

Architecture Culture 1943-1968

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**A Documentary Anthology**

**Joan Ockman**

with the collaboration of Edward Eigen

Columbia University

Graduate School of Architecture Planning and Preservation

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Paul Virilio  
Konrad Wachsmann  
Frank Lloyd Wright  
Bruno Zevi and others

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## **Contents**

**List of Documents** 7

**Foreword** by Bernard Tschumi 11

**Acknowledgments** 12

**Introduction** 13

**1943–1949** 25

**1950–1959** 123

**1960–1968** 317

**Selected Bibliography** 463

**Index of Authors** 464

*As flowers turn toward the sun, by dint of a secret heliotropism the past strives toward that sun which is rising in the sky of history.*

—Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, 1940



## List of Documents

- 1943 Nine Points on Monumentality** 27  
José Luis Sert, Fernand Léger, Sigfried Giedion
- 1943 In the Nature of Materials: A Philosophy** 31  
Frank Lloyd Wright
- 1943 A Swede Looks at Sweden** 42  
Sven Backström
- 1944 Monumentality** 47  
Louis Kahn
- 1944 Mr. Moses Dissects the “Long-Haired Planners”** 55  
Robert Moses
- 1945 Ineffable Space** 64  
Le Corbusier
- 1945 Constitution of the Association for Organic Architecture in Rome** 68  
APAO
- 1945 The Post-Modern House** 70  
Joseph Hudnut
- 1946 Program: Domus, the House of Man** 77  
Ernesto Nathan Rogers
- 1946 Return from America** 80  
Marcel Lods
- 1946 Designing a New Industry** 86  
R. Buckminster Fuller
- 1946 New Education—Organic Approach** 93  
Laszlo Moholy-Nagy
- 1947 Reaffirmation of the Aims of CIAM** 100  
CIAM 6, Bridgwater
- 1947 Mr. Oud Replies** 103  
J. J. P. Oud
- 1947 The Skyline [Bay Region Style]** 107  
Lewis Mumford
- 1948 The Oneiric House** 110  
Gaston Bachelard
- 1949 Townscape: A Plea for an English Visual Philosophy** 114  
I. de Wolfe [Hugh de Cronin Hastings]
- 1949 [Art Belongs to the People]** 120  
Helena Syrkus

- 1950 Sixteen Principles for the Restructuring of Cities** 125  
German Democratic Republic
- 1951 Concerning the Building Art** 129  
Rudolf Schwarz
- 1951 Summary of Needs at the Core** 135  
CIAM 8, Hoddesdon
- 1951 The International Style Twenty Years After** 137  
Henry-Russell Hitchcock
- 1951 Origins and Trends in Modern Architecture** 149  
Matthew Nowicki
- 1952 Education and Design** 157  
Max Bill
- [1953] [With Infinite Slowness Arises the Great Form]** 163  
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
- 1953 Formulary for a New Urbanism** 167  
Gilles Ivain [Ivan Chitchevlov]
- 1954 Arguments apropos of the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus, against an Imaginary Bauhaus, and Its Purpose Today** 172  
Asger Jorn
- 1954 Eight Steps toward a Solid Architecture** 176  
Walter Gropius
- 1954 Doorn Manifesto** 181  
Jacob Bakema, Aldo van Eyck, H. P. Daniel van Ginkel, Hans Hovens-Greve, Peter Smithson, John Voelker
- 1954 Remove Shortcomings in Design, Improve Work of Architects** 184  
Nikita Khrushchev
- 1955 The Seven Crutches of Modern Architecture** 189  
Philip Johnson
- 1955 Cityscape and Landscape** 193  
Victor Gruen
- 1955 Preexisting Conditions and Issues of Contemporary Building Practice** 200  
Ernesto Nathan Rogers
- 1956 Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal (Part 2)** 205  
Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky
- 1957 The Case for a Theory of Modern Architecture** 226  
John Summerson
- 1957 Machine Made America** 237  
John McHale



- 1957 The New Brutalism** 240  
Alison and Peter Smithson
- 1957 Regionalism and Modern Architecture** 242  
James Stirling
- 1957 The Architect's Conscience** 249  
Alvar Aalto
- 1957 Architecture and Ideology** 253  
Giulio Carlo Argan
- 1957 The Architect, the Artist** 260  
Gio Ponti
- 1957 On Building in Our Time** 266  
Konrad Wachsmann
- 1957 Architecture Is the Thoughtful Making of Spaces** 270  
Louis Kahn
- 1958 Program of Mobile Urbanism** 273  
Yona Friedman
- 1958 Human Setting in an Industrial Civilization** 276  
Richard J. Neutra
- 1958 New Developments in Industry and the Training of the Designer** 288  
Tomás Maldonado
- 1959 The Evolution of Architecture: Reply to the Custodian of Frigidaires** 300  
Ernesto Nathan Rogers
- 1959 Form and Function in Architecture** 308  
Oscar Niemeyer
- 1959 The Great Game to Come** 314  
Constant
- 1960 Toward Group Form** 319  
Fumihiko Maki and Masato Ohtaka
- 1961 A Plan for Tokyo, 1960: Toward a Structural Reorganization** 325  
Kenzo Tange
- 1961 It's Not Geniuses We Need Now** 335  
J. A. Coderch de Sentmenat
- 1961 from The Death and Life of Great American Cities** 338  
Jane Jacobs
- 1962 The Modern Movement in Architecture** 341  
Alan Colquhoun
- 1962 Steps toward a Configurative Discipline** 347  
Aldo van Eyck

- 1963 The City as a Work of Art** 361  
O. M. Ungers
- 1964 Zoom and “Real” Architecture** 365  
Peter Cook
- 1965 A Home Is Not a House** 370  
Reyner Banham
- 1965 A City Is Not a Tree (Part 2)** 379  
Christopher Alexander
- 1965 Nonstraightforward Architecture: A Gentle Manifesto** 389  
Robert Venturi
- 1966 from *The Architecture of the City*** 392  
Aldo Rossi
- 1966 Architecture, Environment, Nature** 399  
Vittorio Gregotti
- 1966 Invisible City** 402  
Arata Isozaki
- 1966 The Oblique Function** 408  
Paul Virilio
- 1967 Semiology and Urbanism** 412  
Roland Barthes
- 1967 Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias** 419  
Michel Foucault
- 1967 The Right to the City** 427  
Henri Lefebvre
- 1967 Invention Design and Evasion Design** 437  
Superstudio
- 1967 Democratic Planning** 442  
Paul Davidoff
- 1968 On Ducks and Decoration** 446  
Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi
- 1968 Introduction to *Theories and History of Architecture*** 449  
Manfredo Tafuri
- 1968 Motion of May 15** 456  
Strike Committee, Ecole des Beaux-Arts
- 1968 Everything Is Architecture** 459  
Hans Hollein



## Foreword

Columbia's commitment to the documentation and reassessment of twentieth-century architecture, and especially its development over the last half century, goes well beyond being a desirable scholarly activity within the walls of a major university.

Throughout its long history, architecture has displayed an unusual fascination for the interplay between words and images, manifestos and actual buildings. From Vitruvius to Alberti to Le Corbusier to the present, the history of architecture is as much the history of its writings as of its buildings. Almost never can architecture be separated from the ideological context in which it was produced.

The following anthology aims to examine the relationship between historical documents and the culture in which they were first introduced. It also aims to relate these texts with an ongoing and very contemporary discourse that calls into question the boundaries between theory and practice. New interest in the idea of a theoretical practice for architects—that is, a practice grounded in theory—makes this book a very timely proposition, as many of the questions being raised today can be directed to the architecture of the recent past. Do architectural texts belong to the realm of objectivity, similar to scientific theorems whose validity can be demonstrated by actual buildings? Or do they on the contrary belong to the realm of poetic gestures and programmatic statements motivated by partisan interests? Are texts—and all theory—essentially descriptive or prescriptive?

Today, participating in an unprecedented exchange of ideas between disciplines—the arts, philosophy, literary criticism—current writings in architectural theory tend to differ significantly from the texts produced up to 1968. Paradoxically, the radical questioning that accompanied the *événements* of '68 made possible a concept of architecture as "theoretical project," as a critical project not so much aiming to be a model for future practice as meant to remain *theoretical*. In contrast, the underlying ideological stance of most written work produced by the generation active in the quarter century that followed the war more characteristically yearned toward responsible ways and means to correct the ills of society.

This is not the place to oppose generations. On the contrary, this anthology of documents and their careful *mise-en-contexte* by Joan Ockman should prove one point: that for the last half century, it has been impossible to be an architect without simultaneously acting as a critic, without thinking about the critical function of one's activity. The critical value of this publication within the overall pedagogical program of architecture thus cannot be underestimated. It is our hope that beyond serving as a key reader and companion for those concerned with issues of history and theory, it may ultimately suggest modes of articulating theory and criticism with reality, in order to achieve the transformation of that reality.

*Bernard Tschumi*

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To Zoë Slutzky and, finally, to Bob Slutzky, who lived through it twice—first the period, then the making of this book—the present volume is dedicated. Any thank you would be an understatement.

J.O.



## Introduction

*1943—a year with nothing special about it, situated perhaps at the point of inflection between the sum of the errors made and the dawn of a new start.<sup>1</sup>*

The years delimited by this book appear at once close and distant. Part of the lived experience of the generation currently dominating the senior ranks of the profession and schools, they span a period that has only recently come into critical focus. With the passage of the last quarter century, it is now possible to view with some clarity the developments that followed the “heroic” epoch of modern architecture. The present selection of writings aims to broaden this knowledge and to illuminate the role of ideology in architecture’s evolution since the Second World War. It has been culled from a great variety of sources, reflecting the diversity of the field and the proliferation of published material. Limited to the literary record, it must necessarily be read in context of the contemporary buildings and projects.

“Architecture culture” underwent a significant transition during these years. In retrospect, they may be said to constitute the interregnum between modernism and what is now called postmodernism. Modernist architecture became dominant while being subjected to increasingly intense questioning. The traumatic events that marked the end of the war—the revelation of genocide on a previously unfathomable scale of organization and brutality, and the advent of atomic warfare—could only engender a profound crisis in rationalist thought. An ethos of progress predicated on functional determination and technical advancement offered, as many architects realized, no guarantees as far as humane values were concerned. Even as standardized building, scientific planning, and development of new technologies accelerated after the war in the context of reconstruction and rehousing, continuing the positivist orientation, prewar doctrine began to be revised along some of the following lines:

1. a reconciliation and integration of functionalism with more humanistic concerns: symbolic representation, organicism, aesthetic expressiveness, contextual relationships, and social, anthropological, and psychological subject matter;
2. a recovery of premodernist and antimodernist themes—above all, history, and with it, monumentality, the picturesque, popular culture, regional traditions, antirationalist tendencies, decoration, etc.—within a perspective of “evolution”;
3. a replacement of functionalism by other theories like structuralism, semiology, and sociology as new bases for a “scientific” determination of form;
4. neo-avant-gardism: a reassertion of the critical or radical side of modernism, but in a more ironic and dystopian context;
5. an outright rejection of modernist ideology as fatally linked to the ills of urban development and modernization, and recourse to politics or (conversely) aestheticism and autonomy.

This cultural critique was bound up with the ongoing trajectory of modernization. The mobility afforded by mass availability of automobile and air transport, the globalization of information and communications, and demographic and territorial shifts produced major changes in contemporary life. Primary among these was the rapid growth of the residential suburb, especially in the United States. On the global scale, postwar

geopolitical reconfigurations inflected not only ideological positions but long-range planning strategies. The war also catalyzed a second industrial revolution, bringing to the construction site a new array of synthetic materials—plastics, resins, fibers—and putting in place the infrastructure for electronic and cybernetic technology.

### **Crisis or continuity?**

We begin in the middle of things, at the turning point of the Second World War. As historic capitals and cultural centers were being devastated in Europe and parts of Asia, pawns in a strategic and tactical game of aerial warfare, the first Liberty ships were being launched from the United States. Major victories in Italy, North Africa, Russia, and the Pacific and the decisive mobilization of American technical capability successively shifted the balance in favor of the Allied armies.

"Architecture" was hardly of primary consideration in 1943 amid a cataclysmic world picture. Yet many architects around the world, if not militarily engaged, were already employed in drawing up plans for the postwar rehabilitation of cities, towns, and villages. Those charged with the program of reconstruction had not only to address the urgent needs of rehousing and rebuilding, but also to project a vision of postwar society. On the one hand, the war had proven the potency of coordinated functional planning and industrialized production, confirming modernist ideology. In a pictorial essay entitled "Design for War," the editors of *Architectural Forum* wrote,

*After many decades of functionalist preaching, this century is today producing functionally designed objects for the first time on a tremendous scale. In other words, in an extreme emergency we turn unquestioning to functional design. It is important to note that these products of ingenuity, economy, and utmost exploitation of limited materials have quite unconsciously become the most satisfying designs of our machine civilization.<sup>2</sup>*

Yet the massive destruction of human life and the built fabric through this formidable instrumentality provided a more cautionary and ambivalent lesson.

The issue, as it now appeared to planners, was how to convert the vast war machine to the needs of peace. The *Athens Charter*, the official codification of functionalist urbanism, was published in German-occupied France in 1943, a decade after the fourth congress of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) drew it up. Appearing under the imprint of the French CIAM group, it had been edited by Le Corbusier anonymously in 1941—for fear of antagonizing the fascist caretakers in Vichy, who were to spurn his grand urban schemes a year later—and contained an introduction by the playwright and urbanist Jean Giraudoux. The latter heralded, with a trepidation unknown to those who drafted the charter in 1933, "the threshold of this new age."<sup>3</sup> Le Corbusier for his part reflected that the current mobilization, wresting the French economy from its previous stagnation, would be the war's major positive outcome. As he stated in *Sur les quatre routes*, also published during the war years,

*In wartime the farsighted have realized immense possibilities in an alliance between the planners and industry. The war itself has bequeathed to the country a working plant. A quantity of the elements of housing can be produced in factories: dry assembly; the prefabricated house. Provision of housing will become the largest, the most urgent, the most fruitful item of the industrial program.<sup>4</sup>*



In America the potential of transforming wartime production to meet the desperate need for housing was immediately grasped by Buckminster Fuller, among others. Before the war's end he turned his energies to persuading a Kansas aircraft manufacturer to retool its factory for the fabrication of low-cost metal houses. By 1946 his "Dymaxion" prototype was readied and exhibited to an enthusiastic public. Yet already a strong countercurrent was in motion. "Let Bucky Fuller put together the dymaxion dwellings of the people so long as we architects can design their tombs and monuments," as Philip Johnson—having in 1932 been the emissary of European modernism in America—was to put it. Johnson's remark, an ironic commentary on a statement made by Adolf Loos half a century earlier, reflected a widespread desire that emerged during the war years and became an ongoing debate of the period: for a "new monumentality."<sup>5</sup>

In 1943 Sigfried Giedion, José Luis Sert, and Fernand Léger, all taking refuge from the war in New York City, jointly wrote a paper entitled "Nine Points on Monumentality." In it they voiced the desire to invest modern architecture with new means of collective expression. Despite its traditional association with authoritarian regimes, they argued, monumentality was not incompatible with democracy. It was, instead, a "true expression" of the human spirit, capable of being conveyed in a language of modern forms and materials. Their statement translated (consciously or not) the *esperanto* of a proud and powerful nation on the eve of world triumph. Both the isolationism and the anticapitalist criticism of the late 1930s had subsided in the United States. Succeeding them was a climate of magnanimous internationalism, epitomized in Wendell Wilkie's best-selling book of 1943, *One World*, and soon to be focused on the building of the United Nations. A world rid of its recent tyrannies required, they sensed, appropriate symbolic forms.

The most potent reconciliation between an "architecture of democracy" and the modern sensibility was offered by Frank Lloyd Wright in these years. The second volume of his *Autobiography* appeared in 1943 with its credo "In the Nature of Materials." In it he continued his crusade for an "organic" architecture placing machine technology in the service of humanistic values. Also published in 1943 was Ayn Rand's novel *The Fountainhead*, in which the Wrightian protagonist was romanticized into a full-blown American symbol: the modernist genius-architect, at first thwarted by an uncomprehending society, then triumphantly vindicated for his foresight and individualism. Wright, of course, could hardly have been imagined any larger than life. The same year, he sent a petition to the United States government requesting a mandate to build his suburban dream, Broadacre City, throughout the entirety of America. He solicited signatures from John Dewey, Albert Einstein, Buckminster Fuller, Walter Gropius, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Robert Moses, and fifty others.<sup>6</sup> In this respect, Wright and Fuller (and Moses for that matter) were alike—they believed in thinking "in the biggest way that you know how."<sup>7</sup>

If bravado was possible in a country that had come through the war physically unscathed, in Europe the day of inflated conceptions had passed. Pragmatism and relief tinged with hope characterized the immediate postwar period. In the war-damaged areas of the Western countries, rebuilding proceeded quickly, providing major new jobs for architects. The work was carried out with dedication, if sometimes shoddy results. In England forced austerity inspired a disciplined and on occasion distinguished design of schools, housing, and towns. Le Corbusier's *Unité d'Habitation* rose in Marseilles, a supreme emblem of the functionalist aesthetic. Yet on its completion, the very singularity of this great urban ship—intended prototype of a convoy that never materialized in the French landscape—lent it a tragic dimension. Its

sculptural presence and surreal roofscape “spoke” with a new poetics.

CIAM, meeting in 1947 in Bridgwater, England, after a decade of inactivity, reaffirmed its earlier stance on functionalism but put new emphasis on spiritual and emotional values. Two themes were introduced: aesthetics, and how to bring modern architecture to the “man on the street.” The first, passionately advanced by the young Aldo van Eyck, was, like Le Corbusier’s credo of “ineffable space,” a call for an infusion of poetic imagination into architecture. The second, bound up with the monumentality debate, became increasingly urgent as Stalin’s social realism pervaded Eastern Europe, obliterating the culture of modernism that had thrived there prior to the war.

With heightening Western perception of Soviet repression, America appeared a beacon of freedom and opportunity. The architectural emigrés from Germany who entered this country starting in the mid-1930s—Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Marcel Breuer, Erich Mendelsohn, and others—found an environment receptive to their ideas. Bruno Zevi, who finished his education in America during the war, went home to Italy bearing Wright’s message of organicism, while the French architect Marcel Lods reported to his compatriots, after a tour in 1946, his “enthusiasm and euphoria” at witnessing the products of American civilization. Alvar Aalto, visiting the United States in 1940 at the height of Russo-Finnish hostilities, also was drawn to America during the war years. His country’s pact with the Nazis halted further contacts; in 1943 he found himself obliged to head an entourage of Finnish architects to inspect German military installations, hosted by Albert Speer, Hitler’s new armaments minister. But after the war he returned to teach and build Baker House at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His infatuation was not to last, though. At first eager to establish a base here, he soon became critical of the excessive materialism of American culture.

### **The Americanization of modernism**

With the aid sent by America under the Marshall Plan, Western Europe largely recovered from the postwar emergency by the early 1950s. It now braced for a different onslaught as the progressive modernism it had exported to the United States in the 1920s and 1930s recrossed the Atlantic in the reverse direction. Along with the material goods of the new *pax Americana* came a new set of cultural values.

*The American invasion of Italy brought not only peace and national liberation, the end of destroyed cities and prostitutes, but also chewing gum, powdered milk, and Coca-Cola, and first and foremost the idea of “comfort” and the mechanization of the home. The myth of the refrigerator was born . . .*<sup>8</sup>

If the great symbolic client of modern architecture had been the proletariat, heroic protagonist of an idealistic socialism, that of the period after was the middle class. For geared-up capitalist economies now facing the threat of overproduction, the American slogan of “better living through technology” was a manifest destiny. Focus shifted from production to consumption, marketing, and “planned obsolescence”; from “revolutionary producers” to a new class of consumers happy to leave behind the asperities of *Existenzminimum*, desirous of an ever higher standard of living and the leisure to enjoy it. The emphasis on the domestic environment gave women a central role in the marketplace even as they were denied one in the workplace (a contradiction that would have political consequences by the 1960s). From *Germany Year Zero* to *Miracle in Milan* to *La Dolce Vita*: the route led from the rigors of scarcity to an “aesthetics of



plenty."<sup>9</sup> By the end of the decade the "economic miracles" created by the reorganization of West European production to serve technocratic and acquisitive ends had made the world ripe for full-blown consumerism. Whether the culture purveyors would play an affirmative or a critical role in this formation was not yet, however, clearly discerned.

For some, the transformation of functionalism from socialist to capitalist utopia occurred seamlessly. To Gropius there was ostensibly little disjunction in adapting the program of the Bauhaus, where he had first aspired to a partnership between art and industry, to American managerial democracy. Only a shift in rhetoric signaled the change: from "totality," an all-encompassing synthesis of art and handicraft or industrial production, to "team," a well-coordinated group of specialists. Ironically, the new corporate professionalism of the 1950s—soon decried by sociologists as engendering a society of "organization men"—was the antithesis of the cultural and social nonconformism embodied in the diverse group of personalities at the Bauhaus.

At the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, West Germany, which opened in 1955 on the Bauhaus model, the contradictions were only gradually elucidated in successive restructurings of the curriculum. An initial conception of the designer as creator of *gute Form* (Max Bill's position) gave way to that of the designer as captain—"coordinator"—of industry (Tomás Maldonado's), retreating by the mid-1960s into a critical theory of design largely confirming the Frankfurt School's critique of culture. Abraham Moles, a lecturer on information theory at Ulm, would write,

*functionalist doctrine . . . is essentially an ascetic doctrine and manifestation of a certain philosophy of life: that of scarcity, of rational application of existing means for clearly defined purposes. Within certain sectors of culture functionalism will retain its validity. But recently functionalism has entered a critical period due to the growth of affluent society. . . . Functionalism necessarily contradicts the doctrine of affluent society which is forced to produce and to sell relentlessly. . . . [The latter] creates a system of neokitsch by accumulating objects in the human environment. At this point the crisis of functionalism becomes manifest.*<sup>10</sup>

Symptomatic was the fact that functionalism was now increasingly perceived as a stylistic manifestation linked to an earlier historical period. As such, it was doubly condemned: too abstract and elitist for the symbolic populism promulgated in the communist countries under Stalinism, it was too abstract and antiindividualistic for those in the Western countries paranoiacally professing "freedom." While the consolidation of state power in Eastern Europe left architects little leeway for opinion, in the United States for several years McCarthyism created a xenophobic climate for many of the same emigrés the country had welcomed earlier. A public housing project in Los Angeles by Richard Neutra was quashed in 1951 as "creeping socialism."<sup>11</sup>

Yet this was simply demagoguery on both sides, a battle of ideology fired by the intensifying Cold War. Khrushchev, seizing power shortly after Stalin's death in 1953 and more pragmatic in economic matters, reinstated functionalist building and outlawed decorative excesses. Meanwhile the cost-effectiveness implicit in a stripped aesthetic was hardly lost on capitalist builders and speculators. Big business became the second major client for postwar architecture. The new multinational corporations, surrogates for governments struggling to preserve their spheres of influence around the world, offered lucrative commissions. The leading architects were soon more preoccupied with corporate or government headquarters and single-family houses

than with solutions to factories and social housing. Modernism, as now reinterpreted, largely meant a frame with repetitive components. Flexibility became interchangeability as the “modular plan” replaced the free plan and “form follow[ed] form.”<sup>12</sup>

The ubiquitous glass curtain wall turned out to be, paradoxically, a plane as absolute as the Iron Curtain. As with the new American painting of these years, successfully proselytized by the ex-Marxist art critic Clement Greenberg, an abstract aesthetic sublimated disturbing subsurface contents.<sup>13</sup> In architecture, Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson’s selective and formalistic adaptation of the modern movement, propounded two decades earlier, had a similar effect. As the received version of modernism by the 1950s, the authors’ denatured concept (more nuanced in its original formulation) enabled architecture to be abstracted from specificities, making possible a truly “international style.” It now penetrated all corners of the world, including the newly decolonized “Third World” countries aspiring to Western living standards, at times hybridizing local vernaculars. An exception to the mostly superficial efforts at contextualism was Le Corbusier’s work in Chandigarh, a brilliant, if flawed, effort to wed Indian tradition to modernism. Closer to home, Lewis Mumford touted the “native and humane” regionalism of the San Francisco Bay area. The language of corporate hegemony was also inflected with personal inputs. Yet the subjective design approaches that now proliferated, from the eclecticism of Johnson himself or Edward Durrell Stone to the sculptural expressionism of Eero Saarinen in America, or the virtuosity of Oscar Niemeyer in Brazil and Kenzo Tange in Japan, were the other side of the glazed grids perfected by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. “Form was king.”<sup>14</sup>

In American design education as well, the postwar reevaluation of modernism tended along formalist lines. Starting in the late 1930s, the presence of Gropius at Harvard, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy at the Institute of Design, and Mies van der Rohe at Illinois Institute of Technology grounded American pedagogy in traditions established at the Bauhaus. The didactic exposition of modernist form and materials led in many instances to refined and sophisticated results. In others, overemphasis on functional expression produced the clichés of the “decorated diagram.”<sup>15</sup> Possibly the old Beaux-Arts orientation had been exorcised only superficially. Louis Kahn, a charismatic presence at Yale and the University of Pennsylvania during the 1950s and 1960s, arrived at his own synthesis. Meanwhile, at an educational outpost like the University of Texas at Austin, an innovative curriculum was predicated on rigorous analysis of form. The English architect-historian Colin Rowe, who was to influence two generations of American students (the later one postmodernist), linked modernism to academic tradition in his rereadings of modern architecture, calling into question the sociotechnical *Zeitgeist* that had been an article of faith for preceding historians.

A similar argument was made, though with opposite consequences, by Reyner Banham in his seminal *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (1961) and in Italy by Giulio Carlo Argan. For the latter writers, and for other inheritors of the “functionalist tradition,” the relation between “ethics” and “aesthetics” remained a vexed one. Peter and Alison Smithson in England, initially affected by the neo-Palladianism of the Wittkowerian school, soon began challenging the modernist establishment in less academic ways, seeking a “socioplastic” basis for design. Under the banners of Team 10 and the New Brutalism they promoted an architecture of “growth and change,” seeking inspiration in the spontaneity of popular culture and anthropological sources, and rejecting CIAM’s mechanistic model of urbanism for more empirical “patterns of association.” John Voelker, a cofounder of Team 10, articulated the new concerns:



*Images:*

1930. *The frame building and the multilevel high-rise city, images which contained a complete urban system.*

1950. *Random images drawn from many sources containing single ideas which, one by one, contribute to, change, and extend the experience of space.*

*Program:*

1930. *To popularize the already established style of the modern movement—didactic.*

1950. *To search for a plastic system which reciprocates and intends in architectural form existing ecological patterns.*

*Method:*

1930. *To categorize the general situation and to develop it through the dialectical manipulation of the categories made.*

1950. *The empirical observation of particular situations and development through the architectural expression of those unique patterns observed within them.*

*Technique:*

1930. *To replace existing buildings and cities with new categorically formulated elements.*

1950. *The time-conscious techniques of renewal and extension derived from the recognition of the positive ecological trends to be found in every particular situation.*

*Results:*

1930. *Prototype buildings and master plans, each charged with the full “international” urban program. Irrespective of location—didactic.*

1950. *Building in unique situations. The elements articulate and resolve the ecological patterns, and provide instruments of research into possible development of each location.<sup>16</sup>*

Spearheaded by Team 10's critique, the breakup of CIAM at the end of the decade was a major symbolic event. The organization had greatly broadened its base during the postwar period, drawing participants from all over the world to its ninth congress in Aix-en-Provence in 1953, and fêting the completion of Le Corbusier's *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseilles on this occasion. But the nocturnal celebration on the building's roof augured the end of the dream of rationalism. The “youngers,” as the incipient Team 10 thought of themselves, were in an oedipal relationship with the generation of the masters, reverent but restive. Le Corbusier himself was now building Ronchamp. Three years later, absenting himself from CIAM's last official congress, held at Dubrovnik, he acknowledged the incurable rift:

*It is those who are now forty years old, born around 1916 during wars and revolutions, and those then unborn, now twenty-five years old, born around 1930 during the preparation of a new war and amidst a profound economic, social, and political crisis—who thus find themselves in the heart of the present period the only ones capable of feeling actual problems, personally, profoundly, the goals to follow, the means to reach them, the pathetic urgency of the present situation. They are in the know. Their predecessors no longer are, they are out, they are no longer subject to the direct impact of the situation.<sup>17</sup>*

By 1959 CIAM was gone. Its “museum meeting” at Henry van de Velde's Kröller-Müller in Otterlo succeeded in consigning modernism—now the “great tradition”—to history.

## From metropolis to global village

If the manifesto was the generic expression of the emergent aspirations of the early-twentieth-century avant-gardes, indeed of the period of high modernism itself,<sup>18</sup> its moment was over by the midcentury. An architecture culture largely in retrenchment after the war, engaged in reconstructing its interrupted development or else institutionalizing itself in the professional and academic mainstream, was not disposed to such a positive form of enunciation. The missionary spirit that had once animated it deflated in a widening breach between theory and practice.

The dissolution of the unitary formation previously coalesced under the banner of CIAM further tended to produce a fragmented succession. In England, historian John Summerson wrote of British architecture in the 1950s:

*... the old notion of a party line, a "cause" to be argued and supported by any amount of didactic talk, no longer has the slightest relevance, any more than the notion of "the international style" of the thirties has the slightest relevance. ... We are no longer in the period of "towards an architecture." It is architecture or nothing. And if it is architecture, it is architecture continually redefined—not in words but in forms.*<sup>19</sup>

Across the continent, in Italy, revisionism was the order of the day. The bourgeois tradition that modernism had repressed was now recuperated by means of a new emphasis on historical continuity and contextualism, lent credence by the editorial activity of Ernesto Rogers at *Casabella-Continuità*. So eclectic was the architecture emerging out of the rationalist legacy that Rogers was led to remark that the only new orthodoxy in Italian architecture was that of heterodoxy itself.<sup>20</sup>

Yet despite—or because of—this apparent vacuum, a "culture of criticism" began to reemerge. Indeed in Italy, where fascism and modernism had had a particularly involved relationship, an exceptionally high level of intellectual debate persisted from the earlier period. During the 1930s, *Casabella* had functioned as a rallying point for Italian rationalism under the legendary figures Edoardo Persico and Giuseppe Pagano. After the war, this tradition continued in critical battles of position, if not polemic, waged in the architectural press. Within a few years after the war, despite economic scarcity, at least a dozen significant journals concentrating on architectural subjects were publishing. In the 1950s, when Rogers renovated *Casabella* adding the suffix *Continuità*, it was the most dedicated journal "of tendency" in the world.<sup>21</sup>

Elsewhere the major journals were more typically geared to boosting the profession. Yet in England, notwithstanding the general lack of position-taking noted by Summerson, critical discourse was forwarded in the *Architectural Review*, where the postwar editors, once staunch modernists, now championed Swedish informality and townscape picturesque with nearly equal fervor. By 1953 the *Review* had a less sentimental interlocutor in *Architectural Design*, redesigned by the young Theo Crosby with an eye to the increasingly important student readership.

The theory-practice split was likewise ingrained in the American professional journals, which now publicized a mainstream modernism. Yet in Los Angeles *Arts and Architecture* under John Entenza positioned itself more critically relative to new work. Inaugurating its "Case Study Houses" program in 1945, it sponsored innovative designs by Californians like Charles Eames and Richard Neutra. "Little magazines," often of academic provenance, also cropped up as forums for debate, like Yale School of Architecture's *Perspecta*, founded in 1952 by George Howe, responsible for early



expositions of Kahn's work and ideas.

Later in the decade, more tendentious publications appeared, aligned with specific movements. In 1958 *Le Carré bleu* was launched in Helsinki, to function largely as a vehicle for Team 10 ideas, and *Ulm* was published by the Hochschule für Gestaltung. The first number of the avant-garde *International Situationist* also appeared, advancing a "unitary urbanism." In 1959 Van Eyck became principal editor of Dutch *Forum*, making it another arena for the post-CIAM critique. The first (and only) issue of *Metabolism* came out in Japan in 1960. During the 1960s the postwar media reached a new threshold with the transformation of the architectural journal into a radical project in itself. In the paper polemics of the British Archigram, its first broadsheet published in 1961, and other groups, the "antiarchitecture" position vividly unfolded.

This diverse activity worked to break down national parochialisms and to penetrate countries isolated by geography, technological backwardness, and repressive political regimes. It preceded and followed the shifting cultural axis: from Europe to America, as well as to places outside the usual centers of ferment, where crucial architectural developments were occurring—Scandinavia, Japan, South America, Eastern Europe, India. Nor was the expanded journalistic network solely responsible for the circulation of ideas. The internationalization of firms, prestige associated with the commissioning of foreign architects, the cosmopolitanism of the schools, wider travel, and other mechanisms of dissemination contributed to the universalizing of architecture culture. At the same time, decolonization allowed voices to be heard (or images seen) from regions that a Eurocentric architecture had long ignored or relegated to exotica. The great metropolises virtually synonymous with modernism earlier in the century found themselves reduced to the scale of historical nodes in what would be described by Marshall McLuhan in 1964 as a global village.<sup>22</sup>

That same year the success of Bernard Rudofsky's "Architecture without Architects" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York underscored the desire of architects to look outside their discipline for new meaning and less egotistic models. The economic boom of the 1950s had slowed by the beginning of the 1960s, while the Cold War warmed into the tense confrontation of the Cuban missile crisis and an (outer) space race. The resurgence of a leftist critique of culture and steady American escalation of its misguided adventure in Vietnam now elicited a wave of anti-Americanism. Some architects attempted to regain control over a troubling reality through a return to technological solutions and scientific methodologies, while others translated their criticism into sociopolitical protest and utopian prophecy. Still others embraced popular culture or its countercultural spin-offs, learning to like Levittown or building domes in the desert.

The first tendency constituted a belated success for rationalism, now as a metalanguage. Structuralism, having originated earlier in the century, replaced the existentialist *Angst* of the 1950s as privileged intellectual current. Linguistic, semiotic, and typological approaches to design flourished on the border between science and culture, affording methods and models to the technically minded wing of the profession—architect-planners like Kevin Lynch, Christopher Alexander, Yona Friedman—as well as to new theoreticians of architectural history and form like those in Venice or at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York City, the latter founded in 1967.

On the critical-activist side, the range of responses ran the gamut from the social reformism spurred by Jane Jacobs in America to Archigram's futurism. While Jacobs preached an urbanism continuous with the fabric of the city, Archigram projected a

house for the year 1990 with adjustable walls and floors, inflatable furniture, a hovercraft bed-capsule, and robotized servicing. Despite their different visions, though, the two were linked by the vehemence of their attack on modernism and the breadth of their impact. Cultural connections bridged international boundaries in unprecedented ways. The radical school had protagonists in Japan, Italy, France, Austria. As Hans Hollein was to put it, "Anybody who wants to be on good standing has to have a plug-in city project in his pocket or an inflatable text-pavilion."<sup>23</sup>

The student protests of 1968 would seem to represent a culmination in the course of late modernism, at least within a broader cultural perspective, and were proclaimed to be such by intellectuals. Herbert Marcuse wrote in *The End of Utopia* (1967), "Historical possibilities must be thought according to forms that put the accent on rupture rather than continuity with past history, on negation rather than on the positive, on difference rather than progress."<sup>24</sup> Inevitably, though, the regressions that followed the revolts in the universities counter such a periodization. With regard to architecture, the strikes that closed the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in France after 250 years largely failed to bring about the sweeping professional and social reforms to which radical architects aspired. Instead, the first wave of postmodernism in the 1970s vindicated many values epitomized by the old academy. In 1975 the Museum of Modern Art in New York, bastion of modernism, would mark the return of historicism with a major exhibition on Beaux-Arts architecture.<sup>25</sup> The publication in 1966 of Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* and Aldo Rossi's *Architecture of the City* proved a truer portent of the two decades to come than the short-lived "events of May."

### **History is not a tree**

The preceding sketch barely evokes the rich dynamics of a period as complex and disparate as that represented in this anthology. Indeed, the heterogeneity of the subject matter poses special problems for the volume as a whole. Within the purview of contemporary "architecture culture" falls the widest possible range of formal, technical, and institutional considerations, all variously intersecting with intellectual models, modes of production, and modes of consumption.

It is with the realization of the diversity of the field rather than out of eclectic criteria of selection that visions as different as an early meditation by Gaston Bachelard on the spatial poetics of the house and Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion proposal of nearly the same date both find a place here. Urbanism is the subject of this volume as much as architecture, especially as the relationship between the two disciplines remained a critical issue after the war. Also deemed "architectural" are documents like Nikita Khrushchev's dictum on functionalism and Robert Moses's assault on utopian planning—two ideologically opposite statements, but both revealing in terms of the way different levels of spatial production (what used to be called the base and superstructure) act upon each other. The decision to organize the presentation chronologically rather than thematically stemmed from the desire not to suppress such interrelationships. At the same time, in order to give the reader an indication of some threads interwoven in the book, cross-references—on occasion suggestive rather than direct—have been provided in the margins of the introductory articles.

One of the immediate problems of defining the criteria for the selections was to reconsider the meaning of the "document" during the period at hand. As Michel Foucault has pointed out, the primary task of historical work in our time is the "questioning of the document." In particular, what is an *architectural document*? In the



case of architecture, the relationship between written, graphic, and built record—reductively seen as a relationship of theory or criticism, representation, and practice—is particularly intricate. Material of the type that follows intervenes in both the production and reproduction of the built world; it is part of the construction of historical space. This reflection gives rise to a rather broad definition of document here. Rather than requiring that a text have had a specific reception or novelty when it appeared, we found it more useful to consider the document as *a manifestation implicated in a significant way with a major constellation of discursive thought or practice*. Thus along with many “classics,” a certain amount of material has been included whose importance could only become apparent in retrospect.

In some cases, an obvious choice has been omitted for reasons of length—to avoid having to make meddlesome cuts—but also on occasion in the interests of drawing the reader’s attention to a lesser known writing. We have also sought, when appropriate, to make available previously untranslated material rather than reissue that which already exists; thus a number of writings appear in English for the first time. In other instances, a text was chosen more for “internal” reasons: because it had a significant connection to another in the book, or conversely, to avoid redundancy.

Through the process of selection we have also tried to convey a sense of the time that an idea or conception entered architectural discourse. With regard to Team 10, for instance, the “Doorn Manifesto,” though less crystallized than some other statements, pinpoints the coalescence of that group’s thinking as it occurred right after CIAM’s ninth meeting. On the other hand, history is as much a matter of arrivals as departures. Frank Lloyd Wright’s statement of 1943 is a synthesis of his previous thinking at a moment when his position had great impact. Naturally, despite the attempt to be as discriminating as possible in such choices, the ultimate compilation represents a subjective and occasionally pragmatic judgment and makes no claim to be exhaustive or “correct.” On the contrary, the reader is invited to argue with both its inclusions and omissions. (It might be stated in anticipation that a few of the latter were owed to the difficulty of obtaining a text efficient enough to accommodate the present format.)

In line with the above notion of timeliness, we have placed the documents in sequence according to their original date of utterance or writing, when this could be ascertained, rather than the date they were first published. This was done in view of the fact that ideas in architecture often have a significant half-life prior to reaching print. Occasionally this caused complications when the author made later revisions. Such problems have been adjudicated on an individual basis, and the version of the text here adopted is indicated in the introductory article or source note.

Editing of documents has been kept to a minimum throughout, except that spellings have been Americanized and typographical and other obvious errors corrected when these had no reason to be perpetuated. As a general policy as little exception or internal cutting as possible was done; where it was unavoidable, the intervention has been indicated by three dots in brackets. Unbracketed ellipses belong to the original text. The illustrations in the book are those that accompanied the document originally, or a selection of them, unless otherwise indicated. Unascribed translations are the editor’s. Finally, every attempt has been made to secure permission for publication from the appropriate copyright owner or owners. This information appears in the source note accompanying each document. Oversights are sincerely regretted and, upon proper notification, will be rectified in future editions of this book.

How to read a compendium of this type? In different ways: as a sourcebook, as

a narrative, or—in the spirit of the *flâneur*—just by browsing. The introductory articles provide, in very abbreviated form, some background for the documents and are written so that the latter may be read independently. Selective bibliographic references in the articles and at the back of the book offer some points of departure for further study.

Joan Ockman

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## Notes

1. Le Corbusier, *Looking at City Planning*, trans. Eleanor Levieux (New York: Orion Press, 1971), p. 1.
2. *Architectural Forum*, September 1943, p. 4.
3. Le Corbusier, *The Athens Charter*, trans. Anthony Eardley (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973), p. xix. See also Sigfried Giedion, "CIAM at Sea: The Background of the Fourth (Athens) Congress," trans. P. Morton Shand, *Architects' Yearbook* 3 (1949), pp. 36–39.
4. *The Four Routes*, trans. Dorothy Todd (London: Dennis Dobson Limited, 1947), p. 15 (translation modified). Original French edition 1941.
5. Philip Johnson, "Where Are We At?" in *Architectural Review*, September 1960, p. 175. See also Johnson's earlier "War Memorials: What Aesthetic Price Glory?" *Art News* 44 (September 1945), pp. 8–10, 24–25. Loos had written, "Only a very small part of architecture belongs to art: the tomb and the monument. Everything else, everything which serves a purpose, should be excluded from the realms of art" ("Architecture," 1910).
6. Wright's decentralist vision of society was first conceived in the early 1930s and further elaborated during the postwar period in *When Democracy Builds* (1945) and *The Living City* (1958). For the document mentioned, see John Sergeant, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses: The Case for Organic Architecture* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1976), p. 201.
7. See *Designing a New Industry: A Composite of a Series of Talks by R. Buckminster Fuller, 1945–1946* (Wichita: Fuller Research Institute, 1946), p. 9.
8. Vittorio Gregotti, "Italian Design 1945–1971," in Emilio Ambasz, ed., *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1972), p. 322 (translation modified).
9. A phrase first coined by Lawrence Alloway in 1959. See Alloway's essay "The Independent Group: Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty," in the catalogue of the same title, ed. David Robbins (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 49–53.
10. "Functionalism in Crisis," *ulm* 19/20 (August 1967), p. 24.
11. See Thomas Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 229–30.
12. Matthew Nowicki, "Origins and Trends in Modern Architecture" (1951) in this volume, pp. 150–56.
13. See Serge Guilbaut, "The New Adventures of the Avant-Garde in America: Greenberg, Pollock, or from Trotskyism to the New Liberalism of the 'Vital Center,'" trans. Thomas Repensek, in Francis Frascina, ed., *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986).
14. Robert Venturi's characterization. See his preface to the second edition of *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977), p. 14.
15. For a critical assessment of the Gropius pedagogy at Harvard, see Klaus Herdeg, *The Decorated Diagram: Harvard Architecture and the Failure of the Bauhaus Legacy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983). A history of postwar American architecture education remains to be written.
16. Published in Oscar Newman, *New Frontiers in Architecture: CIAM '59 in Otterlo* (New York: Universe Books, 1961), p. 16.
17. Letter to CIAM 10, Dubrovnik. In Newman, *New Frontiers in Architecture*, p. 16.
18. As exemplified by Ulrich Conrads's anthology *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-Century Architecture*, trans. Michael Bullock (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970). Conrads's book goes up to 1963.
19. Introduction to Trevor Dannatt, *Modern Architecture in Britain* (London: Batsford, 1959), p. 28.
20. See Ernesto Rogers, "L'Ortodossia dell'eterodossia," *Casabella* 216 (June–July 1957), pp. 2–4. "Continuità o crisi" is the title of an editorial by Rogers in *Casabella* 215 (April–May 1957), pp. 3–4.
21. On the relations between theory and practice in postwar Italy and France and the architect's intellectual role, see Jean-Louis Cohen's valuable *La Coupure entre architectes et intellectuels, ou les enseignements de l'italophilie* (Paris: Ecole d'Architecture Paris-Villemin, 1984).
22. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 20.
23. *Architectural Design*, February 1970, p. 62.
24. As cited by Jean Baudrillard in *Utopie: Revue de sociologie de l'urbain*, May 1969, p. 14.
25. The catalogue of the exhibition is Arthur Drexler, ed., *The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977). The events of 1968 figure on one page of this 500-page volume.