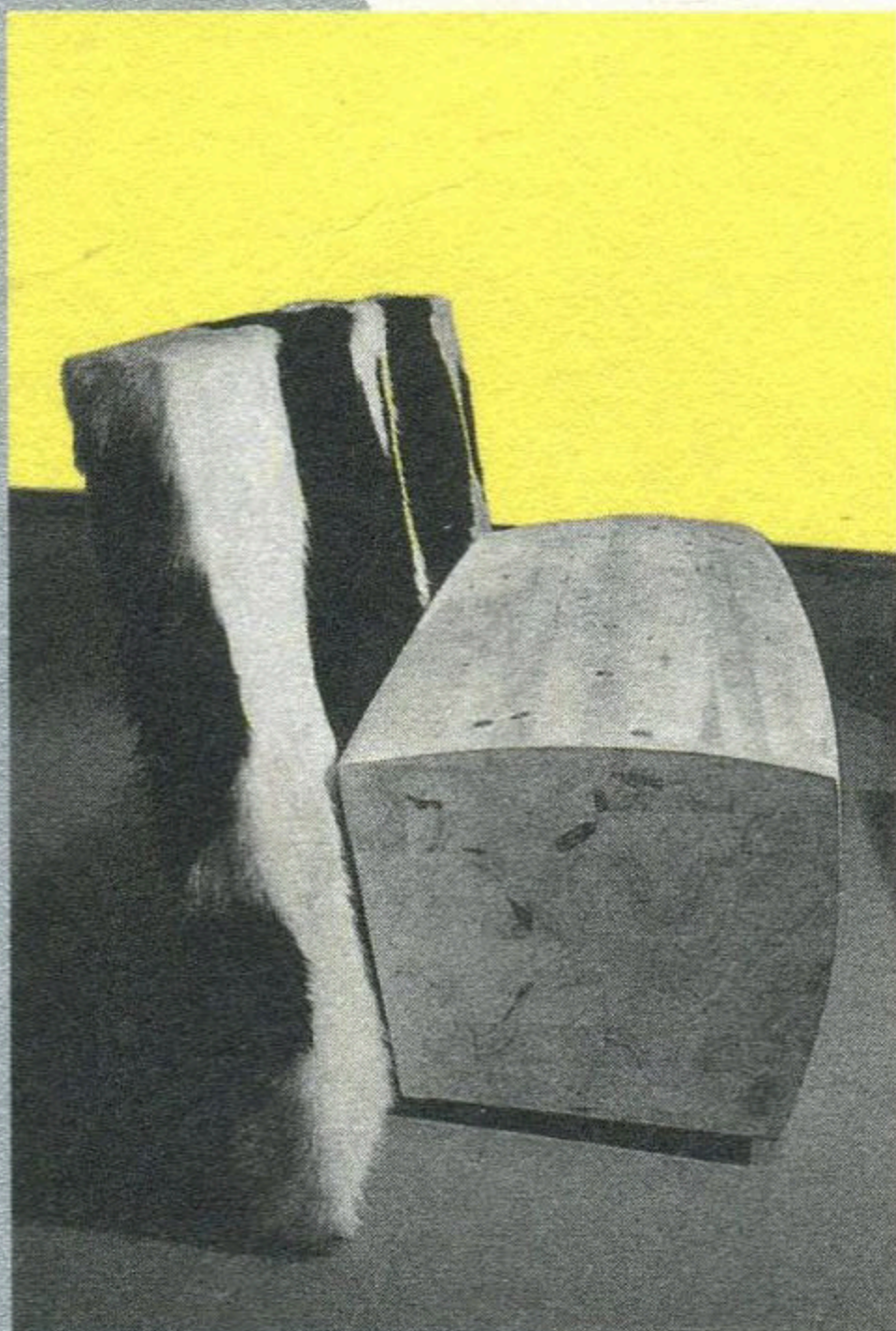


ROGER CONNAH



SA[L]VAGED MODERNISM

Rakennustieto

Play, play your tune on me, the modern tune that everyone hums in the big cafes, in the dance halls, and on the beaches, the pure tune of world youth in tennis shorts. Play on me the modernism of white tennis shorts. Won't you?

GOMBROWICZ ¹

Unceasingly I feel that I was an other,
that I felt other, that I thought other. I am a
spectator of a play produced with different scenery.

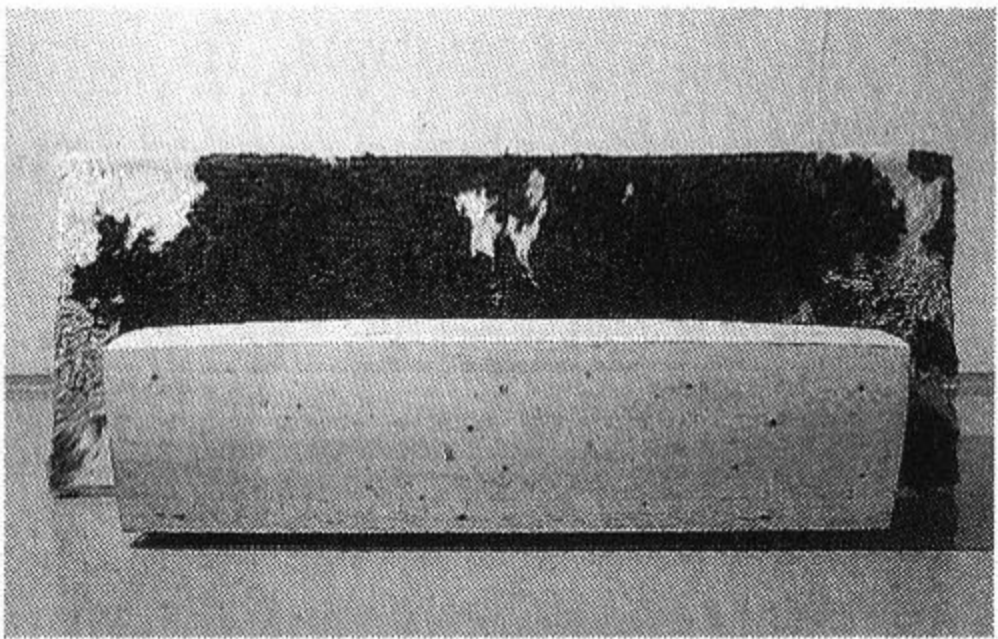
PESSOA ²

You want a fence, ask another fence.

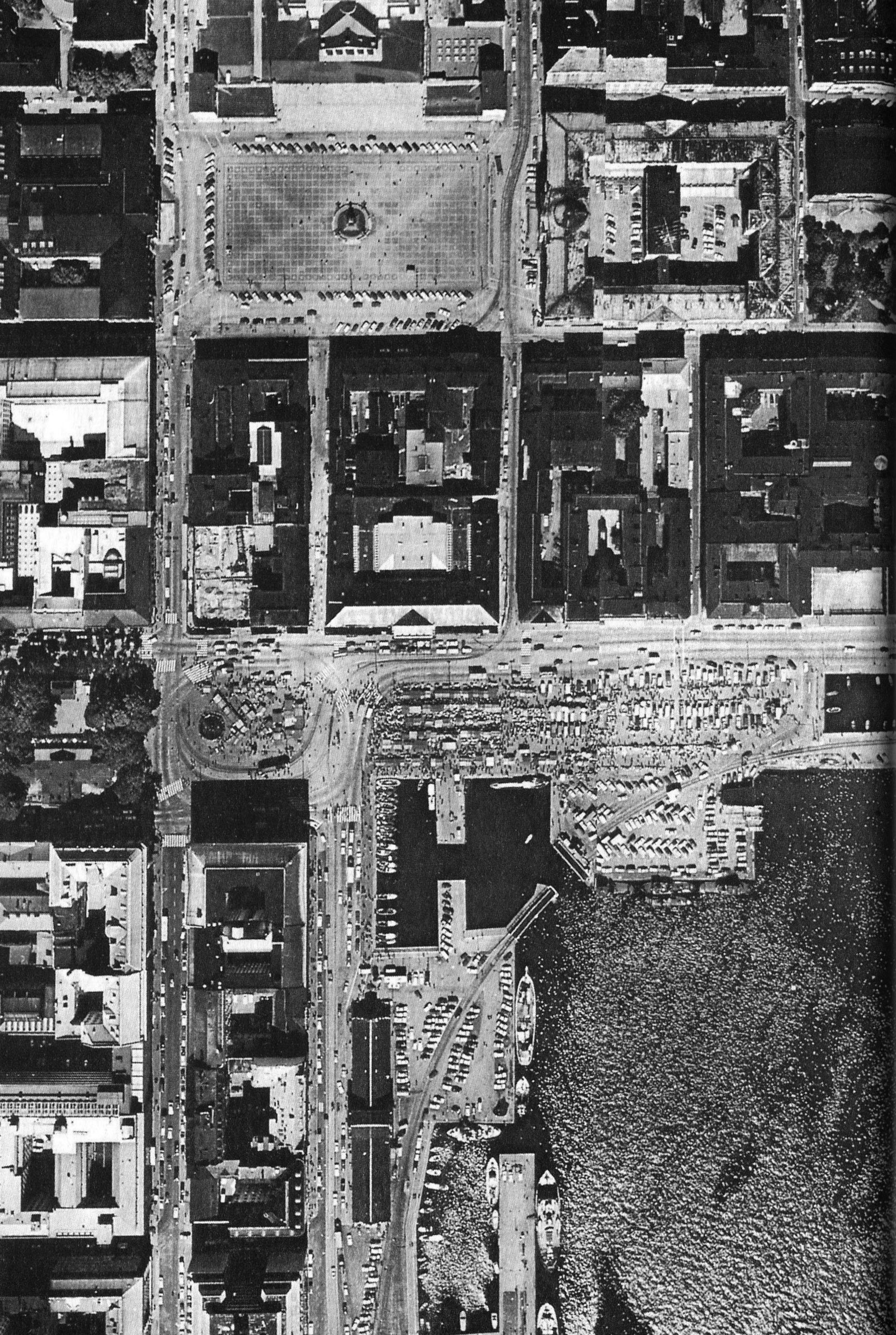
GIBSON ³

The irrationalistic lackey-language of
the twenties prattled on about
'body-soul' unity.

ADORNO ⁴



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phy conforming to the stricter code of modernism put forward by both Blomstedt and his colleague Aarno Ruusuvuori.

Here we meet the contrary architectural imaginations head on. Aalto diverged. He adapted this ability to refine ideas and line from project to project. Ruusuvuori and Blomstedt conveniently offered a convergence which eventually became an authoritative instruction. Offered towards those who favoured guidance and an accepted vision, theirs was a convincing ordering of architecture, a formalism that could remain respected and yet individual. It occupied, for many years, the higher moral ground in architecture and remains equally powerful today. The position these two occupied as teachers at Otaniemi, the important Helsinki School of Architecture and as the Director of the Finnish Museum of Architecture (Ruusuvuori), both having also been chief editor in the Finnish Architectural Review for some years, meant a centralisation and acceptance of this vision as the unwritten but 'official' Finnish architecture from that time onwards. Helped on by the promotional fever of the 1960s and 1970s, and the promotional institution that the Museum of Finnish Architecture became, we can begin to see where this narrowing down of architectural excellence and vision started.

There is a paradox worth attending to here. The Finnish architects which the world applauded and waited for in the 1950s and 1960s were the likes of Aalto, Revel, Siren and Ervi. The architecture of Viljo Revel, Timo Penttilä, Heikki Siren and Reima Pietilä when assessed outside Finland by scholars and critics became 'Finnish' first, 'International' second. Yet none of the foreign projects by these architects are really Finnish. Not *Finnish*, that is, in the way the Mairea sauna is 'Finnish'. Not *Finnish* in the way the Finnish Pavilion at the Paris Fair 1900, by Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen, was so 'transparently' Finnish. How then has such ambiguity remained and if such 'transparency' was present in 1900, how has this transparency travelled throughout the century?

Later it will be noticeable how important and confusing this inter-nationalism remains in the 1990s. At least two buildings will be awarded first prize in competitions with the juries and journalists needing to praise them for their 'international' feel, or denounce them for the same 'international' feel. The first uses the notion *international* as a comparative measure implying that the society now has buildings of an equal standard! The second uses *international* as a threat of fashion and style. That this stems from the confusion of authenticity and the fashionable within the 1990s will be all too obvious, but it is confusion that can be traced back even to the year 1900. Throughout the century *contrary architectural imaginations* have been paired and then thrust apart, some claiming more authenticity than others, only to be critically re-claimed later. We must go back to the beginning. Or one beginning!

architectures where the visual importance of forms come to the surface well in advance of architectural rigour. The creative fraudulence that ensures souvenirs of modernism become contemporary architecture and contemporary architecture become souvenirs, coincidental here with Kundera, suggests that history as we might have come to think of it has ended. Where a critical tradition also fails to archive its own past adequately, the past will indeed become part of the critical alibi of the present. A continuous stage of reversals and falsifications will then be at work but extremely difficult to unravel. It is no surprise that Reima Pietilä spoke in 1967, when defending his project Dipoli, of the Tenth Century as *acultural*. For him this was a time when history hadn't even begun. Today it is even possible, as scientists take Worm Holes and Time Travel seriously, that the Twentieth Century – to some in the next decade – might never have happened!

In 1967 the Finnish Architectural Review produced an issue on the theme *National-International*. This was in response to the steadily growing acceptance abroad of an architecture in Finland at the time that veered away from the convergent strain of 'functionalism'. The influence and effect of this work (works by Aalto, Pietilä, Suomalainen, Siren and Penttilä) needed understanding if it was to be resisted. The main culprit to the younger architects was, of course, Alvar Aalto. He was involved in what the powers that be felt were projects of a tasteless, romantic, 'national' monumentalism. Ironically, the same architects today express the unspoken feeling that Aalto would have been an even greater 'Finnish' architect had he not done the buildings he achieved in the 1960s and 1970s!

In 1967 Aalto once again put forward in non-critical terms his version of this duality between *national* and *international*. This time with an important difference. He took the oscillation between national and international for granted, preferring to see his own oscillation between local and national more significant: *Architecture, of course, is tied to its locality: it always stands on a specific site. It is not only national but local as well. Through its forms, however, it can get an international whiff of what is going on in the world.* By linking this 'internationalism' to aesthetics, to the visual force, to a signature of architecture, Aalto acknowledged once again the obvious attentiveness to 'trends' in international architecture. Architecture was, and had been, 'intertextual' long before the French thinkers coined the notion to explain how words work on words, buildings work on buildings and architecture works on other architecture. Aalto's whole output certainly can be interpreted as a slalom oeuvre of divergent - convergent tactics, an architecture of *more* and *less*. As if sensing this, Aalto continued...*whatever the starting point, or the ultimate goal, it is a combination of both qualities that produces a balanced result.*

What Aalto was saying was ambiguous and useful. It also held a subtext for the souvenirs of architecture that might follow. 'Local' and 'national' would always need this tension. And though Aalto finished with a statement that has hardly altered since 1967, it was this concentration on the local (*site*) and the national (*region*) that became the *bête noire* of the younger Constructivists in the following years. Even up to the late 1980s it was still possible to hear architects deny the 'local' or the 'national' as offering any serious premise for their architecture. Formalism denied such romantic departure, even forewarning against an implicit critical regionalism. As usual the insight Aalto offered within the iconoclasm all around was as clear then as it is today: *this (combination) is indispensable in the modern world, where the concepts of national and international can hardly be distinguished from one another any more.*³⁷

That Aalto was correct in this can be seen from one of the most successful books on Finnish architecture in the 1990s, *New Finnish Architecture* (1996)³⁸. That this is a photography collection would fit into our thesis on visual promotion at the expense of analysis. The five introductory texts, all written by architects, are examples of charming, poetic and deflective prose applied to the subject. Though nothing in the book takes a look at the serious contract between photography and architecture, the images are important for several reasons. Not only do they indicate that the concepts of 'national' and 'international' are virtually indistinguishable, they serve to keep the romance of photographic leanness alive and well in architecture. Sadly, apart from the quality of the images themselves, we learn little more than the *international whiff* these works play in and among. Without further clues to the imaginations and tensions in these buildings we are left to work out the strengths of the 'local' and the 'national'. The reason for this is clear.

These photographs are mostly all commissioned works. They belong to the promotional mechanics of each architect as they commission and pay a chosen photographer to document their works. These are the images that will appear in the magazines along with selected description by the architects themselves. They are also, traditionally in architectural photography, people-less. And though the photographer has attempted unusual angle or lighting, capturing material or aesthetic innovation, they can tell us little about architectural issue. These images can of course tell us a lot about influence, disintegration, assimilation and aesthetic gaming, which is why such a collection is so challenging to those architects who don't get published within. Seeking the visually exuberant, the images in the collection conform to a sort of rhetorical pop-deconstructivism. The architecture demonstrates the careful resistance to a wilder time whilst still keen to whiff international trends. Also, a consequence of timing and architecture, these images cannot fail to be rooted in the visual aesthetic 'brawl' of the 1980s – all tilted planes, angles and integers lifted out,

Both imaginations can seek representational authority through either the labyrinth or the mirror, the flame or the crystal. Both imaginations have also polarised Finnish architecture for a century into a marginalised architecture of *more*, and a promoted 'deep structure' architecture of *less*. *More* architecture and we are in the labyrinth, where a dualism of mystique and magic can be accompanied by an architectural spiral of play, whether language, biscuits, symbol, Heidegger or haiku are used as the architectural *parti*. Picked up by contemporary notions of interactivity, virtuality and fluidity, the poet would describe this thinking within the labyrinth as interminable. It would resemble 'locust' manoeuvres, a nervous brilliance that is always trying to avoid the arrival of the simple sunset. A *divergent* strategy, its fluidity will always enjoy more, working within the very process itself. This is similar to an architectural process that not only doesn't know where the shoulder ends and the breast begins, but sees architectural issue in that oscillation. In other words, an architecture of more and more. In contemporary terms Frank Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim Museum or Toyo Ito's shape-no shape computer-generated tubular mediateque comes closest to the spectacular version of this thinking, though in Finland Aalto and Pietilä (though very different) clearly belong to the antecedents of this community. *Less* architecture however brings us face to face with the mirror. An architecture where the simple sunset is taken for granted and no unnecessary fidgeting allowed. Any arbitrary gest is by-passed into an excellence, with a mood of technical and human fiat. This is the sort of matchless architecture Norman Foster, Richard Rogers and many others have finessed over the years. In Finnish architecture such controlled abstraction serves architecture well by a neurotic refining of the smaller and smaller edges. In other words, an architecture of less and less.

It is hard of course to tell whether the 'zeitgeist' is tempting us to sway one way or the other. The magic and mirror moods intertwine in architecture awkwardly. Throughout the twentieth century we have seen architectures of reality, architectures of silence and authenticity, architectures of place, dream and memory, all threatening to take the higher ground. Primal images coincide with a loss of silence and the art of noise. We then usually get an era of carnival architectures untidying the history so far imagined. When history and culture destabilise, magic, alternative realities and spiritualities offer themselves. New forms, even animalistic forms of a deeper psyche, inevitably come to supply the demand.

We should keep to our word and now attempt to unify the evidence about convergers and divergers, as Hudson contends, *by considering each as the embodiment of a different defensive system*.⁵⁷ The solid orthodoxy in Finland is one of simple, expressive line. A tempered elegance, this is the line and calcu-

lated excellence of Finnish architecture that can astonish. It rarely needs any essence-mythology to breathe life into it. Its evidence can be found in a vast number of different buildings and architecture. But such an orthodoxy, when done in an architecture a little off the mark, as anywhere in the world, naturally becomes dull and repetitive. This type of enthusiastic mediocrity spawns a host of orphan aesthetics of grid, line and dislocation. An unimagination in architecture then seeks a privileged relationship to emotional and sensuous man. The result is often an empty plea to an architecture that should 'mean' but doesn't. It asks from the ideal an integrated normative and a way of pulling back from the self-destruction of industrial man; often inevitably claiming more for the calm than it can handle or offer as architecture.

If we are to believe current theory and therapy on the Finnish psyche, this view demonstrates a continuing ambiguous relationship between innocence and naivety, between history and novelty. For some reason, perhaps fear, symbolic significance needs arresting. The guidance offered by convergence appears comforting especially when architectural symbol and intention need steadying. But the shock comes when other traces muddy the picture. When architecture asks to be linked up with the 'merciful equality of art' we are presented with difficulties. Create silence by all means, if we are to follow Kierkegaard, but to bring men to silence through architecture asks just a fraction too much phenomenological imperative from architecture and perhaps not quite enough transgression. Some consider this a travesty and strait-jacketing of the slow Finnish psyche. But such claims for a calm architecture reminds us of those people who want to replace their cutlery at the slightest loss of gleam. This often means in Finland that the cutlery, the dinner service, the raincoats and the Volvos have little chance to grow old. Perhaps patina, wear and tarnish are suspect in the same way as an uncontrollable history is. There is emotional loss in this. Symbol itself seems restless. A sign of wear might never really be modern in the semantic, gleaming 'modern' sense of the word. And accepting this impatience with wear and signs of memory, this would explain why we see, time and again, a novelty in Finnish aesthetics polished into a preference for the mirror surface. And why churches have their old floors replaced and their walls sanitised of history!

If this is accurate, it would confirm our picture so far. The *modern code* – the mission of novelty, tradition and progress – has suited Finland well. Its moral crutch probably still does. It did, after all, for some decades marry cultural emergence to national identity. But this should not hide the negative essence that has crept into the architecture. The architectural flip-side, the fraudulent creativity of all this, should not surprise us. Architects as divergent as Aalto, Saarinen, Pietilä and Penttilä become, under these architectural con-

ditions, martyrs. Condemned as they were to a loneliness, especially in Pietilä's case, they were and still are held responsible for a type of non-architecture. These architects clearly do not receive enough hospitable critical support to refine an architecture of greater risk. Working on their own, monologues became dialogues between self and country. For theirs is an architecture that needs as much, if not more, rehearsal than others.

Such architecture, as Pietilä's has done and still does to many, can appear remarkably arbitrary and crude. Or then it is just hysterical, indeterminate, eccentric and divergent. It is the aberrant vision unhappily fitted into Finnish architecture. It is an architecture that smells too much of architecture, an architecture of the "funny little path, winding here and there, dashing off in different directions, and sometimes even tying a knot in itself from sheer joy". This is the path of Moomintroll, likened to the eternal promise and sentiment of the intelligent fairy tale: *you don't get tired of a path like that, and I'm not sure that it doesn't get you home quicker in the end.*⁵⁸ The line wavers of course and some inevitably ask but where is home?

The expressive zeal for the cleaner line, the mirror option, seems to win out in Finland. It has taken on itself an immense, weighty ideological legacy. There is no doubting its solid orthodoxy, even duty. And when supported by modern art, a selected cabal of allowable colour, formal rhetoric and nuance, its thinking not only defines acceptable taste, it becomes *architecturally correct*. The grid of a Japanese screen never really looks like a pine forest any more than it gives an order to an imprisoned world. Like deaf poetry and haiku, what it quite says about man, the cosmos, about woman and cultural identity, will remain unanswered.

If we can show the necessity of propaganda within architectural achievement we would also be advised to hold back a moment. The thinking is ours to decipher. If it is dangerous to think this way, as Krishnamurti said, then perhaps our thinking should invite danger. *Though divergers*, Hudson discovers, *are likely to be more jocular, some of the sharpest wit comes, curiously enough, from the convergers.* It is (and this shapes Finnish Architectural orthodoxy too) *as if they have a narrower frame to sharpen up any potential whiplash.*

Whiplash takes many forms. There were days when both Alvar Aalto and Reima Pietilä were out on a limb in their own society. Both were non-conformists. Aalto was thought to have stolen Corbusier's cream to make his own butter. Pietilä, a decade later, was considered to have stolen from Kurt Schwitters an architecture too hysterical even for a surrealist (Dipoli, 1996). Both these are architects of rogue strategies, their similarities outweigh their differences, though Pietilä's more radical project for an undecodable, unsettling cultural architecture might be seen to have remained underchieved.

There was a civil courage in Pietilä's struggle which does not sit well with

the way the society felt forced to promote what often seemed an unpromotable architecture. Pietilä can be seen now to have assumed the incongruity of his own demonstrations with a certain martyred air. Roland Barthes configures this as the martyrdom of the inventor.⁵⁹ Pietilä, after all, never really took, or was encouraged by the culture to take, his most radical theory – that an architecture can be made or possessed from any point of departure, any source, even nothingness – to its logical satanic end. A more astonishing architecture has probably been lost.

Aalto was altogether more bullish, even surprisingly uncultured. Kuhn's revolutionary opportunist, Aalto conformed to the discreet internationalist abroad, whilst assuming the general 'top man' underpinning at home. Talk of the internationalist and localist in Aalto is irrelevant. An expressive architectural alchemy comes closer. Ancient forms, sacred influence, modern code excellence. Aalto didn't invent closeness to nature. Nor did he invent an architectural treatment of natural genius, folkiness and classical preoccupation. Aalto just happened to get closest to any real presence nature has in architecture. And time's arrow was fortunate. He could choreograph nature when not only Finland but the rest of world architecture needed it.

Though both Aalto and Pietilä could offer insights into creating a powerful architecture of space and place from a wide variety of sources, Aalto always had that knack of hinting at a project's closure. There is an agreed, inventive finality and 'modern mastery' about Aalto's buildings. Mostly they seem right. What is more, their preoccupations remain identifiable. In world architecture, subject more and more to the semiotics and media project, the importance of identification and signature should not be underestimated. The discipline of bluff and confidence served Aalto admirably. Pietilä never quite operated in the same way. Without an agreed interpretative finality, architecturally Pietilä's thinking is a more difficult contract. In overdrive, its indeterminability often invites us, as Pietilä did himself, to be passengers into a dizziness. His is a schematic rather than satanic chaos. Importantly for a significant artist, condemned by the idealists, such chaos and indeterminacy is – will remain – disputed.

eight **ARCHITECTURE OF THE LABYRINTH**

Though there are many projects, built and unbuilt, that will offer us clues to the magic, labyrinthine option in Finnish architecture, we will find none better for this 'overdrive' and divergence than Reima Pietilä's main library in Tampere. For analytic purposes, we are taking the most hysteric-heretic project the Finnish culture has offered in the last 20 years. There are, and will be, looser, even lesser, versions of this hysteria but divergence and transgression

Sa(l)vaged Modernism is a bracketing of the twentieth century. It is an option of consciousness as it attempts to signify, judge and speak Modernism's own re-enchantment. Its romanticism might no longer involve a frenetic search for the first truth, but by interrogating itself it interrogates the very rationalism it purports to be grounded in. *Sa(l)vaged Modernism* might also be a bracketing that is taken well into the next century if we cannot uncover, amidst its essentialism, its fallibility.

Relying on a symbolics within architecture, the main enigma of this rhetorical formalism is embedded in the fact that the world of Modernism and its myths is already a broken world. Just as Paul Ricoeur uncovers in the 'symbolics of evil' where he claims man appears no less a victim than guilty, such might be architecture's fate.¹¹⁷ As contrary architectural imaginations, the tension within might ultimately collapse architectural visions into a romantic discipline redundant to society?

What are the ruling critical passions then that rule themselves? *If pointed architecture is perfect truth*, David Watkin puts it, *then it must not tell a lie; it must not seem to be what it is not*. Morality has clearly put architecture into its own spin recently. In Finland, once-leading figures in a policed-modernism, never telling a lie, have consolidated a protectionism. Dogma and essence have been re-sited by creatively misreading architectural movements from elsewhere. Yet this does not invalidate the desire to award architecture so much promise. Nor is it wise to damn correctitude for its passion, a mirror passion that attempts to demonstrate to others as they feel it to exist to themselves. We have already indicated why, from our observations, the monitoring of Modernism's hope and claims has led to little serious re-assessment. By resorting to a new vocabulary, a revision of existential and phenomenological thinking from the 1950s, we must consider how this allows the *modern tune* to locate newer authority. This is not to be confused with that part of a critical self operation whereby architects provisionally contest the very production, the political and social issues within architectural production. For convergers, a newer critical scaffolding may be no new set of beliefs. It is more likely a new jargon which can go on ensuring the necessary critical and professional protection for selected architectural mission. Perhaps Finnish architecture is hardly alone in seeking the clichés it so likes to hear uttered of its work. A complicated generalising process, this is buttressed by Institution, Professor, Museum and Research. In its critical disguise, this serves to disguise the validity of much unpromoted architecture in favour of schemes that suit the contemporary (and current) archive.

In *The Western Canon*, Harold Bloom writes of the 'negative exuberance'

of *The Pardoner*, Iago and Edmund. This negative exuberance is as engaging as the positive exuberance of *The Wife of Bath*, Panurge and Falstaff. Responding generously and positively to energy has never been as acceptable as it seemed in earlier times. Indeed it is possible that, after a century of 'incredulity', after a century of advances in communication theory and access (if not advances in communication itself), the response to energy meets more resentment than ever. "We see the things ourselves and show it to others as we feel it to exist and as, in spite of ourselves, we are compelled to think of it." Hazlitt is right: "we do not wish the thing to be so; but we wish it to appear such as it is."¹¹⁸

In 1972, at the height of Alvar Aalto's ostracism within his own country, at the height of the militancy that was ensuring a collective consensus of some tyranny, he made a prophetic statement. As was usual for Aalto then, the weight of the persona meant that the content was relatively ignored in favour of a resistance to his outsized authority. The warning of a formulaic, rationalising tendency in architecture delivered by Alvar Aalto was secondary to the words of an old lion. Today it is a haunting piece: *We see this tendency to reduce everything to a formula everywhere, from regional plans to extreme architectural details. It brings together a specified number of people and a specified planning method such that $x+z+11+180$ will automatically lead to the right result. I have seen it in Helsinki, in Riga, in Vilnius. I have seen it in every town in Scandinavia... they are all infected. There's no need to go to Berkeley or Vienna or indeed anywhere else to see it begin with students and see how the professors resist it. It has the danger of transforming pedagogics, of altering the atmosphere in our towns and countryside. Indeed, town and country are almost one already.*¹¹⁹

In the 1960s, 1970s (and even the 1980s) investment and partisan manoeuvres insisted on taking over the architectural agenda, whilst the profession itself announced their ruling passion for a modern revivalism was misunderstood. This ruling passion for a modern revival is probably best characterised by the year 1998, The Centenary of Alvar Aalto's birth. Writing in the *New York Times*, Herbert Muschamp assessed the 1998 Alvar Aalto Retrospective at the New York MoMA as having, quite simply, missed the point of Aalto's significance today. Mired in historical schemata, Aalto was represented amongst other things as a *synthetic functionalist*. This and other critical re-appropriation does little for Aalto's talent. It does even less to acknowledge Aalto's participation amongst many in the wider, collective vision of Humanism and Organicism that emerged in the work and writings of many 'revisionist' architects in the 1950s.

Once again singularising Aalto critically ostracises him, reminding us just how much this small society needs the blessing of the foreign critic. We get a sense of the importance of this if we attend to V.S. Naipaul's comment on the

out as misfits. This, as we have come to recognise, is only a partial explanation. Given the fair amount of oblique angling, displayed off-centre plans and flying planes, tilted integers and the strong visibility of skewed volumes found throughout the catalogue, it is hard to imagine just what the jurors agreed to be *fashion* and what not. Clearly the buildings conformed to some sort of quality and excellence first, and a freedom from theory later. There is, too, an absence of intellectual posturing within Finnish projects for reasons we have clearly outlined. Yet the posturing of visibility, the grand repertoire of forms identified as belonging to the wear and tear of the decade are all plain to see. In fact flicking through project after project, it was virtually impossible not to pick up a repertoire of scanned form, assimilated strategies and planning devices noted in just about any international journal over the last five years, if not longer.

So what critical deceit is in operation here? The significance of this is not that the foreign juror actually ends up writing a critical script that appears to have been scripted for him by those who would wish him to say the obvious: *one felt one was looking at a clear picture of Architecture at the end of the 20th century; as a holding pattern of good performance feeling its way forward to where the next 'push' of discovery and invention will be.* More remarkable though than this loose scripting of promise was the lack of further detailed critique, the lack of architectural innovation and insight, the lack of a 'history' to the ideas currently around in Finnish architecture. No real mention was made of serious issues like ecology, sustainability and renovation. No architectural strategies like uninflexion, invisibility, or 'trollishness' were identified that could help demonstrate and analyse the divergent repertoire within Finnish architecture at the end of the century. The exhibition and catalogue, subdivided into Urban Design, Culture, Administration, Transportation, City, Heritage, Housing and Recreation, were presented with no supporting essays or debate, no analysis or information pertaining to these issues. The subdivisions became merely an alibi for a visual display, whereby each project is assembled with the usual minimal text submitted by the architects themselves. The critical loss of such costly exercise is devastating. The building themselves are not of course as simple as the descriptive prose makes them out. Nor are they as uninviting as the dull images seem to make them or this critique might suggest. But we are involved here in a critical abdication that must be laid at the door of the profession.

To serve the cultural promotion of architecture like this is a professional tactic that will go on appearing politically useful. But it will also ensure critical issue remains muted. By all means the selected projects might indicate a clear picture of architecture at the end of the 20th century, but they do so by avoiding any serious debate, and by leaving out those that were "not so different" yet

seemed not to conform to the continuum. Where there is energy in the *continuum* script, it is useful. Where there is repression, it is damning for the society. The *continuum* scripted this way is only a reflection of the past in its nostalgic role as a holding pattern. For a holding pattern means what it says – it is generally recognised as a transition until something else (something better?) turns up. Critically, the Finland Builds 9 review was a huge disappointment and unfortunately confirms the thesis we have held to. If convergence is so often opted for, the 'continuum' itself will become the convergence as all is bent to fit the pattern. This, we should add in no uncertain terms, is not how the majority of architects would have presented the last five years, even if The Museum of Finnish Architecture and The Association of Finnish Architects in their protectional positions need to script such regressive vision.

Buildings of course not considered 'Finnish', though designed by Finnish architects, have always had difficulty in being considered for such exhibitions. We need not go too far back in the past to note that some of the architects now considered so 'Finnish' would have struggled to get their buildings within the 'continuum'. Today buildings from the hands of architects like Warttinen, Tasa, Valjakka, Öhman, Littow, Adlercreutz, Louekari, Sanaksenaho and other younger architects out to transform the very trends they note in international journals, are amongst others who struggle to be included. Is there not also something more obvious in this? Some forms, the aesthetics of some architecture are, as we noted when discussing the myth of 'clarity', considered nearer the Finnish soul than others. Anything sporting the visually identifiable international trends, though once an indication of significance, is now despised. This is disingenuous. Most significant architects in Finland have developed and extended ideas from both within and without the country. Many of them sported with international resonance whilst negotiating contrary architectural imaginations, as they have done throughout the century.

In the late 1950s the Internationalism that won competitions time and time again was considered more favourable to the then abused romanticism that Aalto proffered. Ruusuvuori, Petäjä, Blomstedt, Pietilä, Siren, Penttilä, Revel and others clearly used 'international' influence as a way to deepen their 'Finnish' works. That Leiviskä turned to transform Mies with Van Doesburg into something 'particularly Finnish' does not mean that all younger architects have to opt for the same 'transformative' process or strategy. And though architecture after the second world war took on a religious dimension, heavily influenced by the heroic status of the 'heroes', its zeal for the 'international' was undoubtedly, and innocently, messianic. Yet 40 years later, after this zeal has formed the unchanging bedrock of a Finnish Architecture, after it has formed the 'preformed mentality' of excellence and continuity, the same dynamics

nostalgia that grips us to the core. Evidently, the tangle we might still rush to identify within the culture of architecture may probably remain a tangle, for who will ever begin the unravelling?

The urgency of *convergent* thinkers for their own consistency does indeed invite a method-architecture capable of re-constructing newer structures of domination. Capable of newer relationships with tradition in Finnish architecture it becomes, to put it simply, a reconstruction, even a re-invention, not a deconstruction of the modern code. If I have paraphrased this enquiry into one of contrary architectural imaginations, we must also accept the strength the profession invests in preformed models of an expected calm, and the correctitude of *less* architecture. Critical of the romance within the 'clarity' myth of this model, some see this as a confused revisionism which leaves the modern code a restrained, 'intellectual', but unimportant minimalism, spiked by cheap outrage to *postmodernism*.

Whatever the dissent, an architecture of quiet monumentality, an 'intellectual modernism' interpreted as a modest minimalism and grounded technologism, invites us also to understand the contrary, the unsettling often unacceptable thrill of *more* architecture. Not always hysterical or fragmented, this is a hybrid architecture. It can be represented and interpreted as expressive, uninflected, invisible, organic, sculptural or spectacular architecture. The metaphorical choices for such a counter-current in architecture are as wide as they have always been, for not all architects and students see functionalism, the 'modern code' and a continuous authoritarian, romantic *modern tune* made from it, as the one and only stylistic matrix. Nor do they see it as the only 'deep structure', or authentic echo, of their own nationhood.

The intention here has not been to sketch out a socio-politics of architecture, but to explore whether the dynamics of *divergence* and *convergence* help us understand the creative 'frames of mind' that make up the Finnish psyche. This has allowed an exploration of the tensions between an architecture seeking its identity and integration through a normative procedure, and an architecture that struggles for its own identity through difference.

In Liam Hudson's test 'Semantic Differential', a questionnaire allowed individual schoolboys to rate a number of typical figures – *Novelist, Historian, Mathematician, Physicist...* – against pairs of adjectives, *warm/cold, intelligent/stupid, hard/soft, valuable/worthless...*). The myth of the poet against the engineer which opened this series of essays seems to come up with typical clusters. The mathematician, physicist and engineer resemble each other as do the poet, artist and novelist. The engineer is seen as less intelligent, cold and dull, but as manly, dependable. At the other extreme, the poet is seen as more intelligent than the artist but less warm and exciting. The novelist is seen as more imaginative and socially valuable. Ultimately *divergers* are seen as exciting but perhaps unreliable, *convergers* reliable but hardly exciting. The differences are however all relatively small, Hudson confesses, and doubtless oscillate. There was no indication how the *architect* might fare in such a study, though some indication might be gained from the following: "a man chooses to become a scientist because he finds the prospect of

science comfortable; but once a scientist, he begins to see the world from a scientist's point of view."¹³⁸ Ditto, the architect?

Of course, the conventional intelligence test is by now familiar and dated. Yet it holds relevance to our thesis of contrary architectural imaginations. We know the tests usually consisted of questions in the form of puzzles. We might add, in architecture's case, the tests so often consist of a puzzle in the form of signs: *the individual is set a problem to which he is required to find the right answer; and he is frequently invited to choose this right answer from a list of alternatives.*

Besides everything else it has done this century, modern architecture can hardly be said to be up there with some of the best communicators. For the first half of this century, hope and promise in an 'essential' modern tune were strong and stubborn, architects began to see the world from an architect's point of view. For the second half of this century, the *modern tune* (or at least one accepted version of it!) has remained formalistic and stubborn, leaving some architects naturally still convinced it is an ideological carrier of the world's salvation

It may be relatively easy for the external commentator to hallucinate a reality of increased dialogue and more critical reflection. It is even easier to imagine a corrected history. Yet this is likely to remain an hallucination. Though I may have offered a few ideas on the way Finnish architecture might also be re-thought, we have also, by implication, suggested why such a re-invention may not only be unwelcome, it might be structurally impossible. A survey of the institutions that guide, yet 'repress', the cultural and professional patterns of architecture would demonstrate that any such deeper 'critique' is unwelcome. It has become not only fashionable to deflect architectural thinking behind a non-verbal 'do it, do it', but it is as common, as it was in the 1960s, to hear of intellectual posturing and a denial of theory. But this should not defer the reality of exploring critical fraudulence. For how could the future reveal fraudulence except from a privileged position of hopelessness within the present?

One of the inevitable – structural – ways to deal with the 'negative exuberance' of these essays is to resist their openness and see them part of a personal attack. Lack of confidence and self-esteem achieves this, being part of the structural process to sideline 'difference' and debate. Feigned, but silent, outrage to such ideas continues to ensure no further critical hospitality and generosity. A condition of 'impasse', buoyed as it is by a repressive silence, forces the profession to hold to an hypnotic will, condemning even the divergence in this thinking. When Milan Kundera speaks of Casanova in terms of a 'utopia of memory', it would suit us to question whether architecture will similarly disappear for ever behind an image. Such warnings may put the external commentator in the unenviable position of Iago, as told by Hazlitt: "He is quite or nearly as indifferent to his own fate as to that of others; he runs all risks for a trifling double advantage; and is himself the dupe and victim of his ruling passion."

As a counter-current to the hysteria and misreading of all things *postmodern*, there is no doubting the seduction that exists in a strategy that ultimately resists deciphering