes in eastern Norway, for example. Built on an exceedingly tight budget, the little house even manages to engage in creative pragmatism. Its structure is a simple, cost-efficient truss timber frame for which many different kinds of facade elements are possible. This also allows for a flexible annual strategy of buying facade elements like windows and doors second-hand on the popular website www.finn.no. The house was also a greening job for new insulation standards, an experiment that allowed the architects some technical and budgetary leeway. The small dwelling on Brystad far exceeds the moral or practical purposes of much contemporary Norwegian design. In doing so, it gain not only an unusually low-cost per square metre, but also an expression of cheerful informality, well-suited to the situation and function, unpretentious and pragmatically adapted to the local context.

New environmental awareness has led to major changes in Norwegian building standards and regulations in the last few years. While there is concern that new standards focus too narrowly on a technological definition of sustainability, young architects seem remarkably adept in their response, using new legislation as a creative trigger rather than a hindrance. Such adaptability in the face of an increasingly bureaucratised building industry is characteristic, not only of new Norwegian architecture but also in general in architecture. This is a generation-merging with social and technological sustainability, fair distribution, the challenges of multiculturalism, and the changing rules of architectural practice—without compromise. Instead of begrudging the architect’s loss of power today, they invent new methods and organizational structures to survive both quality control and climate crisis. They have long since abandoned the idea of the architect as a solitary figure, and can instead work as teams, working with clients, politicians, industry, and other parties to create good places. Do not be fooled by the blonde birch wood—Norwegian architecture is less natural than it seems, and no longer fits comfortably into the nameplate of Monty Python’s Ministry of Silly Walks. They were no joke but instead a potentially interesting contribution to the Northern landscape.

The moss/plug juxtaposition is an exercise in creative pragmatism. Its structure is a simple, cost-efficient timber-frame frame for which many different kinds of facade elements are possible. This also allows for a flexible annual strategy of buying facade elements like windows and doors second-hand on the popular website www.finn.no. The house was also a greening job for new insulation standards, an experiment that allowed the architects some technical and budgetary leeway. The small dwelling on Brystad far exceeds the moral or practical purposes of much contemporary Norwegian design. In doing so, it gains not only an unusually low-cost per square metre, but also an expression of cheerful informality, well-suited to the situation and function, unpretentious and pragmatically adapted to the local context.

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Urban developments in Norway are mainly dominated by (sometimes risky) market-oriented and -defined experimentation with physical qualities. This is evident in every city, but no place more than in the fast-growing capital, Oslo. Particularly commercial buildings and the majority of housing developments seem to be downsizing good public space and architectural qualities. At the same time, initiatives exist within developers and architects have a common ambition and strive to make more positive contributions. Especially amongst the younger offices can be found architects who take initiative to individually make their mark on urban development. (AVB)

**Word on the street**

**Tuttle, Jonas Bjerre (パートナー ジョナス・ビエルレ アーキテクト)**

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

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

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

Since the beginning of the 2000s, there has been some turnover in terms of changing power structures. This has resulted in a new generation of architects working more as social instigators and artists than as planners. And, in this situation where both public and private developers are driven by the quest for financial gains, a position on the edge of the field is probably the most interesting. Rodeo, Fantastic Norway and the Collective Project have all developed alternative positions by changing their own rules. Rather than using research to finance an expanded practice, Fantastic Norway by exposure, placing themselves in the middle of the city, and the Collective Project by developing a practice between art and architecture. From these positions it is possible to transform both architecture and the city.

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

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

The purpose of the project was to address the Roma peoples’ need for a cultural house in the capital. The Embassy is open 365 days a year and will be in operation for the next ten years. The project aims at manifesting the potential need for a cultural house in Oslo, a cause that’s been in the need for a cultural house in Oslo, a cause that’s been in the

2 THE NORWEGIAN ROMA EMBASSY

For a Denser Concentration of the City

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3 THE NORDIC PLATFORM (NP)

The Nordic Platform (NP) is a strategy for integrating educational and cultural institutions in the north and promotes the development of the area through a policy of processes that integrate all

4 FURUSET, OSLO

The area is mainly residential, but also houses cultural institutions and light industrial production. For the concept, Element chose Runde og Rundbue, an underused stretch in the eastern part of inner city Oslo, on Dælenenggata.

5 THE COLLECTIVE PROJECT: FOR A DENSER CONCENTRATION OF THE CITY

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High North Norway

The landscape of the world’s High North is opening up for new ways of living and building societies. During recent years, it has been the subject of multiple projects and initiatives related to architecture, research and urban design. These projects illustrate how architects can engage in geopolitical processes and create new and alternative models for development. A growing number of architects in the Nordic countries are undertaking these challenges, often out of professional interest rather than by commission. They demonstrate tendencies and possibilities that are then engaged politically, fostering the realization that the world is not what it once was. (20)

Changing the Arctic

Ghilardi + Hellsten Architects

The environment of the High North is characterized by a unique combination of natural beauty, harsh climate, and cultural diversity. These factors have shaped the region’s history and continue to influence its development today. One of the most significant challenges facing the High North is how to accommodate the increasing population and economic activities while preserving its unique character.

For example, the town of Kiruna in Sweden is facing the challenge of having its city center move underground due to the extraction of iron ore from below. This has led to the creation of a new city center, which has been designed to blend in with the surrounding landscape.

Another example is the Global Seed Vault, located in Norway. This vault contains the world’s largest storage bank of seeds, providing a backup for local seed banks in case of regional disasters. The building itself is designed to withstand harsh weather conditions and is surrounded by a natural landscape to emphasize its connection to the region.

These projects demonstrate the potential for architecture to play a role in shaping the development of the High North, while also preserving its unique identity.

Architects

Ghilardi + Hellsten Architects

www.ghilardihellsten.com, www.white.se
Section

Bathed in light

Current trends and developments in cutting-edge building technologies and specific materials are the focus of Section, wherein A10 selects a single project for closer analysis, exploring the connections between concept and result, innovation and use, and beyond. In this issue, we take a closer look at the new headquarters of Sigmax, an ICT company in Enschede, the Netherlands, designed by Paul de Ruiter. Kirsten Hannema reports on an innovative use of LED lighting that comes close to the experience of daylight.

CLEAR GLAZING

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

ATRIUM

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

FLOATING FLOORS

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

LEDs

The office building is illuminated using LEDs, which look as if they have been dispersed at random intervals over the ceiling. The result of this ‘confetti illumination’ is radiant, even lighting, bearing the open space and providing a sense of working in daylight.

AIR CUSHION DOMES

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

CANOPIES

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

FLOATING FLOORS

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Clear glazing

According to Reinout Jonker, project manager of glass supplier Glassolutions Saint-Gobain, ‘Two things make the facade particularly striking. Firstly, the clear glazing without reflective coating that allows daylight to reach deep inside the building, and secondly, the fact that the glass has been used in a semi-structural manner; we have not used any vertical frame profiles. The wide glass panels, measuring 41 mm thick, have aluminium profiles that have been integrated into the concrete floors. The glass panels themselves have been positioned along side each other with straight joints, and are connected by means of mastic joints. In this way, a single, flat glass facade is seen from both the inside and the outside. Reflections in the glass are not interrupted by frame profiles, clamp frames, or corrosion.

Canopies

Architect Paul de Ruiter explains, ‘Following on from the idea of a facade made entirely of glass, we wanted to blur the boundary between indoors and outdoors using the canopies. The canopy has the same thickness as the concrete floor inside. The stainless steel cladding on the underside reflects daylight into the interior; the same on the underside was inspired by Jansonius of glass. According to Reinout Jonker, client supplier Saint-Gobain, ‘Two wishes were the basis for this solution – the need for an open, light workspace and a pleasant view into the exterior. We have positioned the doors at such an angle to ensure maximum sunlight, while we have also filtered the light using canopies and blinds. In addition, the floor provides both heating and cooling. Fresh air is sucked in directly from outside via the ventilation units which are integrated into the canopies. Depending on outside temperature, the air is then warmed or cooled before being blown into the interior. The air is then extracted centrally from the canopies.’

Floating floors

In terms of the look, De Ruiter adds, ‘We wanted the floors to extend downwards in the form of canopies. However, the most important thing is that all solutions contribute to a pleasant and sustainable working environment, with plenty of light, pleasant views, and fresh air. We have positioned the buildings at such an angle to ensure maximum sunlight, while we have also filtered the light using canopies and blinds. In addition, the floor provides both heating and cooling. Fresh air is sucked in directly from outside via the ventilation units which are integrated into the canopies. Depending on outside temperature, the air is then warmed or cooled before being blown into the interior. The air is then extracted centrally from the canopies.’

Air cushion dome

‘The architect was very specific in what he wanted for the roof of the atrium: plenty of daylight, evenly dispersed indirect light, and an even surface without intermediate constructions,’ adds Reinout Jonker of Buitink Technology. ‘The idea was to use sustainable lighting, says Project Architectos. Airpilight LED lighting is energy-efficient and offers a long service life. In this case, the lighting also responds to the strength of the daylight and makes use of motion detection. The problem was that we were not able to use hanging light rings, as they would have interfered with the air flowing along the ceiling as ventilation. Built-in lighting was also not possible with this construction. In the end, we used fittings with lightness of just one centimetre. These have been clipped onto a deforming material on the ceiling using magnets. The circular shape neatly connects with the suggestion of a random pattern, but also allows air to flow freely.’

The basic idea for the design was a very compact building, with this core at its centre surrounded by flexible, open, light workplaces,’ De Ruiter continues. ‘The amount of land available determined the need for floor storage. That is a good height for this kind of footprint. At the same time, this brought the challenge of creating connections — literally and figuratively — between the different levels. The connecting element is the atrium with the white steel grid floor. It is not only an aesthetic element; it has also become a meeting place. With a staircase to flow to this, no one takes the lift.

10

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Kaleidoscopic shell

A project for the entertainment venue in need’s city center, designed by Dutch design experts InventDesign, is an old building and does not try to hide it. Rising to 35 metres, it is faced with metal and glass panels in different shades of grey, set in a diamond formation. As it wraps around the building, this unique shell is comprised of standard windows that have been punched with frosted glass panels. In the evening, the exterior becomes even more overwhelming. Covered with 600 LED lights and track spots in fixtures are fitted in the windows, the building then turns into an acoustic tech scale space.T: There is nothing like it in Nederlands, and it has already been described as a scene of the most important occurrences in the city in years. The architects, who designed a pell-mell of libraries, subsidized housing and the multistory Centre Cura, point out that they have developed the facade as a kaleidoscope: the windows, the lighting and the laying are themselves part of the building with a capacity for 15,000 visitors to react to the type of event being held within. Another interesting feature of the structure is its connectedness: the layout area around a stage at the center, which focuses every eye on the city stage, bringing the public closer to the center of the city, surrounded by a rain shower. The walls and ceilings are covered with materials that reflect light, allowing the structure to stand out against the backdrop of a train station. The architects hope to use the space for public events and exhibitions, creating a vibrant hub for the city's cultural life.

LED cloud

**HAMBURG** — A new north-south metro line is currently being built to connect the north of Amsterdam to its Zuidas (Southside), a large, newly developing business district. The construction required that the metro- way that runs through Amsterdam North, the Newest Netherlands and the highway, be dropped seven metres in elevation. As a result, two gas stations on either side of the road have lost their function and would have been demolished if it were not for the district council, which saw an opportunity to use the space for public lighting. Soapie Valla Architects, an Amsterdam-based office founded in 2006, was commissioned to turn the filling stations into inviting meeting pavilions, complementing the adjacent park. The stations are originally sleek and simply designed, reminiscent of American gas stations from the 1960s. This characteristic imagery is retained, though a new raw concrete layer is added: the cars are now admired with light.

**NIEUWE LEEUWARDERWEG** — Rising to 35 metres, the interior becomes more overwhelming. Covered with 600 LED lights and track spots in fixtures are fitted in the windows, the building then turns into an acoustically scaled space. There is nothing like it in Nederlands, and it has already been described as a scene of the most important occurrences in the city in years. The architects, who designed a pell-mell of libraries, subsidized housing and the multistory Centre Cura, point out that they have developed the facade as a kaleidoscope: the windows, the lighting and the laying are themselves part of the building with a capacity for 15,000 visitors to react to the type of event being held within. Another interesting feature of the structure is its connectedness: the layout area around a stage at the center, which focuses every eye on the city stage, bringing the public closer to the center of the city, surrounded by a rain shower. The walls and ceilings are covered with materials that reflect light, allowing the structure to stand out against the backdrop of a train station. The architects hope to use the space for public events and exhibitions, creating a vibrant hub for the city's cultural life.

Non-linear fluidity

**HAMBURG** — In Hamburg, Europe’s largest inner-city development project is under construction. It involves the transformation of the former HafenCity office and shopping facilities into a modern urban development area. To connect the new port areas and an urban expansion of the city, linking the old red-brick warehouses of downtown Hamburg and creating a city within a city, one of the plant’s flagship is a new home for Fischers Fassbenden University, a school of architecture and urban planning. To serve the new quarter, and university, the city expanded its metro system with a new station. The University of Hamburg’s new station, designed by Munich-based office Architektur Licht und Technik, is a place for people to gather and enjoy the public space. The station features a number of unique design elements, including linear LED lighting fixtures that change color throughout the day and night. The fixtures are connected to a central control system, which allows for precise control and the ability to customize the lighting for different events and occasions. The lighting serves as a visual guide to the public space, helping to create an inviting and welcoming atmosphere. The station’s design is also intended to be sustainable, with energy-efficient lighting and materials used in the construction to minimize the environmental impact. The architects hope that the station will become an icon for the city, reflecting its commitment to innovation and progress. The light fixture is a pop of colour to the space, adding visual interest while relaxing and reflecting. Users can admire the spectacle while relaxing and reflecting.
Glow-in-the-dark dwelling

**Illuminated barcode**

- **endless scenery** — On a narrow piece of land in the suburbs of Paris, wedged between a railway embankment, the river La Seine and a branch generated by the western entrance of the new district under the embankment, the Albrecht-S wins. It has successfully inserted a gymnasiu m to minimalist structure, made of a wood frame.

work leaving over concrete base ment along the railway, is deliber ately autonomous and compact. Still, the architect, with his atelier in Rotterdam and worked for West B and CMA, before starting on their own practice in 2000, have managed to pre sent a human scale in the project. Emerging from the railway em barking at a clock with straight edges, the building is composed of basic volumes, mostly clad in metallic-painted panels. Marゾ used just behind the panels are vertically aligned LEDs of about two meters in height. These stripes of light dis婷ish the exterior, preventing it from being non descrip tive, but without constructing a monolithic architec ture. A large volume forms the transition be tween the railway and town, and on the station side, the building is closed and higher than on that of the street, where large windows make the activities in side visible. By dis covering its function on the ground, the building obtains a public character.

Within the more encumbered area around the sports hall are the changing rooms and the facili ties. A daylight allows for the illumi nating of sunlight entering the inter inner spaces, adding to the light coming from the wide windows on the facades. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

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**Concept house**

**MINIBASE [BE]** — Generally speaking, light switches are not high on the list of priorities for interior designers. Yet, the design and placement of switches can just give an interior that extra finish. Modern technologies like smart phones and tablet PCs continue to pro vide new possibili ties. Today, building s are already stuffed with all sorts of switches, for atmospheres, lighting and hardware. Domestic is sup posed to group these different functions together and ease living without being noticed. To show how this can be done, a Belgian manufacturer of touch sensitive light switches has transformed a building from 1875 into a so-called concept house.

In a small municipality in East Flanders, the house of a former florist has been converted into a showroom where people can live and experience the company’s smart home products. The basis of the design has been demonstrating to visitors how various products can be arranged into a home.

The atmosphere of this concept house is homely and understated. All walls are painted white and contain not divert attention from the light switches and the integration of scenes and mood settings. One of the highlights is the LCD, a touch sensitive switch that is divided into different surface giving access to either two or four different functions. It also features the patented multi-touch function, activated by touching more than one surface at the same time.

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

T he uninterrupted mobility afforded by the infrastructural networks, together with numerous loans light-heartedly offered by the banks, led to the development of an intense consumerist culture. Numerous shopping malls popped up along the main avenues. Simultaneously, a large influx of non-affluent populations departed the city centre for new neighbourhoods on its outskirts, leaving a vacuum filled by thousands of illegal immigrants migrating to Greece from Asia and Africa. The city’s periphery, left behind by the economic crisis, became apparent with the massive rise in the centre of Athens, following the killing of a young student by the police in December 2008. A year later, the country’s public debt started climbing, reaching an almost enormous proportion of its GDP. Austerity measures. From 2010 onwards, construction activities decreased, both private and public. The construction aid package from the EU and the IMF, accompanied by severe restrictions on public spending, was introduced in the last fifteen years refer mainly to the work of Nicos Valsamakis (4), architect’s horizontality. The building’s horizontality.

The House in Kifisia (1) and the House in Psychico (2), both by Valsamakis and completed after the mid-2000s, embody a ‘sabot’ manner the characteristics of the aforementioned architectural idiom. Both are very simple, rectangular and two-volume houses planned around large gardens. Likewise, the House in Psychico (3) by BLP Architects (Ioannis, Christos Yannopoulos and Costis Paniyiris) adopts an L-shaped plan so as to isolate itself from neighbouring buildings and open up to its garden and pool. The first-floor bedrooms form a white, linear volume that hovers above the ground level, accentuating the building’s horizontality. Two houses in Kavouri (4) by Maria Kokkori and Andrea Dassules are placed and differentiated in a shaped site in the southern suburb of Vouliagmeni. House A consists of a large volume of living quarters connected to three individual bedroom volumes. House B also uses the uniform element as a design tool, upon which stand the extensive living quarters, complemented by shaded areas opening onto an unobstructed sea view.

The House in Eiland (5) by ISV Architects (Babis Ioannou, Nassos Tassos and Alexander Van Gilder) provides spaces for living but also friends of the owner’s larger art collection, organized in multiple levels along the site’s sloping hill, while a house in Voula (6) by Spathis sits on an existing site, organized as two parallel volumes. Its smaller, two-storey volume encloses vertical movement and allows the linear path through the tall lavatories. The larger volume contains the living areas, which open onto the ground level terrace and bedrooms defined by a large glass- and-metal structure. Similarly, the houses in Pendeli (7) by Dimotrios Tassos and Tasia Papamakriou face each other at two ends of an elongated plot, creating an interior courtyard paved by a bordered walkway.

Polykatoikia constitutes the most common building type in Greek architectural production. During the last five years, the rising demographic heterogeneity of Athenian society due to massive immigration led to less generic designs of polykatoikia, based on the architect’s appearance. Identity providers for their inhabitants.

The Uptown Residences (8) housing complex in Voula by BLP Architects occupies an entire urban block and consists of seven functionally autonomous buildings with a total of 70 apartments, linear communal spaces with gardens and underground parking. The complex is laid out in an L-shaped plan, with elevations marked by the white horizontal strips of balconies, referencing the traditional façades of modern Athenian polykatoikia. Oyster Smart Flats (9) by OY Architects is a serviced apartment building located in an up-and-coming neighborhood with notable cultural institutions. It addresses a diverse crowd of young people seeking a fresh relationship with the city centre. The building provides spaces for relaxation, leisure and meeting, and balconies are planted to reproduce a wild flora within the urban environment. The finely-crafted exposed concrete polykatoikia of Kolonakiavontes (10) by George Leggeris sits on a sloping, three-faced site. It introduces a public passage on different levels, cutting through the ground-level points to bring urban life into the building, while a four-storey exposed concrete polykatoikia of Voula (11) by...


Over the last three years, we have witnessed the collapse of the construction sector.
In the next issue:

Ready Water source, Rotterdam
Due to changing climate conditions and increasing rain-fall in some areas, now is the moment to look at all that water that is available. Water is a scarce commodity in cities where drainage occurs primarily via underground systems are especially vulnerable. The municipality of Rotterdam and the design office de Urbanisten have found common ground in a unique approach: a public space where water can be stored when it rains heavily.

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

Tour Guide Tallinn
The capital of Estonia blends historic urban heritage and a vibrant contemporary architecture scene. Many neighbourhoods provide excellent snapshots of various periods from the city’s past, from classicist palaces to functionalist housing. Over the last two decades, the Estonia’s regained independence, Tallinn has witnessed a building boom that entails a number of publicly, commercially and privately funded ventures.

The strangely familiar house of Thomas Bedaux, Tilburg
The free-standing house Thomas Bedaux built for his family in a 1938 virtuality in Tilburg is a rather odd one out. The house is three storeys, instead of two, of its slim stature almost tower like. The bricks are not dark red but brown, as the school up the street, it lacks double or bay windows. Instead, windows are minimalistic, saving doubt as to the building’s exact size. Even the interior and house number are different in style from the neighbours’. Nevertheless, this corner house holds a certain familiarity. From the outside, the window frames have the same slim dimensions as the steel frames in the houses opposite the joining, filled flush with bricks of the same yellow colour, has been met with similar attention to detail. Behind the modern facade is a rather classic floorplan.

The motivation stands in the two between tradition and innovation. It is clearly a statement, as one’s own home is the perfect opportunity to show what you can do. A designer says, this brings about a confrontation with yourself as an architect. This design is the first of its kind in Tilburg, it’s been made in a different way. Beside the window, the balcony is fitted with boards, which look outwards to the garden. The high-storied corridor on the first floor enjoys daylight from the north. The four bedrooms and two bathrooms each have their own views.

The innovation that Bedaux aims for lies in the isolated character of the house. That effect can partly come from its location, in a courtyard and with a facade full of sheep. Besides, the garden below the garden is divided by the fence. Beside the bedaux remodels the building, creating a baroque design.

The facade of a residential building in Tilburg is designed by Bedaux. The building's two characteristic facades are redesigned as solid walls of sedimentary stone – a reference to an underground function – and play. This same strategy has been applied to the design of public spaces, archives, library and auditorium. The building's two characteristic facades are redesigned as solid walls of sedimentary stone – a reference to an underground function – and play. This same strategy has been applied to the design of public spaces, archives, library and auditorium.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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