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Cover image: The living room of the home of Aino and Alvar Aalto in the Southwest Finland Agricultural Cooperative Building, Alvar Aalto 1927-1928. Alvar Aalto Foundation.



# Focus on Bauhaus and Nordic Architecture and Design

Editorial

Juhana Lahti & Leena Svinhufvud

Just like Nordic design, Bauhaus indicates modern, functional, and democratic design. What is the meaning of Bauhaus in the Nordic countries, and how does it relate to Nordic design and architecture today? Do a mutual philosophy and shared history exist, or should we see them as separate? The centennial of the German art school Bauhaus (1919–1933) in 2019 led to many publications, exhibitions, and events globally, and it was also honored in the Nordic countries. It was an opportunity to examine the link more closely, search for networks and influences, and study parallels and differences.

This special issue of the Tahiti journal originates from the Fokus Bauhaus Symposium, held on September 13, 2019 in Helsinki. Scholars and artists from Sweden, Norway,

Denmark, Germany, and Finland presented in two sessions: 1) Networks & transformations; and 2) Branding & marketing. The topics ranged from Swedish architects traveling to Dessau and Bauhaus weaver Otti Berger traveling in Norway and Sweden to experiencing “Bauhausian” handweaving in contemporary participatory art installations, and from Alvar Aalto as a brand to critical reflections on commercialized concepts of Bauhaus and New Nordic. The symposium was a collaboration between the Design Museum Helsinki and the Museum of Finnish Architecture, realized with support from the Estrid Ericsons Stiftelse, the Goethe-Institut Finland, and the Nordic Forum for Design History.

The symposium was part of the program for the Fokus Bauhaus (August 3, 2019–February 2, 2020) exhibition at the Design Museum. The exhibition featured one of the most iconic Bauhaus artifacts, the lamp de-

signed by Wilhelm Wagenfeld in 1924, and critically discussed modernist ideals using artifacts from the museum’s permanent collection. When planning this intervention, the curators, the designer and design historian Julia Meer and the curator and cultural manager Julia Kartesalo contacted the national specialist museums of design and architecture and challenged them to reflect on what Bauhaus means in Finland and in the Nordic countries. The editors of this Tahiti special issue responded to the challenge and organized meetings with invited specialists. The discussions delved into the meanings and value of Bauhaus in Finnish architecture and design history and in contemporary design practice. What was the influence and impact, and how can we measure it? What is the Bauhaus we are talking about? Is it about visual language, vanguard technology, or something else? And what is the relation



between historical knowledge and the image that is built in our minds today?

This publication focuses on Bauhaus and Nordic architecture and design.

The article by Juhana Heikonen traces newly discovered links between housing architecture in Germany and Finland before World War II, while Gerd Bloxham Zettersten examines the influence of Bauhaus architecture on the design of Nordic town halls before and after the war. Anders V. Munch writes about the Danish discussions of Bauhaus, which focused on the promotional value of everyday objects and the critique of conspicuous modernism. Adriana Kapsreiter, on her turn, traces immaterial ideas, pedagogical concepts, and philosophical conceptions in iconic Bauhaus objects, which most often are connected to functionalism and rationalism.

Kerstin Wickman, in her article, maps the developments of Swedish design education with respect to the Bauhaus school, and Christina Pech presents an event series “Bauhaus in the Archive” at ArkDes, Stockholm, and discusses the influence of institutions and archives in building the canon.

In an article by Susanna Aaltonen it is presented how Bauhaus appeared in Finland in

the 1920s and 30s, the author using as an example the Chat Doré café in Helsinki designed by Birger Carlstedt. And in the text by Petteri Kummala and Joonas Rantasalo, they review the Bauhaus anniversary exhibition at the Bröhan Museum, reflecting the relation between Bauhaus and Nordic design.

### **Finnish Architects and Bauhaus**

The discussions mentioned above point to the fact that there is very little research on the interrelation between Bauhaus and Finland. The influence of Bauhaus on Finnish architecture while the school was open is not simple to track. The contacts by Alvar Aalto (1898–1976) and Aino Aalto (1894–1949) with the Bauhaus circles are perhaps the most obvious influences on Finland, together with the new style of publicity Bauhaus was producing. The iconic Bauhaus building by Walter Gropius was the place to see for modernistic-oriented Finnish architects at the turn of the 1920s and the 1930s. It can be argued that personal contact with colleagues was more important than the Bauhaus school itself. The style of the new modern architecture spread through professional circles and the professional press from peer to peer and not under the Bauhaus label.

Of the pioneers of modern architecture in Finland, Erik Bryggman (1891–1955) and Erkki Huttunen were among the first to visit Dessau in the late 1920s.<sup>1</sup> Erik Bryggman’s visit dates to summer 1928, one year before the Turku 700th anniversary exhibition in 1929, which has been seen as the first event when new functionalistic architecture entered Finland. Aalto and Bryggman designed the exhibition architecture collaboratively.

Alvar Aalto seems to have visited Bauhaus only in 1931, according to correspondence with Josef Albers in the Alvar Aalto museum collections.<sup>2</sup> Aalto was active in CIAM circles and had contacts with László Moholy-Nagy and Walter Gropius. Aino and Alvar Aalto met both in 1930, when they traveled to Berlin and Frankfurt.

Erkki Huttunen (1901–1956) visited Dessau in Autumn 1929 and photographed the Bauhaus school and the Konsumverein building, both designed by Gropius.<sup>3</sup> He worked for the Finnish Central Co-operative (SOK) designing functionalistic architecture from 1928 until 1941.

Conversely, Pauli E. Blomstedt (1900–1935), who was familiar with Gropius’ Total Theater design of 1927 and who designed steel furniture that reflected the furniture designed within Bauhaus circles, did not visit Bauhaus.



## Bauhaus and Finnish Design

To demonstrate the concrete links between Finland and Bauhaus, the Fokus Bauhaus exhibition took as its reference the exhibition organized in the Design Museum Helsinki (then the Museum of Applied Arts) in 1983.<sup>4</sup> Several exhibitions on Bauhaus have taken place during the past few decades. One of the earliest was in 1967, when the National Gallery of Finland organized a touring exhibition that presented the Bauhaus workshops in Weimar (1919–1925).<sup>5</sup> Also in 1967, the designer Kaj Franck and Liselotte Kerbs, a former Bauhaus student living in Finland, were interviewed for the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE).<sup>6</sup>

We know there were no Finnish students in the Bauhaus school. However, Bauhaus has been present in designer training as a pedagogical ideal for decades. These ideas are connected to the designer Kaj Franck, who modernized the design curriculum in the 1960s. He had absorbed Bauhaus pedagogy in the US during his Lunning Prize trip in 1955. In Finland, Kaj Franck communicated that craft (handicraft) is a laboratory for industry. Many school projects led by him were based on teamwork and inter-disciplinarity.

He was also one of the initiators of the idea of social design and the social responsibility of designers.<sup>7</sup>

The developments in the 1960s were orchestrated by a new generation of designers connected to the success story called Nordic design. In recent interviews, design students of the 1960s and 1970s—today aged in their 70s—profoundly subscribed to the term “Bauhaus” in their personal design philosophies. The interviewed designers who worked as design teachers connected the concept to the meaning and importance of free creativity for rational design.<sup>8</sup>

Weaving is a special field of craft and a “mode of design,” as the art historian T'ai Smith, who has researched the intellectual legacy of Bauhaus weavers, puts it.<sup>9</sup> The WeavingKiosk event organized by Rosa Tolnov Clausen and Emelie Røndahl as part of the Fokus Bauhaus Symposium presented handweaving as a social tool. The changing contexts of weaving as a medium are interesting here: sometimes it is presented as avantgarde art, sometimes as rationalistic production.

The handweaving example illustrates not only the constantly changing directions of ideas and influences, but it is also an excel-

lent example of the weight of time and historical setting. Otti Berger was one of the weavers who adopted their skills from the lively Nordic weaving cultures. In the Nordic countries, handweaving has remained, until today, a relevant medium for designers and artists and also a serious and popular hobby for many non-professionals.

In Finland, textile art tuition in the country's only design school in Helsinki began formally in 1929 when a weaving workshop started. However, handlooms had already been brought into the school before that, which communicates the central role of textiles in the modernization of design—with or without Bauhaus impact. The handloom was taken by educated designers as a productive tool, and this method was quite successful. As in the Bauhaus, we know now that the weaving workshop was commercially the most successful department of the school.<sup>10</sup>

## Bauhaus in the Library

The collections of the Museum of Architecture contain several volumes from when the Bauhaus was located in Dessau from 1925 until 1933. The series of Bauhausbücher is obviously among the most influential together



with the books by Bauhaus teachers from other publishers.

The core collection of the museum's Bauhaus books is the volumes owned by architect Erik Bryggman, donated together with his drawing collection in 1989. Bryggman had brought some of the volumes with him from his visit in summer 1928.

The following summer, the Turku 700th anniversary, designed by Alvar Aalto and Erik Bryggman, opened. It has been seen as the first realization of new modern architecture in Finland. Bryggman's visit to Bauhaus certainly influenced his view of architecture.

Based on architects' donations to the Museum of Architecture library, several publications can be found over the decades. The most popular seems to have been J. J. P. Oud's *Holländische Architektur* from 1926 (*Bauhausbücher* 10). It belonged to the home/work libraries of Sigurd Frosterus, Risto-Veikko Luukkonen, Aili-Salli Ahde-Kjälldman, Erik Bryggman, and P. E. and Märta Blomstedt at the least.

The influence of the Bauhaus on Finnish architecture at the turn of the 1920s and the 1930s can be seen above all in changes related to visual presentation: the way

architectural photography was taken, a new graphic look for journals, new types of fonts in architectural drawings, and the spread of new modern architecture through spectacular publications. Its later influence has primarily related to the organization of architects' education on the basis of the new modern ideas presented by the Bauhaus.

In that sense, it is interesting that the Bauhaus journal is not to be found in the records of either the Finnish Architects Association or Helsinki University of Technology. Based on archival records, however, we know that the journal was freshly acquired by the library of the School of Art and Design and that the issues were studied eagerly.<sup>11</sup>

## Endnotes

1 Riitta Nikula (toim.), *Erik Bryggman 1891-1955, arkkitehti* (Helsinki: Suomen rakennustaiteen museo, 1991).

2 Alvar Aalto Museum, list of Aalto's travels: 1931 Berlin CIAM inner circle meeting 4.-6.7. Visit to Dessau, home of Joseph Albers.

3 Teppo Jokinen, *Erkki Huttunen liikelaitosten ja yhteisöjen arkkitehtina 1928-1939*. Jyväskylä studies in the arts 41 (Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, 1993).

4 Bauhaus, toim. Karl-Georg Bitterberg, suom. Vilma Vaikonpää. Stuttgartin ulkomaisten

kulttuurisuhteiden instituutin julkaisu yhteistyössä Suomen rakennustaiteen museon, Taideteollisuusmuseon ja Helsingin Goethe-instituutin kanssa (Stuttgart: Cantz'sche Druckerei, 1983).

5 Sakari Saarikivi. "Weimarin Bauhaus Ate-neumissa". *Helsingin sanomat* 14.4.1967; Bauhaus. Staatliches Bauhaus i Weimar. Verkstädernas arbeten från åren 1919-1925. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Weimar & Finlands konstakademis avdelning för konstbildning. Finlands konstakademis vandringsutställning 24/1967.

6 *Kun nykyaikaa rakennettiin: Bauhaus*. Risto Hallaste, Severi Parko and Seppo Miettinen, reader Teppo Ivaska. YLE, 1967, <https://areena.yle.fi/1-50168933>.

7 *Kaj Franck. Muotoilija formgivare designer*, toim. Kaj Kalin et al. (Helsinki: WSOY, 1992).

8 Kärt Summatavet & Leena Svinhufvud, "Takaisin 1970-luvulle – taideteollisuuden opettaja-haastattelut muotoiluhistorian lähteenä", *Tahiti* 3/2014, <https://tahiti.journal.fi/article/view/85540/44490>

9 T'ai Smith, *Weaving Theory: From Feminine Craft to Mode of Design* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

10 Leena Svinhufvud, Hand-woven fabrics by yard. Unveiling modern industry of the interwar period, in Kjetil Fallan ed., *Scandinavian design: Alternative histories*, ed. Kjetil Fallan (London: Berg Publishers, 2012), 48–64.

11 Today, both the Helsinki University of Technology and the School of Art and Design form Aalto University together with the Helsinki School of Economics.



# Conspicuously Quotidian: Poul Henningsen on Bauhaus and the Art of Promoting Danish Modern

Anders V. Munch

In the historiography of modern architecture, it is common to understand Nordic Functionalism as the true heir of the social ideals of the early modernist architecture. While some have stressed Nordic adjustments to the ideals through a more organic and human-centred design, others have argued that it was more of a ‘return’, because the initial ideals were inspired by the cultivation of everyday life and the home as a work of art in Nordic artist’s colonies. The latter is the central thesis of Barbara Miller Lane in *National-Romanticism and Modern Architecture in Germany and the Scandinavian Countries* from 2000. Along the same lines Scandinavian Design is sometimes suggested as taking

over the initial ideas of the Bauhaus design, as the school was closed by the Nazi takeover in Germany in 1933. The more holistic and human-centred ideas found the right, fertile ground in the stable, budding welfare states up North, according to this line of thought. In this understanding, it seems only logical that the Danish manufacturer of the Arne Jacobsen and Poul Kjærholm furniture, Fritz Hansen, recently has acquired the *Kaiser Idell* Lamp, designed by the Bauhaus *Werkmeister* Christian Dell, as part of its brand portfolio, well even its brand heritage. The actual relationships or familiarities between Bauhaus and Danish design, though, have been much disputed in Denmark.

The Bauhaus-anniversary exhibition at the Bröhan Museum in Berlin *Nordic Design. The Response to the Bauhaus*, 2019, gave at first glance an impression of the mutual confirmation of the Bauhaus having the

best of intentions, which the Nordic designers then were the best to bring into life. The texts of the catalogue, however, document that this story is not as smooth as it seems. Tobias Hoffmann, the museum director, points out that Bauhaus was, of course, not the only source of inspiration for the modern movement of the 1920s and mentions Werkbund, Das neue Frankfurt and CIAM as other strong sources.<sup>1</sup> It is likewise obvious that there were diverging receptions in the Nordic countries as well as critical rejections of the Bauhaus style and ideas. You could add that the ‘Bauhaus style and ideas’ were anything but uniform, as they changed during the years – as well as from one Bauhaus master to another. My approach here, however, is on the reception, and how the Nordic designers and critics represented diverging situations and interests in adapting the modern idiom. I will focus on the Danish discus-





Figure 1. *The Kaiser Idell Lamp*, by Christian Dell, as part of the Fritz Hansen brand universe. Photo: Fritz Hansen.

sions on Bauhaus and pick a single theme which showed to be central to the Danish tradition: the promotional value of everyday objects and the critique of conspicuously modernist designs. This was an ongoing critique that Bauhaus design often just had a modern look, while Danish design was modern in its focus on usability and social value. This is even the very topic of the text on Denmark in the Bröhan catalogue: *Danish Traditionalism – More Functionalist than the Bauhaus?* by Christian Holmsted Olesen, curator at Design Museum Denmark. It has been a polemic, rhetorical topos to align the self-fashioning of Danish functionalist designers with a distinct difference to international modernism. I will look into these arguments forming the Danish Design tradition to see where the interests changed and diverged, especially when the designers needed the promotional value themselves, as in the case of Poul Henningsen. Through this case I hope to explain specific conditions and constraints in the Danish reception and use of Bauhaus ideas and models.

### **The Modest Danish object**

The Danish relations to the Bauhaus School during the years of activity, 1919–33, and





the partly quite negative, public statements by Danish designers both during these early years and in the decades to follow are systematically investigated.<sup>2</sup> The Danish designers were well aware of the Bauhaus and some paid visits to the school, but there was a general reluctance to embrace and identify with the international beacons.<sup>3</sup> The other Nordic countries seemed more open to bridge the gap and make links to the centres of international modernism, while spokesmen of the Danish Design tradition time and again felt the need to stress the unique, modest character of their design and warn against the superficiality of a more fashionable, international modernism. Such a protectionism is, of course, well-known in the other Nordic countries as well, but was central to the Danish Design discourse throughout the whole of twentieth century, as I have shown.<sup>4</sup> Most explicit was the attack of Steen Eiler Rasmussen in 1960 on the insinuation that inspirations from Bauhaus were part of the success of Danish Design in the those years in his Danish article *Bauhaus and the Danish Applied Arts*. This reaction was peculiar as Rasmussen himself had an international career as academy professor in city

planning and architectural theory. He might have been right in stating that the mentioning of Bauhaus was a promotional strategy of linking Danish Design to the international modernism. But he went very far in arguing for the very opposite character of the Danish tradition. “Alongside all the dictates of fashion and effect-seeking, however, will there not still be a need for the modest, Danish object, which is thoroughly worked, made to last and to serve as a good and solid tool?”<sup>5</sup> He wanted the international acknowledgement and the export success to be based solidly on historical and cultural traits in the Danish tradition, here understood as getting the best out of modest assignments and scarce raw-materials. This was, for sure, part of the promotional storytelling about Danish Design that fascinated the American customers being used to heavily industrialised products.<sup>6</sup> The Danish products, however, were designed with a distinct modern look to catch the eyes as well, as the exhibitions show.

Rasmussen tried to build a rhetorical opposition between the modern traits of Danish Design and the international modernism respectively by referring to the grand old man of Danish furniture art. “One might say that

Kaare Klint intended to make things effective, while European modernism strove to make them effectful.”<sup>7</sup> This pun on the words of ‘effective’ and ‘effectful’ might not translate well into English, but it stressed the fine line in modernist design between the urge to improve usefulness or to go for a more surprising and eye-catching modern look. Klint had commented on the Bauhaus back in 1930, when he stressed a parallel scientific approached to ergonomics and construction, however lamenting the rejection of traditional experience of form-types and materials.<sup>8</sup> The pupils of Klint were even more eager to confirm this line as defining the Danish Design tradition. Two of them, the furniture architects Arne Karlsen and Børge Mogenssen, followed up on Rasmussen’s article two years later with a review of the yearly *Cabinetmakers’ Exhibition* performing a virtual witch hunt on those of their colleagues, who – in their eyes – did not stick to the basic values of usability in a low key idiom. They criticised not only younger designers as Jens H. Quistgaard and Verner Panton but showed also examples of Finn Juhl and Arne Jacobsen as problematic. Their ‘crime’ was to design for an international, cosmopol-



itan market, rather than only for the average Dane, the ‘beer mug for Mr. Hansen’.<sup>9</sup> Following this line only a very narrow selection of design would then be part of the Danish Design tradition, and many designers and design icons would have to be excluded. It was, of course, more of a fight on words and to claim the right to define the tradition. And in this institutional fight the promotional value of everyday designs was central.

The fight continued in a special issue of the professional journal of the furniture industry, *mobilia*, published internationally in four languages, where a large group of architects, critics and manufacturers commented on the ‘crisis’ of Danish Design. This is in itself a marvellous mapping of the network, the actors and their roles and positions in the debate. Here another of the grand old men, Poul Henningsen, made his contribution and changed the direction of the critique. In his mind Danish Design had been off the track for long, since the whole international success was based on rather exquisite objects, not affordable solutions for everyone.

For some time we have had as our customers almost all of the whole world’s rich bourgeoisie. Might not a great but hitherto unresolved task now announce itself: [making] practical

furniture for ordinary people as a sort of applied art? [...] We can hardly keep on caressing beautiful, woodwork joints.<sup>10</sup>

The last comment hinted mainly at the late Kaare Klint himself, who used his systematic investigations of ergonomic as an excuse to cultivate joinery and hesitated to embrace industrial production wholeheartedly.

### Sad Modernists

If the Klint pupils had initially thought, they had Henningsen on their side in this argument, it had its reasons in his earlier, critical position to Bauhaus and the international modernism in the late 1920s. Especially as main editor of *Kritisk Revy*, published 1926–28, he expressed harsh reservation against any purely modernist style that took the honour of modernisation without contributing to functional or social improvements. “The telephone, electrical lighting, central heating did not need the Modernists’ propaganda to succeed. It is only the internationally constructed external sobriety and internal hollowness that needs this.”<sup>11</sup> This text called, *For the Sad Modernists*, is quite representative for his many attacks on, what he saw as a sad derailment of the modern movement into a

mere image of white walls, glass and iron railings. Henningsen himself wanted better social housing and interior design based on industrialisation and modern materials, when needed, but did not see Le Corbusier or Walter Gropius solving these basic tasks. In a newspaper announcement for a planned guest lecture by the Bauhaus director in Copenhagen the year before, he recommends the lecture, but adds a warning:

In addition, Professor Gropius is a dangerous man. In his enthusiasm for that which is new in our time he seems virtually to anticipate eventual developments. To him it is insufficient to engage with the many and urgent modern tasks in the world of architecture and technology. He also wants to see them solved immediately, and in a self-consciously modern style.<sup>12</sup>

Henningsen clearly felt that the mere spectacular statements of the Bauhaus were a threat to his own mission to modernise everyday living, because it would scare off or mislead the working class from more feasible and useful solutions to societal challenges.

He went even further in a description of an interior of the Weißenhof-Siedlung by Gropius and Marcel Breuer, in the same issue of *Kritisk Revy* as *For the Sad Modernists* in 1928. Both of these critical writings were provoked by the Copenhagen visit of the Werkbund-exhibition





Figure 2. Interior with furniture by Marcel Breuer in a building by Walter Gropius at the Weissenhof-Siedlung, Werkbund Exhibition, Stuttgart 1927. *Kritisk revy* 2, 1928: 5. The same was shown in a touring exhibition visiting Copenhagen as well.

*Die Wohnung*, on tour after the Stuttgart show. Henningsen used the strongest possible sensorial images in his writing to underline the inhuman superficiality and the counter-intuitive form given by the living room.

The light of the hanging lamp is as harsh as barbed wire and casts a sharp shadow. The guillotine lamp in the background gnashes like sand between teeth. Shiny lights and mirror images from the glass tops of the tables and the nickel tubes of the chairs are emanating from the floor assaulting the eyes. The furniture puts blue frost bites on the thighs of the well-dressed modern woman [...]. In a moment of insanity, the inter-relationship between hygiene and cosiness has been reversed and been transferred from the hospital to the living room. In this show of perpetual horror of dust, any sense for space and home has been sterilised to death.<sup>13</sup>

His understanding would be modified a few years later, when he even designed tubular steel chairs himself. Before we turn to his surprising change of mind, however, we have to understand his initial ideal of the informal type object. First of all, his reaction to the lighting to the room was very strong, because it went contrary to all his own attempts to tame and cultivate the harsh light of the electric bulb. "It is a fact that the electric light is defective, and its defects should not be endured in a room, where people stay."<sup>14</sup> This was stated in his first manifest on his work with the PH-lamp in



*Kritisk Revy* in 1926 – after his presentation of the lamp at the Paris Exhibition in 1925. The Bauhaus designers seemed only to turn up this defective light and even let it ricochet around the room on all the hard surfaces, as a kind of mistaken homage of technology. Henningsen not only wanted to design a lamp to adjust the light to the human eye but developed his own ‘philosophy’ on how to arrange and temper the whole lighting of the room to both practical purposes and enhancement of the experience of colours and materials. “To produce the genuine effect light has to be so rich that it does not deprive the object any of its material or colour properties.”<sup>15</sup> He wanted to revitalise a culture of lighting by combining art and technology.<sup>16</sup> And to him the Weißenhof interior sadly demonstrated the tragic loss of such a culture by only turning up the light volume and smoothness of all surfaces to a narrow-minded, scientific gesture. He worked with new materials, mass-production and electricity but wanted to use them in the service of inhabitants enhancing the best parts of home culture. This taming of the defective technology was also the message of his advertisements for the lamp, especially in his own journal, *Kritisk Revy*.

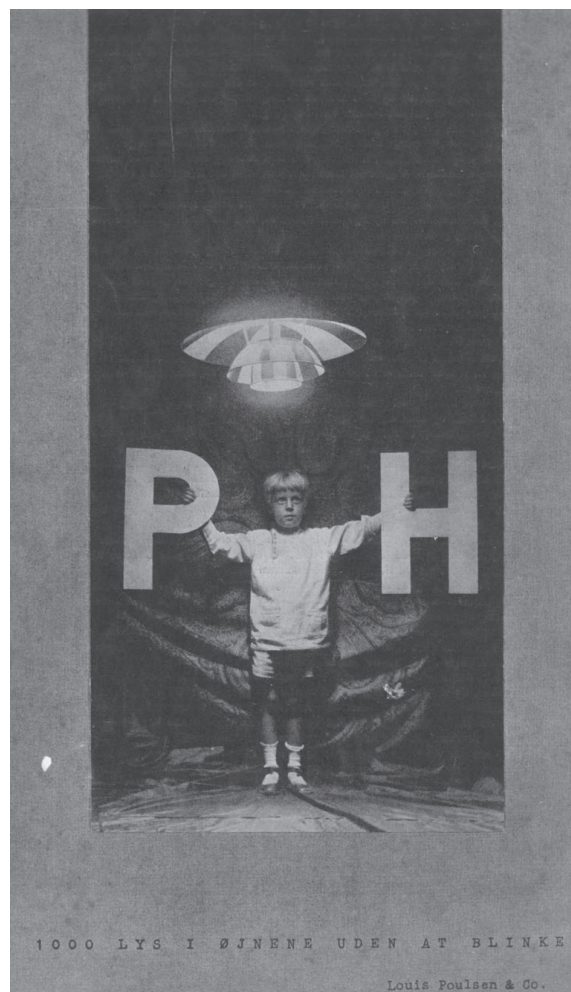


Figure 3. Poul Henningsen, ‘1000 lights in the eyes without blinking’, advertisement for the PH-lamp. Louis Poulsen, *Kritisk Revy* 1926.

### Anonymous and Inconspicuous

You could say that Henningsen wanted to design the lighting rather than the lamp. This might be to flatter him too much, as he certainly also did ‘caress’ the curves of his lamps as well as add more spectacular versions to the Louis Poulsen range of products. This simplified verdict, however, expressed a central line of thought among the Danish architects. It was mentioned time and again, how the form of the designed objects should inconspicuously stand aside to point the attention towards the using experience. This is part of the rhetorical topos we investigate, and it was initially turned against the cult of the artistic individual shown in many art nouveau style objects, called *Skønvirke* in Denmark. Although being a general, modernist objection, the polemic stance continued to be central among the Danish functionalists. Henningsen repeats this critique on a redesign of the Copenhagen trams in 1930, in the article *The Tram as Work of Art. Notes on Type and Taste, Art and Fashion*. In his eyes, the result didn’t stand back as a neutral object of use – as the old trams designed by Knud V. Engelhardt – but highlighted the new designers’ fingerprint on the tram. He



uses this example to stress the ideal of the good everyday object.

The good object becomes quotidian and informal in its appearance. No one will be thinking of “art” or “personality” when gazing upon it, but of naturalness. Nonetheless, there is normally a huge effort and a solemn understanding of the task, and a personality, who would rather make sacrifices than compromises, behind the typical object.<sup>17</sup>

The designer is then only truly an artist, when he or she avoids making an artful object but pays service to the optimal form of purpose only. The tram is just another sad case of modernist designers making aware of themselves through a forced, artistic inventiveness. According to this line of thought, you wouldn't succeed in designing anonymous objects, an ideal of the Bauhaus as well, if you made conspicuous items.

The subtitle of this article also indicates another source of inspiration for this argument, the German Werkbund, as Henningsen was discussing the standardised type-product as a key to the challenges of taste, art and fashion in many of his writings these years. The Danish reception of Werkbund was moulded not only by the publications of the Swedish art historian Gregor Paulsson, but also through

several touring exhibitions. The Danish art historian Vilhelm Wanscher<sup>18</sup> made a comment about the Werkbund exhibition at *Den Frie Udstilling* in Copenhagen in 1918:

The more our phantasy delves into the study of the real things and their proper relation to the whole, the more we rejoice over the *ones, who are artists in the right way* [...]. We have not developed far in the understanding of this in our country. The Germans have proceeded further; for this exhibition, however, they seem rather to have send us quasi-art than real things.<sup>19</sup>

This early quotation both enhance the idea of the ‘real things’ as authentic, if they fit in through their purpose alone, and the idea of the true artist paying service to society by giving new objects their proper, cultural form only. But Wanscher also adds another reoccurring verdict: That the Germans might deliver the crucial ideas of the time, but not the right examples. It was the returning issue in Henningsen's critique of the international modernists. He did share all their basic ideas on utilising design, architecture and planning for social equality and societal progress, but thought that their often rather conspicuous proposals mislead the public and even betrayed the mission.

## Embracing Propaganda

Henningsen did, however, change his rhetoric against international modernism remarkably in the year of 1930 without further notice. I have tried to reconstruct, what might have changed his mind, but he left no self-critique or revealing traces of a conversion.<sup>20</sup> Much more, his critique had been in direct contrast to the warm reception of his PH-lamps among the very same international modernists. It featured as a modernist icon in photos of modern architecture from Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Tugendhat Villa to the living room of the Aaltos in the late 1920s. This confirmed, I guess, his impression of their superficial understanding of the adjusted use of lighting, as his lamp were just hung up as general light source. And they were used anywhere in this way, so his manufacturer Louis Poulsen sold well. This misunderstanding of his intentions might have led Henningsen's attention more to the constraints of communicating the proper use and understanding of the ‘real thing’. In the year 1930 he could both observe the change of political tides in Germany, where the Nazi press and agitators suddenly turned their guns towards modern architecture<sup>21</sup> and witness the thundering success of the interna-





Figure 4. The *PH-lamp* in the living room of Aino and Alvar Aalto in their apartment in Turku, 1927/28. Alvar Aalto Foundation.

tional style at the Stockholm Exhibition. He must have felt the need to choose sides in the more and more polarised political climate and experienced the power of propaganda for a new vision of modern society. In his Danish review of the Stockholm exhibition, he managed to both confirm his former critique and embrace modernism in the version of the Swedish chief architect, Erik Gunnar Asplund. “What, in my view, has never succeeded for Le Corbusier has here succeeded for Asplund: To free Modernism from all false, *technological* motifs like ocean liners and that kind of thing.”<sup>22</sup>

The rhetorical power of his writing is here turned toward the revelation of a vision of a new culture purified by cubist clarity and transparency as a whole and in every detail. It is the revelation of seeing this vision confirmed in the most quotidian details as the women’s clothing and advertisements. He experiences, how this exhibition communicates the spirit of modernism in more details and to a broader audience. The most significant change is that he now acknowledges this ‘propaganda’ as an important tool of the message. In his 1928 critique of the ‘sad modernists’ he ridiculed propaganda as



empty and defective, but now it is of value to him. In his review he maintains that the pavilions of the exhibition do not represent lasting solutions for everyday use. Their value is propaganda for a new society, an egalitarian culture, and the challenge will still be to turn the style into the everyday frames of housing.

No good housing should be exactly as these buildings, for they are ideal exhibition buildings. In this way, however, they are making propaganda for a new understanding of thing. Let us hope that the inevitable effect, which will result of the exhibition, may lead away from and beyond the direct, worthless imitation and towards a solution of the tasks of the everyday on their conditions, as precise as the task of the sunny celebration day is solved here.<sup>23</sup>

His reasoning might be a bit murky to follow here, but his mission was from now on to point out everywhere this new spirit became visible, in society, in fashion as well as in display windows.

The cubists created a wholly natural, modern ornamentation, which has now spread to almost every furniture dealer (“Funkis”) and every window decorator. [...] They replaced the precious and rare with the sharp, the precise and the decent.<sup>24</sup>

In his own advertisements the PH-lamps were also turned more into design icons

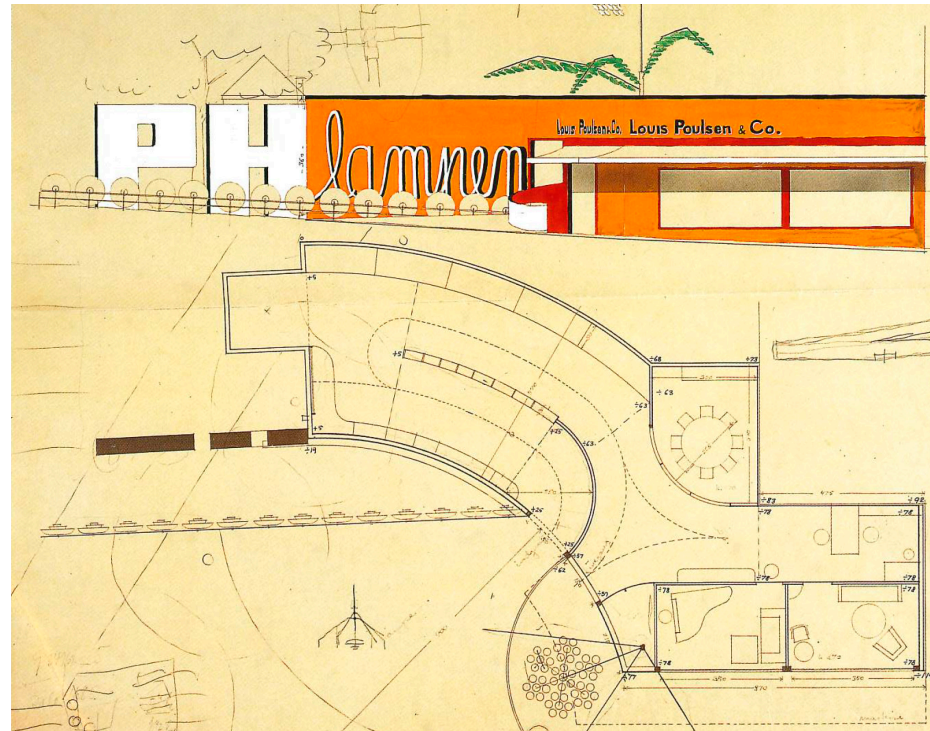


Figure 5. Poul Henningsen, Louis Poulsen -pavillon, Tivoli-exhibition, Copenhagen 1930. Copyright Poul Henningsen.

than type forms, as both the lamps and the commercial tools were now part of the propaganda for the new, equalitarian and emancipatory spirit of modernism. His earlier advertisements in *Kritisk Revy* were quite innovative in themselves, but it was surely difficult to tell or picture the qualities of non-defective lighting, as fig. 3 might show. In the

same year as the Stockholm exhibition, he made an exhibition pavilion in the style of the Bauhäusler Herbert Bayer displaying his own initials, PH, as the brand of his lamps. So much for the sacrifice of the true artist to produce the anonymous type! And the lamps themselves were used in very different ways, than they were designed to – both to light up



the product name and to form the showpiece of an elderflower-like installation at the roof made by white and green lamps. This was very far from only presenting the lamp as a modest tool for everyday use and rather celebrated the lamp as a commercial icon as we know it from more recent examples of brand spaces. On the other hand, the merging of all artistic means to reach a comprehensive effect, a total design, was part of the artistic and cultural ideal of the time, the Gesamtkunstwerk.<sup>25</sup>

The commercial artists of the Werkbund also piled up products or their designed packages in spectacular formations for display windows.<sup>26</sup> In this sense Henningsen might have thought of his installation as a likewise celebration of the mass-manufactured type-product, the cornerstone of a new industrial culture. He had made such a display window setting with chocolate boxes in 1926, and he had often expressed a keen interest in advertisement art in *Kritisk Revy*. The pavilion from 1930, however, went far beyond any earlier displays or advertisements and clearly embraced the propaganda values, he experienced and praised at the Stockholm Exhibition. It was made for an

exhibition in Tivoli, which also fits perfectly with his new understanding of 'solving the task of the sunny celebration day', the festive propaganda for a bright new egalitarian society. Of course, it was a commercial venue, but at the same time an effort of cultural and political propaganda of liberal progress supported by modernist design, architecture and technology that he felt urgent in the year of 1930.<sup>27</sup> While his positive understanding of advertisement art in the spirit of Werkbund went far back, his sudden accept of propaganda was a radical shift, as it was regarded as superficial in the professional discourse on art and design he was part of.

The discourse on advertisement and propaganda itself, however, shifted around 1930. At the *Nordic Advertisement Congress* in Copenhagen in 1931 the broad range of speakers, including the Danish Prime Minister Thorvald Stauning, head of the Social Democratic government, all agreed in the societal role of advertisement and propaganda to educate consumers and citizens to spend their money to the benefit of the national economics and support the domestic workers' employment. The international crisis after the 1929 Wall Street Crack called for

strong medicine to rise sales again, as a mutual interest of organised capitalism and the budding Nordic welfare states. In his opening address the Prime Minister declared:

Advertisement has to build on an optimistic basis. It has to bring confidence in that it can help. It must give the development a light tone, which can bring the doubtful faith and the faithful confidence in that a sound and real effort also bring results.<sup>28</sup>

In his new praise of a mainstream modernist style, called 'funkis' after the Swedish popular term, Henningsen in fact turned to a more pragmatic position than Walter Gropius himself. In the same year 1930 Gropius expressed his concern of, how the Bauhaus ideas were reduced a mere Bauhaus Style copied in any products and graphic layout. Now he was worried that the efforts of the school were copied as just fashionable forms at a consumer market without deeper understanding of the ideas and ideals for a better society.

The goal of the Bauhaus is exactly no style, no system, dogma or canon, no recipe and no model! It stays alive as long as it does not stick to the form, but instead seeks behind the ephemeral form to the very fluidum of life!<sup>29</sup>

This *rappelle à l'ordre* of the now former Bauhaus director to a moralistic rhetoric of design





was also provoked by the basic failure of the school in getting an income from business contract on their prototypes. Only the lamp designs and later wallpapers secured financial support to the school.<sup>30</sup> The normative discourse on style was highly complex during the early modernism, as the term 'style' could either refer to superficial, formal traits as criticised in eclecticism or art nouveau or to a deeper order of appropriate form mirroring the spirit of modern times.<sup>31</sup> Annoyed by the many rip offs in tubular steel furniture and graphic use of sans serif fonts without substantial understandings Gropius needed a position statement, where he insisted on the deeper strategies of spatial organisation, transparency, flexibility and dynamics as the real contributions of the Bauhaus.<sup>32</sup> This was also the vision Henningsen experienced and praised in Stockholm.

### **The Art of Promoting Everyday Objects**

In this way polemics, discourses and position statements played a huge role in the continuous negotiations on which role Bauhaus had as inspiration or parallel to the developments in Danish design. All shared the same general ideals of affordable, well-designed every-

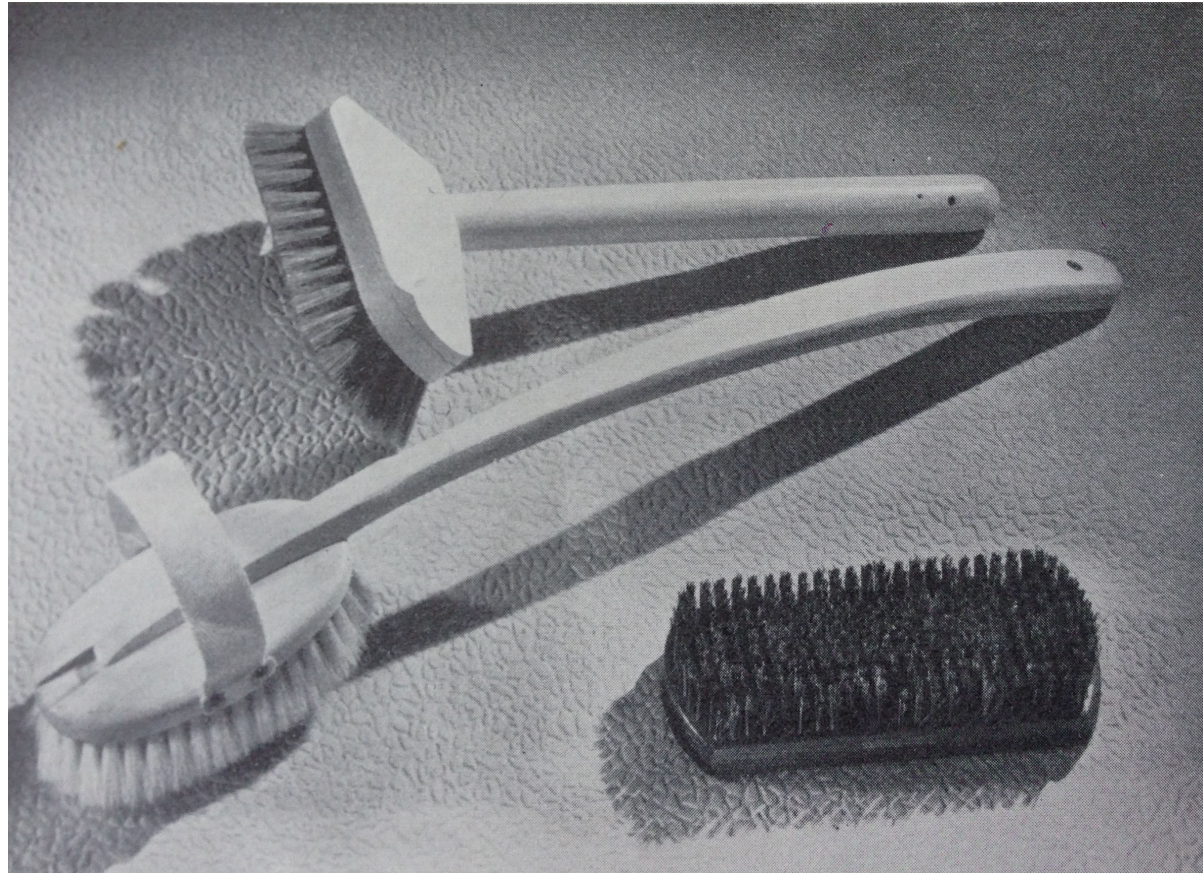


Figure 6. Three brushes by Hans Prehn, a nail brush, a bathing brush and a bathtub brush. from Erik Herløw, *Gode Ting til Hverdagsbrug* (Copenhagen: Schønberg 1949, 78).



day objects and a well-planned modern society, but positions and rhetoric changed with professional and political conditions in Germany as well as in Scandinavia. The mutual challenge was, how to promote the modern way of life through the minimalist and modest objects. At the Bauhaus the whole profile and events of the school were developed as a platform for this – to the annoyance of critics. The Stockholm Exhibition offered a similar platform, which Henningsen and many others in the Nordic countries used. In Denmark the *Cabinetmakers' Exhibitions* developed into a similar platform with good media attention and support by a broad network of professional and trade organisations.<sup>33</sup> This network in Denmark joined forces with similar networks in the other Nordic countries to promote Scandinavian Design abroad through exhibitions, awards and publications. Externally they made conspicuous displays of the design in shows and photography, and internally they confirmed each other in the initial ideal of the modest, inconspicuous tool-like utensil for everyday use, like the text by Steen Eiler Rasmussen discussion above.

His Royal Academy colleague, Erik Herløw, had published an entire book on *Good Objects*

*for Everyday Use* in 1949, where all parts of everyday life got attention with advices for the right acquisitions ranging from the door sign over the kitchen and bathroom to sports and travel. It unfolds this whole thinking about modest objects and show very basic items, indeed. But it also shows, as in image 6, how the most trivial things as brushes can appear in conspicuous display with dramatic lighting and rich shadows on a seemingly tactile, rustic background. Later, with the authority of being the first Danish professor of Industrial Design, he explained the paradox once more:

Art is not at all to make things look extraordinary or conspicuous, but on the contrary to contribute to explain us that this thing is something we need and which we can make use of with the same obviousness, as when we make use of all the known things, which have already got their definite form, and which in natural ways have taken their places in our surroundings and in our everyday.<sup>34</sup>

If we want to evaluate the familiarity between the Bauhaus and Nordic Design historically, we need to dig into many constraints, developments and negotiations, which have moulded the basic ideals and transformed the modernist idiom along the way. Seen through a historical lens of promotion

the photo from Fritz Hansen, fig. 1, makes sense. It shows the Kaiser Idell -lamp series as a recently acquired icon into the Republic of Fritz Hansen in a conspicuous installation of white versions highlighting the form variations and the singular red one. Their curved, organic shapes get here a familiarity with the 25 years younger Arne Jacobsen chairs in a paradoxal setting, where the exquisite products display their subtle, iconic form in a casual way, like a snapshot with a mug of tea left on the pages of an open book and a mess of power cords, inviting the consumer to leave any constraints or worries for everyday use behind.



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**Anders V. Munch, Dr.Phil is Professor in Design Culture at the University of Southern Denmark Kolding. PhD-dissertation *Der stillose Stil. Adolf Loos*, Wilhelm Fink Verlag 2005. Postdoctoral dissertation *Fra Bayreuth til Bauhaus*, 2012; English version *The Gesamtkunstwerk in Design and Architecture* (Aarhus University Press, 2021). Co-editor of *Design Culture. Objects and Approaches* (London: Bloomsbury 2019). Danish board member of Nordic Forum for Design History.**

# On the Paradigmatic Influence of the Bauhaus in the Nordic Countries. The Bauhaus Dessau Plan and Building Elements as Reflected in Some City Hall Projects in Finland and Denmark

Gerd Bloxham Zettersten

Presented here is a brief review of the route for and delayed time factor of Bauhaus influences, in particular via architectural journals, into the Nordic countries, as well as some examples of contemporary influence of the Bauhaus Dessau plan form from 1926 in a public building type, the city hall. Some notable building elements will also be considered. The exemplification will be focused on Finland and Denmark in the 1930s and 50s. The account takes its starting point my own research in 1994–1999 of international influences into the Nordic city hall building type in the period from 1900 to 1955; the choice of building type was instigated by its complex program and its lengthy implementation pro-

cess frequently interfering with and changing the original vision of the competing architects. A major finding was in fact the social impact on the implementation of the city client group. This research investigated in depth all archival material still available, in particular competition programs, drawings and plans, which were collated with accounts of the new development in all the Nordic journals of architecture from the entire period. However, the analysis is extended here, with reference to some supplementary as well as newer literature of particular relevance.<sup>1</sup>

## **Brief Introduction: On the Creation and Reproduction of Forms and Structure**

Walter Gropius was the architect of the “Bauhaus Dessau” building, so named and completed in 1925/26, in connection with the “Staatliches Bauhaus” school’s move from Weimar to Dessau; Gropius being its

director from 1918–28. A closer study of the influence of the Bauhaus Dessau building’s compositional principles makes it clear that what will later be communicated and reflected in projects and works of architecture in the Nordic countries is above all *an attitude* to a way of design, a method-of-approach. For Gropius himself the “New Architecture” was fundamentally a totality, as he makes eminently clear in his *apologia*—an explication of intent—of 1935, having left the Bauhaus in 1928 and moved on to practice for a short time in England.<sup>2</sup> In it Gropius demonstrated how architectural *Structural Instruction* within the entire Bauhaus teaching is “a culminating point”. Meanwhile, summing up the modus of the Bauhaus schooling he emphasized: “What we preached in practice was the common citizenship of all forms of creative work, and their logical interdependence on one another in the modern world”.<sup>3</sup>



In his monograph 1960 on Walter Gropius, written and published in the US where Gropius was then at the peak of his career, James Marston Fitch attempted to summarize the essence of the original Bauhaus Manifesto from 1919. A relevant main principle affecting architecture is explicated as follows:

*'The Bauhaus believes the machine to be our modern medium of design and seeks to come to terms with it'. All design must recognize this fact of life and distill a new set of criteria from it. Such a process would, for architecture, lead to 'clear, organic [form] whose inner logic will be radiant and naked, unencumbered by lying façades and trickeries.'*<sup>4</sup>

Here the word “organic”—an essential concept in Gropius’ architectural thinking—must surely refer to self-consistency, in accord with an inner logic. Expanding the concept, the new striving of architecture propagated by the Bauhaus teaching soon evolved into a striving for an organic totality that embraced not only technology but in equal measure the social dimension of our existence.

Narrowing an investigation down to mere reflections of building plan and elements might therefore be considered to be very nearly a decapitation of the issue; yet it appears indicative of the method-of-approach. Gropius himself had experienced as early as in 1935 that reception of the concept of

the New Architecture had often been inadequate or erroneous, and that assimilation had proved misguided.

But the development of the New Architecture encountered serious obstacles at a very early stage of development. Conflicting theories and the dogmas enunciated in architects’ personal manifestos all helped to confuse the main issue. Technical difficulties were accentuated by the general economic decline that followed the war. Worst of all, “modern” architecture became fashionable in several countries; with the result that formalistic imitation and snobbery distorted the fundamental truth and simplicity on which this renaissance was based.<sup>5</sup>

Instead, the act of design could apparently become a matter of imitation. The contemporary evidence seems to tell us that the process of reproducing forms and structure quickly may become eclectic or even esoteric, while missing the ethics of the content.

In the following brief study here based on the analysis of a few examples a main question to be raised is what types of assimilation can be noted. Is what we shall see happened in the Bauhaus era of influence a matter of “objectification” of impulses? The concept is used in 1999 in chapter four of Panayotis Tournikiotis’ historiography of the modern architecture.<sup>6</sup> Or is it a matter of “codification”, as claimed by Henry-Russell Hitchcock in

his epoch-making 1932 presentation of the International Style?<sup>7</sup> Or of consolidation and/or a changed paradigm for compositional analysis?

## **A Genealogy of Paradigmatic Works, 1909–1925**

From its position in modern historiography the Bauhaus Dessau building’s paradigmatic composition and design in itself might be seen as the third instalment in a genealogy of three Gropius-related buildings of huge significance for a later development and its influence.<sup>8</sup> Here innovative designer Peter Behrens and his AEG Turbine Factory in Berlin from 1909 had played a decisive role. As a young architect Gropius started out as the chief assistant of Behrens in his studio in Berlin. Gropius claims in his 1935 explication of the New Architecture that “it was Behrens who first introduced me to logical and systematical coordination in the handling of architectural problems”<sup>9</sup>. However, in the course of his association with Behrens and the discussions with him and other prominent members of the Deutscher Werkbund, Gropius’ position evolved:

My own ideas began to crystallize as to what the essential nature of building ought to be. I became obsessed by the conviction that mod-



ern constructional technique could not be denied expression in architecture, and that that expression demanded the use of unprecedented forms.<sup>10</sup>

But the underlying, basic need was seen by Gropius as rationalization in its role of “a purefying agency”, meaning the use of new technique in rationalized construction and the use of what Gropius described as “new synthetic substances—steel, concrete, glass” which should actively supersede the traditional raw materials of construction.<sup>11</sup> In Gropius’ *Faguswerke* in Alfeld-an-der-Leine which he designed in 1911 in collaboration with Adolf Meyer his architectural ambition was amply realized, which makes the building into this genealogy’s second paradigmatic work. Here the syntax of Behrens’ Turbine Factory was adapted into a more open architectural aesthetic. Its famous massive corners are here of glass. Kenneth Frampton in his *Critical History* describes the relation between the two buildings clearly:

The vertical panels of glazing, set forward from the battered brick facing, give the illusion of being miraculously suspended from the upstand at roof level. This ‘pendant’ effect, plus the translucent corner, inverts the composition of the Turbine Factory, the sheer planar quality of the vertical glass façade being accentuated by the ‘Classical’ entasis of the brick-

faced frame. Despite such transpositions, the Faguswerk, with its atectonic glazing and its nostalgia for the Classical, remained subject to the influence of Behrens.<sup>12</sup>

### **Route for and Delayed Time Factor of Bauhaus/Deutscher Werkbund Influences**

Several different waves of influence on architectural design came from central Europe during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from Germany as well as from the Netherlands and France, and in the early period, notably also from England and Italy. Directing specific attention to the impact of the Bauhaus movement the following account is focused on the period of admittance of pioneering modernism into the Nordic countries, and on its consolidation, but also with a more diverse conception of building, in the 1950s.<sup>13</sup>

Looking at the route for and delayed time factor of Bauhaus and Deutscher Werkbund influences one can see parallel manifestations originating in a shared or reciprocal reception of impulses that caused debate at the time within the Nordic countries.

In focus here is influence that concerns plan and spatial composition, as well as some elements affecting building plans, to some very small extent already from the mid-1920s, but more particularly from around

1930. From the end of the 1930s and up to the start of the 1950s this influence intensifies, in particular in the balanced plan composition; the evolution includes the integrated courtyard which becomes prominent from the end of the 1940s. “Loans” may be construed to have concerned design solutions and plan forms on the one hand, and the spatial grouping of units and the separation of volumes and functions on the other. Meanwhile the contemporary rationalist interest in typology and the formation of types may have served as one triggering factor.

A few public building projects can be said to have served as a paradigm for compositional analysis, and Gropius’s Bauhaus Dessau design from 1925-26 is one such. A year later the League of Nations competition project for Geneva by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret became a separate example of a paradigmatic influence that was clearly delayed, but which later gave rise to fundamentally fresh plan analysis in some cases. And when it comes to city hall projects the delay of Nordic impact becomes a rule; however, such delay varies considerably between the different Nordic countries. It manifests itself in shifts and within different areas of design



activity. Apparently one reason for that can be attributed to the level of cultural activity of different individuals and groupings which in itself was affected by the national, economic and political context.

Two aspects of the study of influences can merely be mentioned here. An engagement in social and socioeconomic conditions has dominated as a steering factor within the Nordic evolution of modernism in architecture in all the Nordic countries ever since the 1920s, finding its main focus within residential planning and design, and in an extension, in urban design. International influence within these areas has undergone continual historiographic and critical scrutiny and mapping, much of it well published within the individual Nordic countries and by now widely established.<sup>14</sup> While on the other hand, the aspect of inter-Nordic influence sometimes following local international impact deserves specific study. One may ask if at times an inter-Nordic domino effect could be said to have occurred.

Relevant here, then, is the discrepancy between the manifestation of decisive news internationally in relation to its essential breakthrough within the Nordic countries. The

publications of the international avant-garde in relation to the accounting for it in the Nordic countries were two separate scenarios.

Therefore there were some extreme limits to what one generally may have assimilated of reeking hot news from the outside when it comes to the actual situation of a competition for a public building. Le Corbusier's and Walter Gropius's works and experimental results from the 1920s onwards were in each case published almost consecutively as they appeared, under the architects' own supervision; in Gropius's case—among other titles—in the two series of *Bauhausbücher*.<sup>15</sup> This was done alongside the publications of the works of the rest of the international avant-garde, communicated under the general concept of *internationale Architektur*.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, the journals of the Nordic architectural associations published lists of foreign literature and mentions of articles in the foreign journals worth paying attention to. This was done in different ways in each country; it should just be mentioned here that on this count Finnish *Arkkitehti/Arkitekten* took a strong, leading position through their monthly issues, accounting for the essential content of a very great number of international jour-

nals, starting in 1928; from 1934 one passed on to editing the mentions of articles into categories and according to topic.<sup>17</sup> While the Swedish *Byggmästaren*, referring to the usefulness of “the international exchange of ideas and experience”, at the start of 1931 printed a complete list of the subscriptions to foreign journals, at that time 43, by the journal's library.<sup>18</sup>

In Denmark one behaved differently. The periodical *Kritisk Revy* which became influential particularly in Norway and Sweden, was published in eleven issues between 1926 and 1928, but it is considered to be the only one among the contemporary Danish publications which gives evidence of the actual reception of new architectural impulses and ideas from Germany. Its message was a culturally broad one, with contributions from the visual arts, music and literature and with critical texts on a number of societal issues. Its promoter and chief editor Poul Henningsen was the designer of the soon famous PH lamp, while the frequent collaborator/contributor Norwegian-Danish architect Edvard Heiberg campaigned for socialist ideals; he had both studied at the Bauhaus in 1928 and returned there to teach briefly in 1930 under



the directorship of Hannes Meyer who entirely changed the previous aesthetic teaching approach to an entirely socially praxis-oriented one.<sup>19</sup> Among other contributors to *Kritisk Revy* was Alvar Aalto, who had been introduced to the German new architecture—though never himself reaching Bauhaus Dessau—by the older Swedish internationally motivated architect Sven Markelius who had visited there in 1927, making friends with Walter Gropius.<sup>20</sup> Before that, Heiberg had already in 1924 designed his own house in Virum, northwest of Copenhagen, a preliminary touchdown of the new architecture in the Nordic countries, reflecting the Bauhaus experimental villa Am Horn by Georg Muehe from 1923.

Generally speaking, in the period around 1930 there was notable activity on the part of certain Nordic architects engaging in international study visits, friendships, exhibitions.

For both Gropius and Le Corbusier the rapid publishing of results was *per se* in the nature of the mission of pioneering modernism, as were frequent public appearances and lectures. In March 1928 Gropius visiting Stockholm for the first time gave a lecture on modern architecture and industrial art, returning in October 1931 to lecture specifically on the rationalization of

the building industry; this lecture was published in Swedish translation in *Byggmästaren*.<sup>21</sup> Le Corbusier visited Sweden and Norway in 1933, giving lectures which were reported in the architectural journals, being at the time already an international celebrity.

Yet it is striking that in the Nordic countries in 1925–35 it is only a relatively small number of architects engaged in independent inquiry, who take on board or spread further any essential knowledge of this theoretical development. Furthermore, from the end of the 30s non-radical tendencies, later dubbed “new empiricism”, make inroads, in part due to a growing scarcity, caused by the world war conditions, of the industrial materials, steel and glass as well as concrete, that were favoured by rationalist construction.

It should be emphasized, too, that after the closure of Bauhaus Dessau in 1932, and of the Berlin Bauhaus in January 1933, in spite of some continued cultural exchange in 1933, Third Reich architectural preferences could hardly be honoured in the Nordic countries.<sup>22</sup>

However, for architects engaged in competition projects Walter Gropius’s analyses, aiming for systematic and partly industrialized construction, would have been highly

relevant, as they found expression in new plan solutions where separate elements and volumes were possible to re-combine; these were suited for adaption within monumental, public or institutional architecture. Such solutions were in organic congruence with functional modernism’s paradigmatic philosophy of composition which had found its mature expression in Gropius’s design of the Bauhaus building in Dessau in 1925.

What we see, then, is that the interest among progressive architects who were willing to experiment was above all directed towards Germany—from the Finnish and the Swedish side, as well as from Denmark. Their attention also included individual practitioners and groups in France and the Netherlands, in particular, which was a main source of Norwegian aesthetic architectural interest. At the same time, among some younger architects in Norway in 1933 it was a socialist engagement with housing that came to the fore and became dominant.<sup>23</sup>

### **Examples of Influence of the Bauhaus Dessau Building and Its Plan Form**

When studying Nordic city hall projects in the 1930s to 50s it turns out that there are





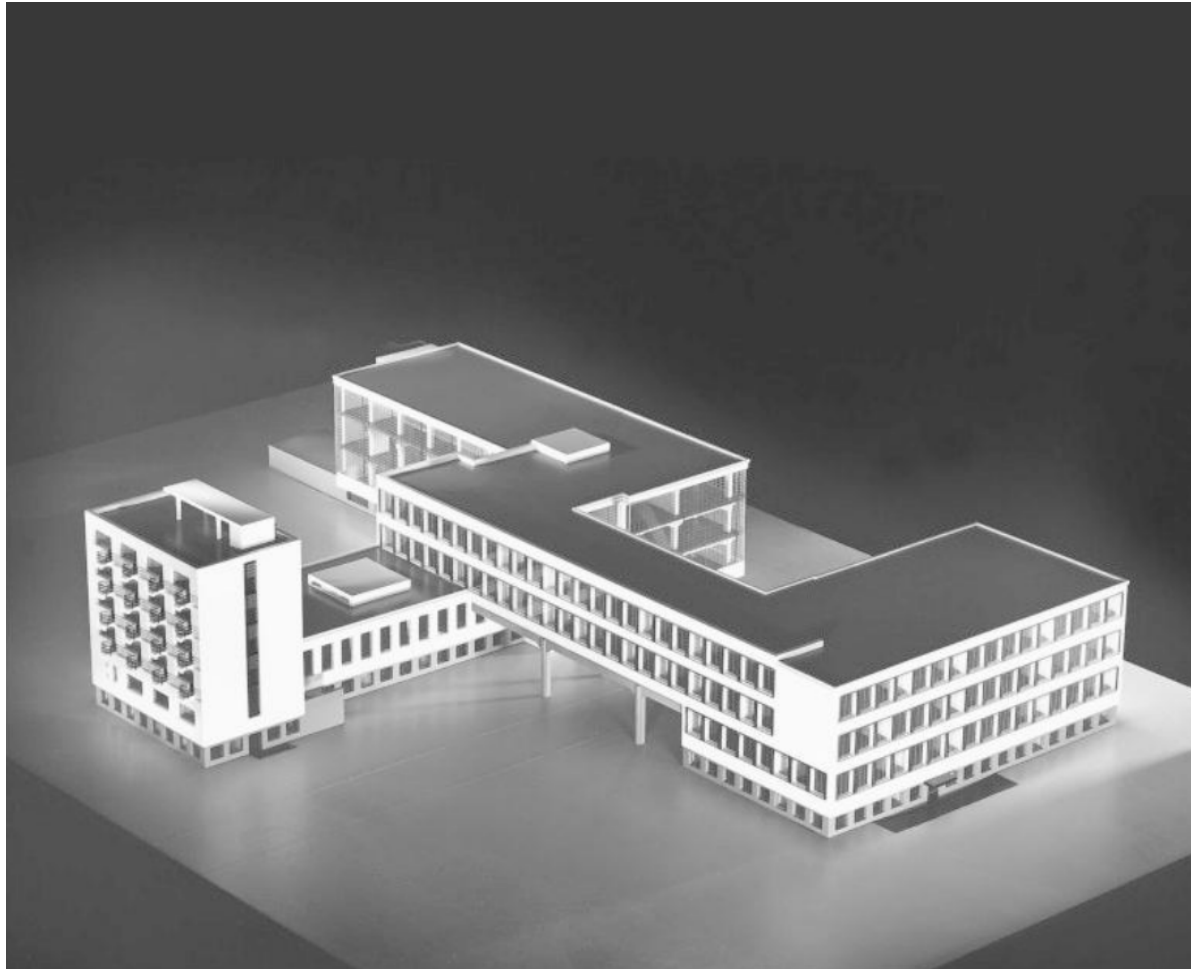


Figure 1. Photo of a model of Bauhaus Dessau, viewed from the northeast. Bauhaus-Archiv Online, [https://www.bauhaus.de/en/sammlung/6299\\_sammlung\\_online/](https://www.bauhaus.de/en/sammlung/6299_sammlung_online/).

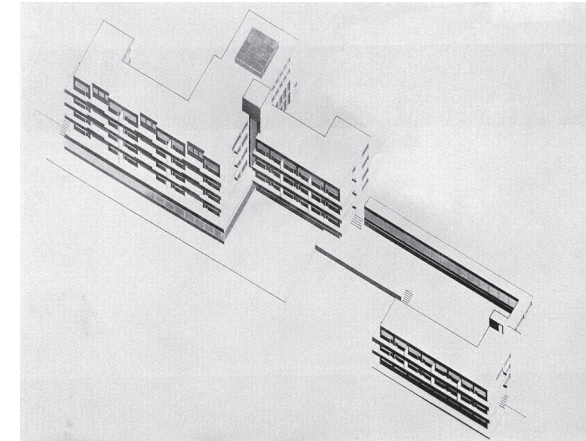


Figure 2. Walter Gropius, the 2nd project for an Academy of Philosophy, Erlangen, 1924. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 111.

clear examples of radical German influence notably in Finland both in competition projects from the 1930s and in the odd completed building. When it comes to the Bauhaus Dessau building specifically, it has been seen as “the built manifesto of the Bauhaus system”.<sup>24</sup> Frampton sees it as Gropius’s mature implementation of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*/New Objectivity ideology being developed in Germany, Holland and Switzerland in 1923–33 and upheld by the Deutscher Werkbund.<sup>25</sup> Its impact of course also reached Finland.



But what is it that makes this building influential? The new composition principle demonstrates an asymmetrical grouping of volumes which here *also*, on top of it, assumes a centrifugal, pinwheel form. This was entirely new. And the construction includes the non-ornamented wall planes, the suspended glass panels and the suspended glass façade in the workshop wing, which had previously first been tried out by Behrens in his Turbine Factory, to be elaborated and refined in the two paradigmatic Gropius buildings discussed above. The façades of the Bauhaus building exhibit a new, sheer planar quality which became a trademark of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement [Figure 1].

Gropius wrote about the Bauhaus teaching principles that a “modern building should derive its architectural significance solely from the vigour and consequence of its own organic proportions”. The old solid walls and massive foundations of masonry must vanish, and with them “the old obsession for the hollow sham of axial symmetry [...] giving place to the vital rhythmic equilibrium of free asymmetrical grouping”.<sup>26</sup>

An embryo of the Bauhaus Dessau plan may be found in the Academy of Philosophy

plan for Erlangen from the previous year, 1924, by Gropius and Meyer; this is particularly evident in the 2<sup>nd</sup> project by Gropius [Figure 2]. And it is in the competition for a city hall in Kotka, Finland, in 1930 that one group of projects show a similar interest in the asymmetrical grouping of volumes that have been differentiated as to function, a plan form that had become very popular at the time [Figure 3].<sup>27</sup> And the way that the grouping of volumes was often resolved was through variations of the use of the L-plan. For example, as a double-L figure with an extra twist to the tail, as in Yrjö Lindegren’s awarded project (“10 pennis stämpelmärke”) [Figure 4]; in an anonymous project (“Tecknad gyllene fågel”) [Figure 5] the extra twist of the double-L figure forms the wing containing the council chamber – which can be seen as a copy of the Bauhaus Dessau plan, but with the rotating 3<sup>rd</sup> wing left out.

In both projects one also finds the side corridor system favoured by Gropius and the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement, which was advocated for institutional and office buildings as it allows daylight into the corridor. It is prominently used in the first Erlangen project, while refined to a single corridor ele-

ment in the 2<sup>nd</sup> project. In the Bauhaus Dessau plan it was used in the famous bridge element connecting the two main volumes, while also allowing the use of an expanse of glass window. [Figures 6–7].

It is this bridge element feature – a direct quote from the Bauhaus Dessau composition and plan, though lacking that 3<sup>rd</sup> wing – which is strikingly used by Risto-Veikko Luukkonen twenty years later in the town hall in the municipality of Valkeakoski, 1950-56, in a forested region in south central Finland [Figures 8–12].<sup>28</sup> The use of the bridge element here is the principal architectonic and functional idea of the design. The bridge element, supported by six pillars, spans a wide opening that connects the exterior, the entrance side of the building, with the interior of the building site on a downward slope which is then bordered by the town canal. Its very function was the creation of this visual and symbolic link between the town hall and the canal area with the industry behind it which is the heart and the livelihood of the municipality. The side corridors on the two storeys of the bridge element with their horizontal ribbon windows – which was another feature of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* ideology – allow the



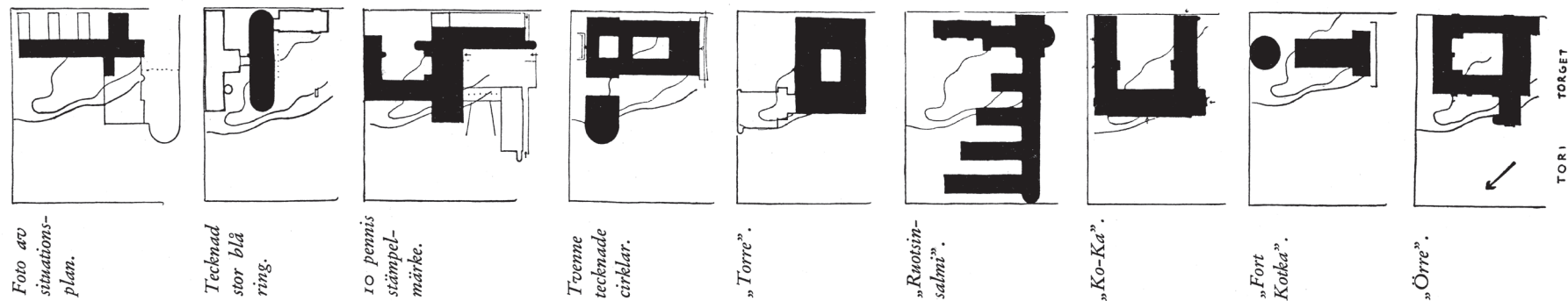


Figure 3. Series of plan forms, competition projects for a city hall in Kotka, Finland, 1930. Gerd Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 109.

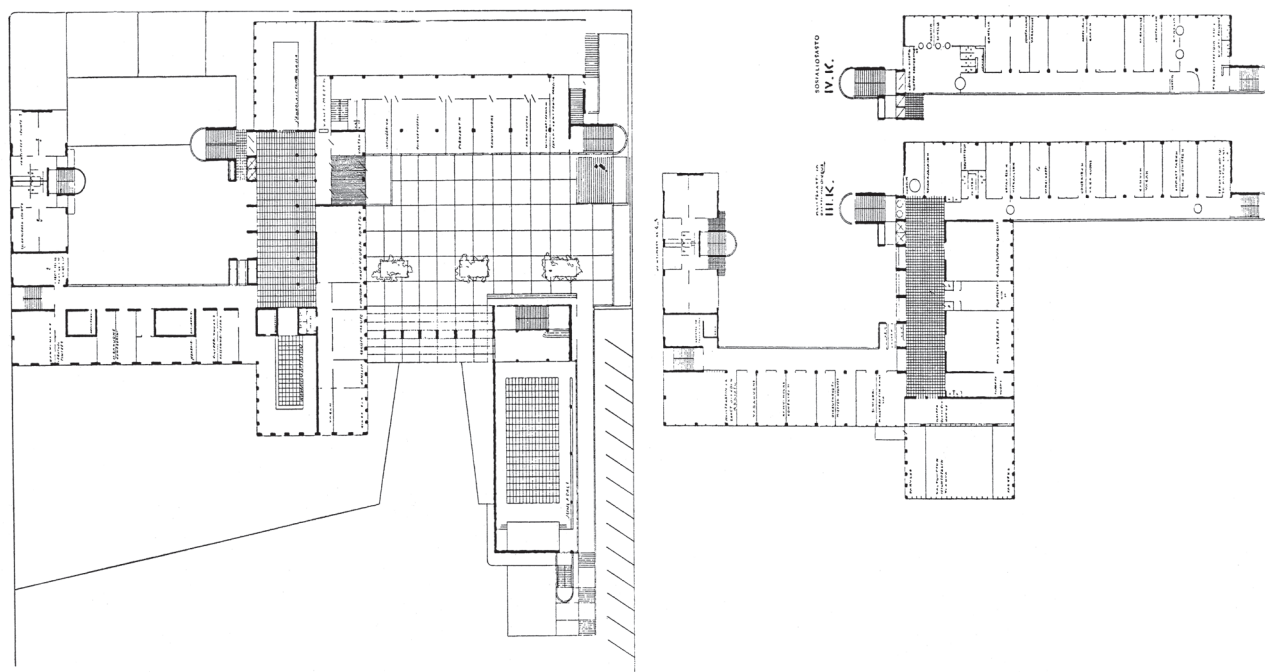


Figure 4. Yrjö Lindegren's project ("10 pennis stämpelmärke"), 3rd prize, for a city hall in Kotka. 1st, 3rd and 4th floor. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 110.



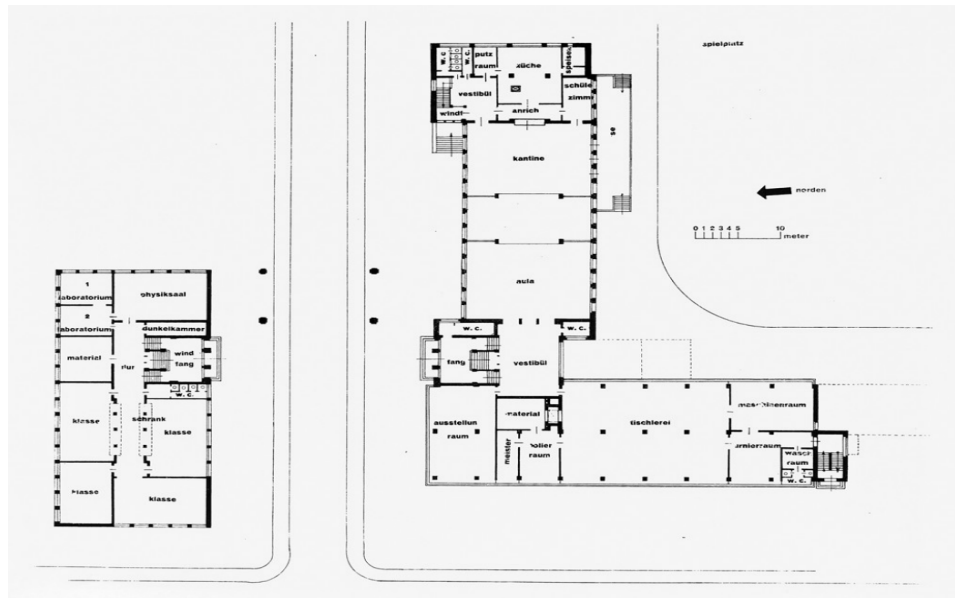
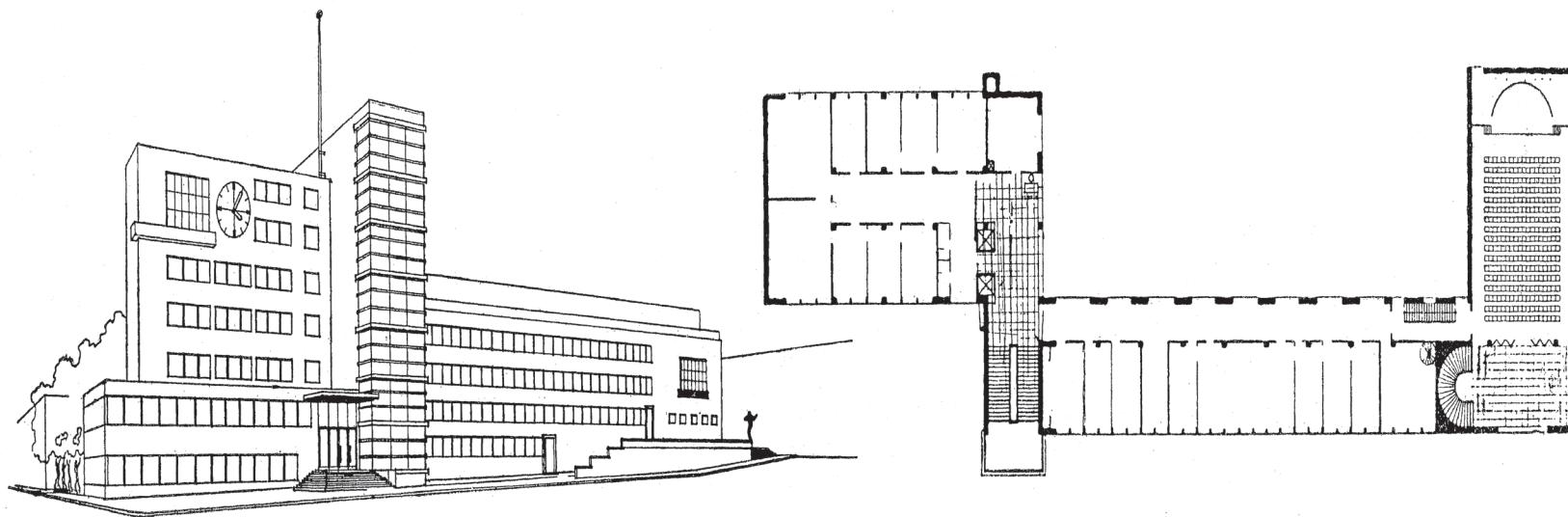


Figure 5. Anonymous competition project (“Tecknad gyllene fågel”) for a city hall in Kotka. Perspective sketch and plan. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 111.

Figure 6. Bauhaus Dessau, ground plan. Bauhaus-Archiv Online, [https://www.bauhaus.de/en/sammlung/6299\\_sammlung\\_online/](https://www.bauhaus.de/en/sammlung/6299_sammlung_online/).

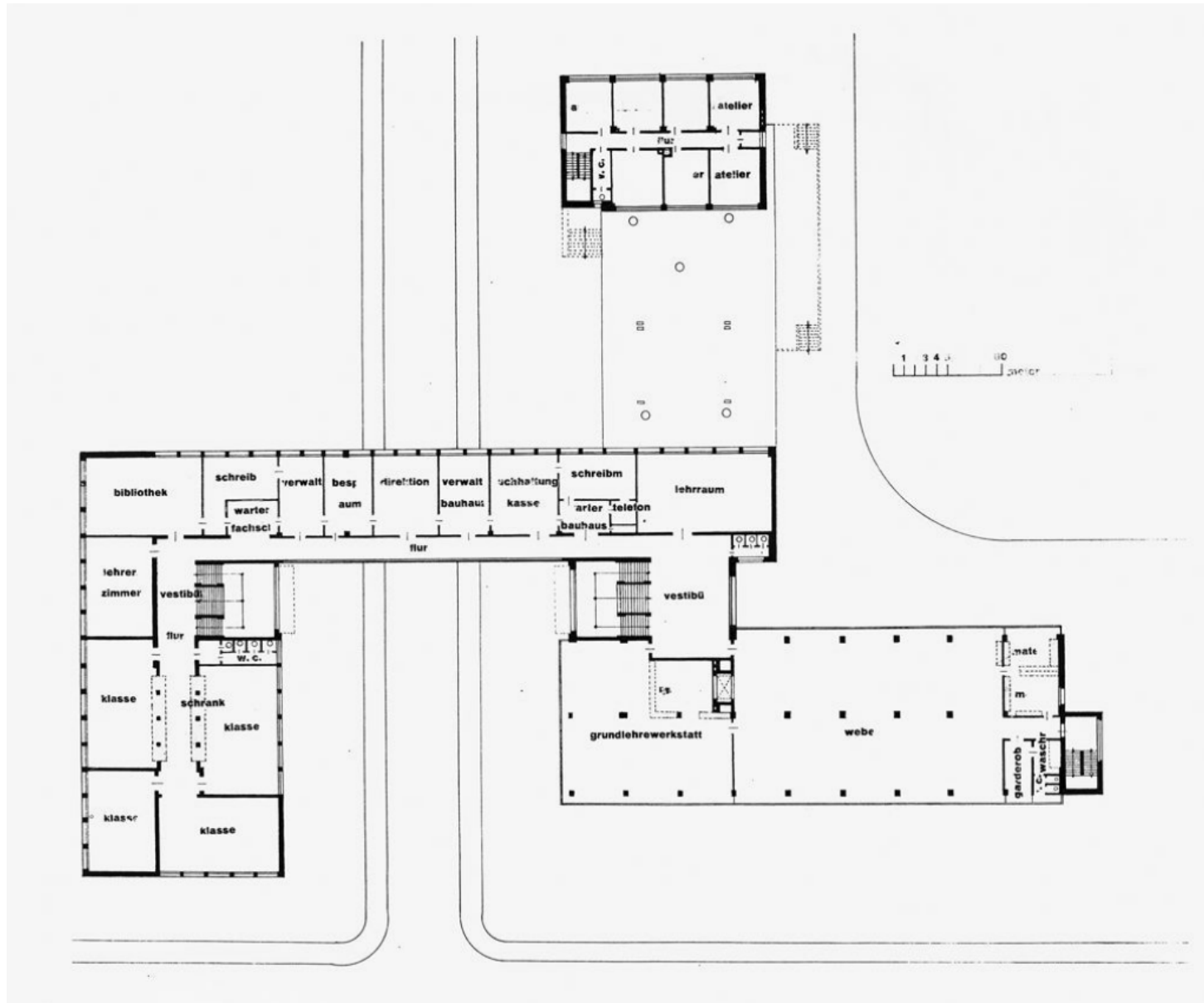


Figure 7. Bauhaus Dessau, first floor plan. Bauhaus-Archiv Online, [https://www.bauhaus.de/en/sammlung/6299\\_sammlung\\_online/](https://www.bauhaus.de/en/sammlung/6299_sammlung_online/)

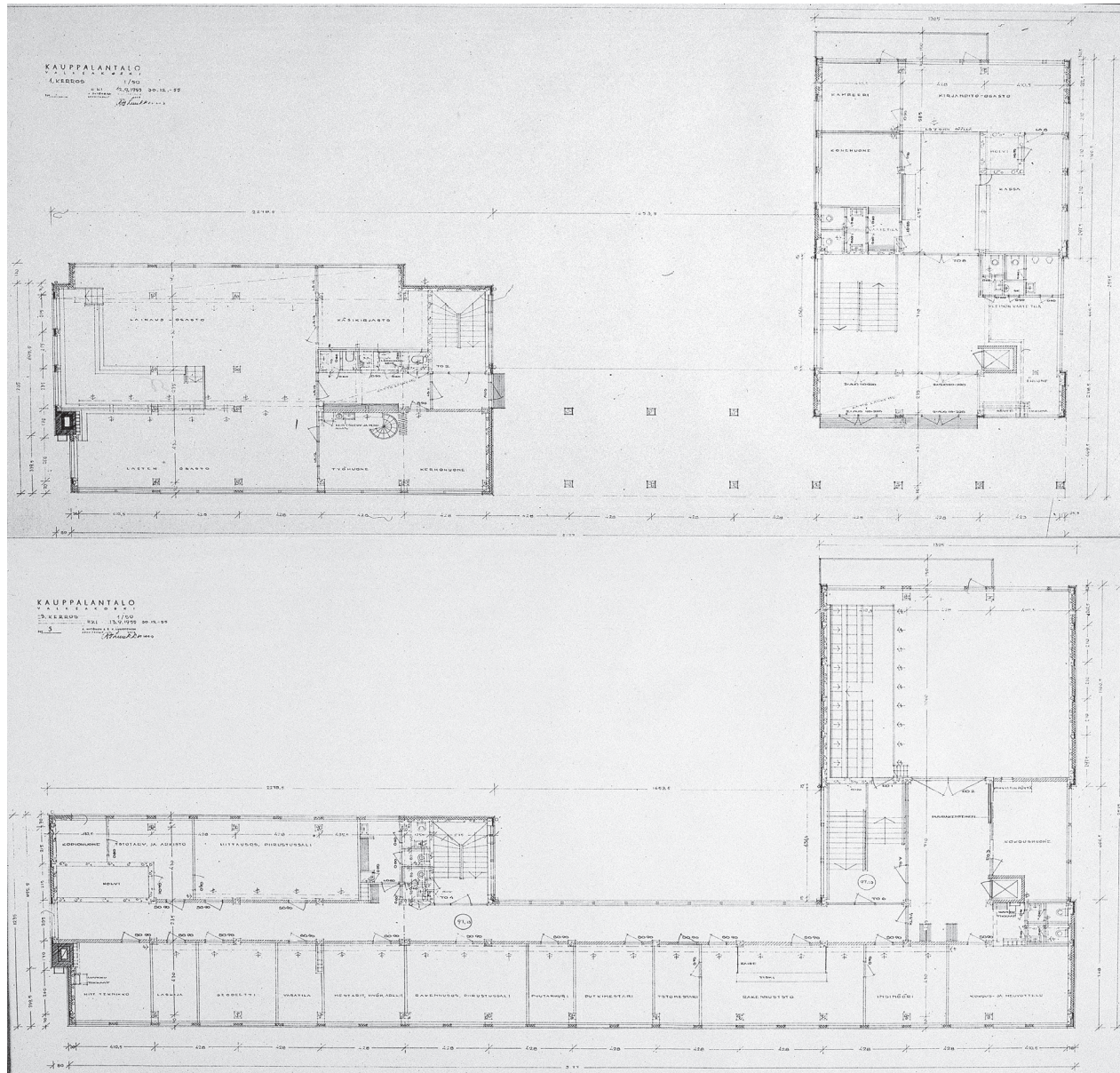
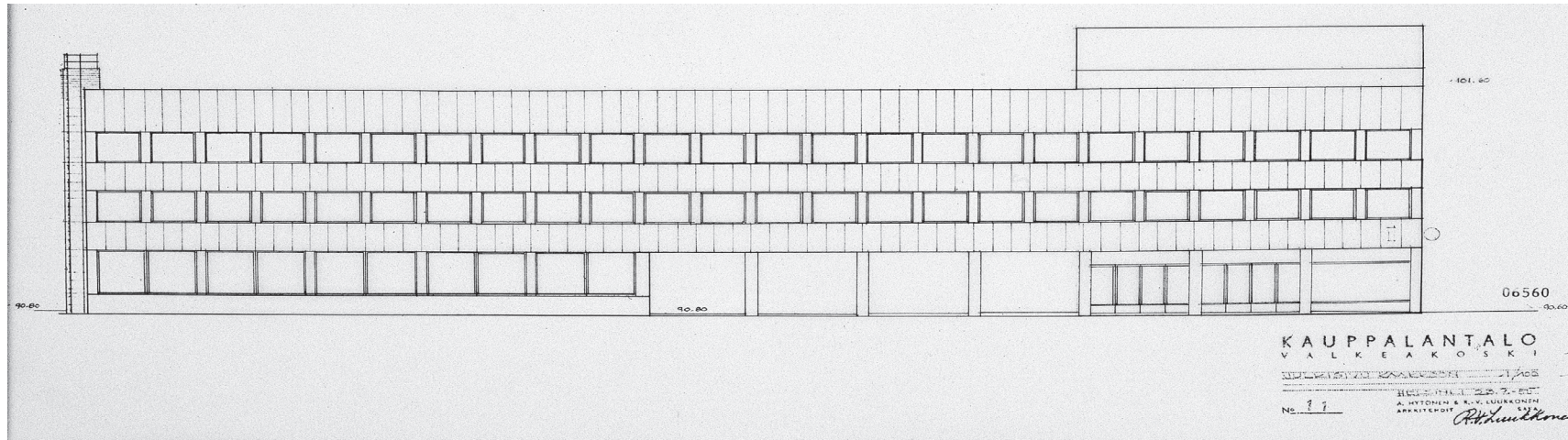
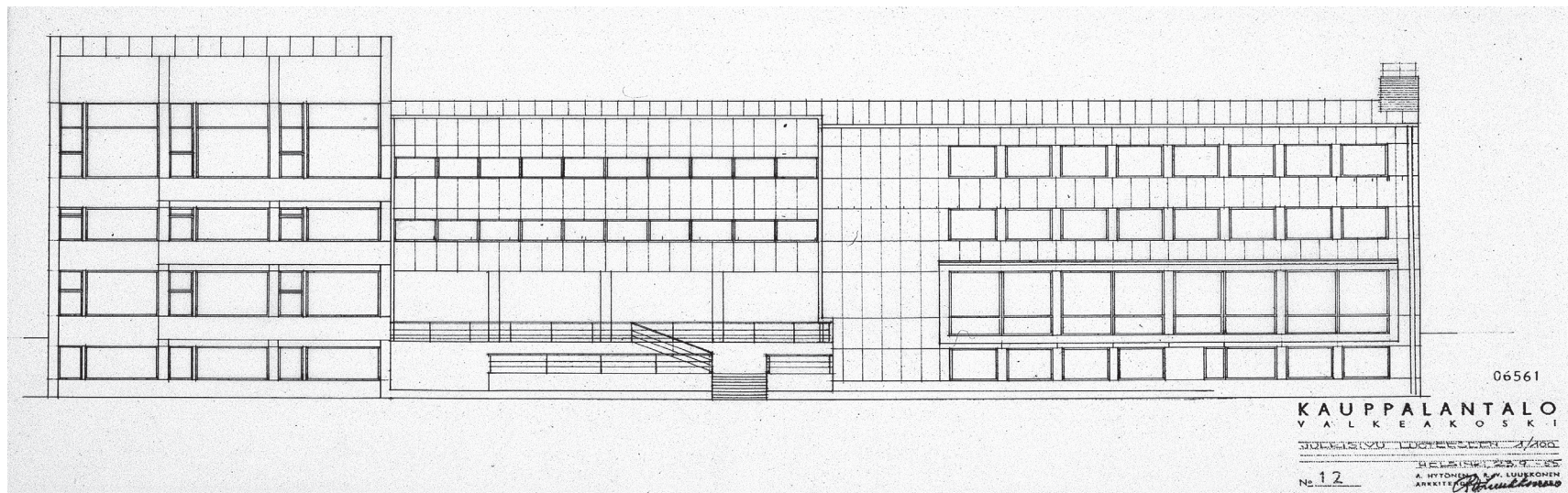


Figure 8. Risto-Veikko Luukkonen, municipal hall in Valkeakoski, plans 1st and 2nd floor, 1955 (1950). Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 323; Valkeakoski Municipality.

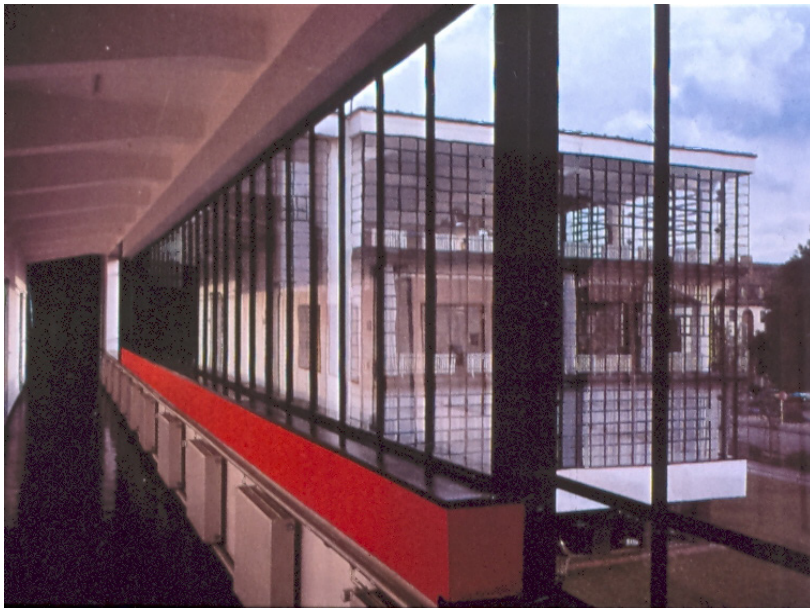


Figures 9-10. Risto-Veikko Luukkonen, municipal hall in Valkeakoski, drawings 1955: entrance façade towards the south east, and façade towards the canal. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 324-25; Valkeakoski Municipality.





**Figure 11.** Risto-Veikko Luukkonen, municipal hall in Valkeakoski, 1956. The bridge element with its side corridor. Photo: Gerd Bloxham Zettersten.



**Figure 12.** Bauhaus Dessau, interior of bridge element with side corridor, view towards the south and the workshop wing with its curtain walls.

view towards the centre of the municipality [Figure 13].

Meanwhile, in the Valkeakoski town hall the suspended glass façade, a prominent feature famously used in the Bauhaus Dessau building on its workshop wing as a “curtain wall”, is here used more modestly to expose the main staircase, which appears in a side-ways view behind a large glass window [Figure 14]. This usage was already becoming an ubiquitous feature on large public buildings in modernist architecture. A variant, more advanced usage is seen in the city hall in Rødovre, Denmark, from 1954–56, by internationally known modernist architect Arne Jacobsen; here the suspended steel staircase is turned with its front facing the suspended glass façade which forms the entire back wall of the main volume [Figures 15–16].

As regards the white, non-ornamented wall planes and sheer planar quality so prominent in the Bauhaus Dessau building, it had made inroads – also by way of the Deutscher Werkbund Stuttgart residential exhibition of 1927 – in Nordic modernist architecture already by 1930; the groundbreaking Stockholm exhibition of that year established it as







Figure 13. Risto-Veikko Luukkonen, municipal hall in Valkeakoski, winter view from the canal. The international architecture reference is obvious. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 333; photo: Rauno Mäntylä, Valkeakoski Municipality.



Figure 14. Risto-Veikko Luukkonen, municipal hall in Valkeakoski, photo showing the main staircase behind a glass panel façade, connecting the council chamber wing and the bridge element. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 326; Museum of Finnish Architecture.

the new mode. For the purpose of resisting damage from the acidity of the air caused by the industry, the Valkeakoski variant solution was found to be the use of light-coloured flat tiles, specifically invented and fabricated while at the same time adapting the modernist “whiteness” as a signal consistent with the new architectural ideology.<sup>29</sup> It is being made clear that the token of the time was a neo-rationalized functionality in the order of the pioneering modernism; as a building exhibiting a public symbolic status it must also be characteristically elegant.

In the Bauhaus Dessau building Gropius had given the three wings distinctly different functions: class rooms in the north wing, administration in the bridge element, workshops in the spacious south volume, student hostel in the east wing, which was connected through a lower building link to the school wings via a *Kantine* (canteen) and an *Aula* (auditorium). The identification of function with building volume within an institutional complex was new. As the needs grew in the Nordic countries during the 1930s and 40s for combinations of different functions, both administrative and cultural, within a city hall complex, so did the variants of syntax of plan





Figure 15. Arne Jacobsen, city hall in Rødovre, 1954-56. The suspended steel staircase in the main lobby facing a curtain wall, towards the back. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 342; photo: Strüwing.

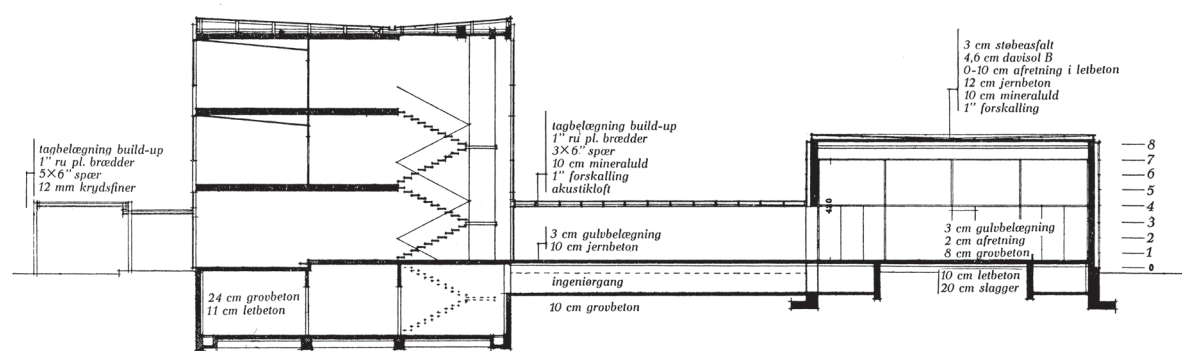


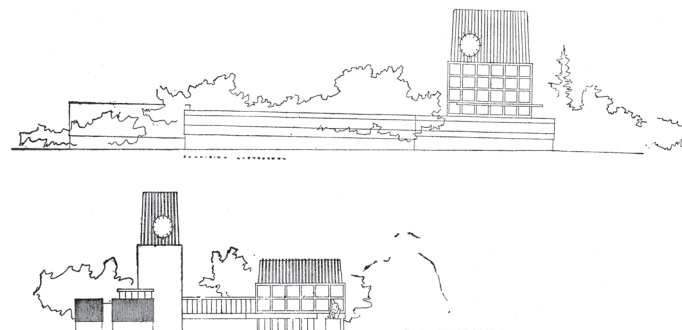
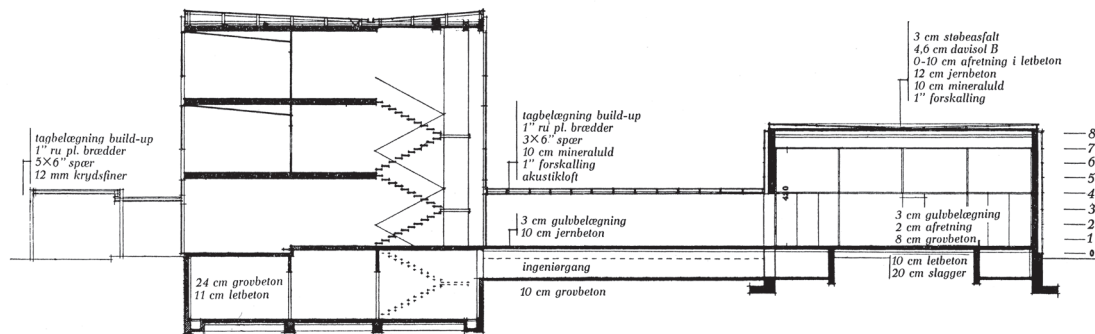
Figure 16. Arne Jacobsen, city hall in Rødovre, drawing. Section through the lobby in the main building, and the corridor connecting it with the council chamber. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 340.

forms develop into a wealth of solutions. The result could at worst become a “conglomerate” of building units of monumental size, ill befitting a small-town urban profile, something which was debated in Sweden and Norway in 1940–42.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, one early, celebrated example of a combination of functions – for the addition of a cinema and library – was the competition for a city hall for Søllerød in Denmark in 1939, where the program had specified the use of two main building volumes. It resulted in several solutions of groupings on the spacious grounds, but the winning project (built in 1940–42) by Arne Jacobsen and Flemming Lassen was

instead a single body of two connected, same-directional wings that were elegantly staggered in relation to each other.<sup>31</sup>

One final, mature example of the asymmetrical grouping trend may be included here. This is Yrjö Lindegren’s winning competition project for a city hall in Kajaani, Finland, in 1950, which was never built.<sup>32</sup> It was to include an assembly hall that could also double as a theatre, as well as a court unit and a library. The basis for Lindegren’s solution was a large square courtyard, almost entirely built around, but with an opening towards the city beneath a bridge element in one corner. This yields an asymmetrical U-plan figure of





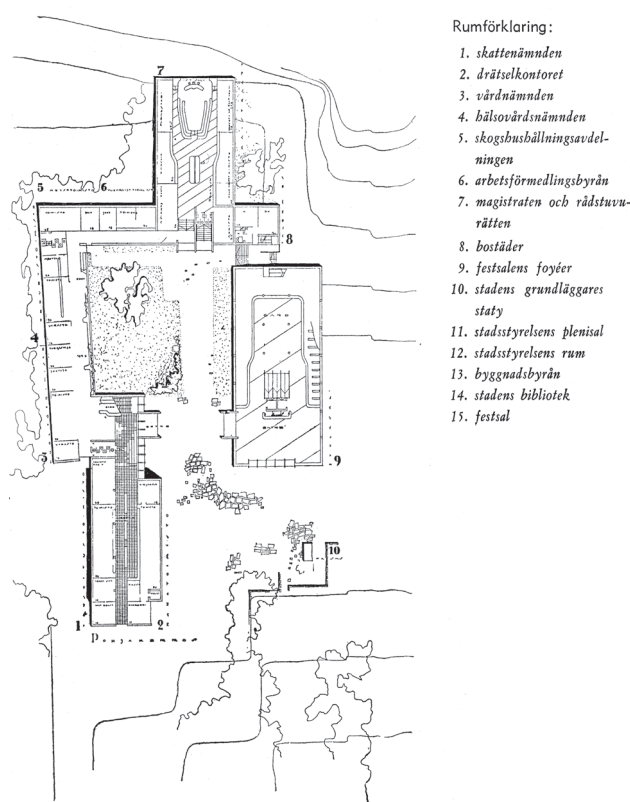
low buildings, which at each end of the U terminates with a larger building volume placed diagonally across from one another as markers, the taller one containing the administration offices and session rooms, the other the assembly hall. Meanwhile the diagonal axis from the portal across the city hall courtyard leads up a slight incline into an opposite, barely pointed corner [Figures 17–18]. It was the courtyard figure or piazza that had taken over the interest of the architects in monumental projects in the 1940s.<sup>33</sup>

### Consolidation in the 1950s? A Conclusion

By the mid-1950s when the Valkeakoski municipal hall was built the architectonic signals of international aesthetic affiliation were already taken for granted, having become an

Figure 17. Yrjö Lindegren, sketch in connection with the competition for a city hall in Kajana/Kaajani 1950; perspective, pencil drawing. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 172; Museum of Finnish Architecture.

Figure 18. Yrjö Lindegren, competition project for a city hall in Kajana/Kajaani 1950, 1st prize. Two facades and situation/1st floor plan. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 173.



explicit trend in Finland. However, this was not the case when the building was first designed in 1950. Instead this very project belonged to the vanguard of the reaction to postwar general empiricism which had been setting in within the Nordic countries, as stated above. The fundamental idea of the project solution, its plan and its construction – which in themselves are early examples of the 1950s’ favouring of the grid plan and construction using prefabricated elements – is taken further in the choice of materials and the new constructional solutions that are reached five years later.

Generally at the start of the 1950s there are new pressures dictated by economy and technology which affect the process of production within architecture; rationalization and industrial construction become increasingly essential.<sup>34</sup> The central question, raised in the introduction, of “objectification” vs. “codification” of impulses has lost meaning by now. What could be seen in the Valkeakoski process was how decisions on a local level were being steered by controlling factors in the period, but are taken advantage of locally in new on-the-spot solutions. In a comparison the contemporary Rødovre

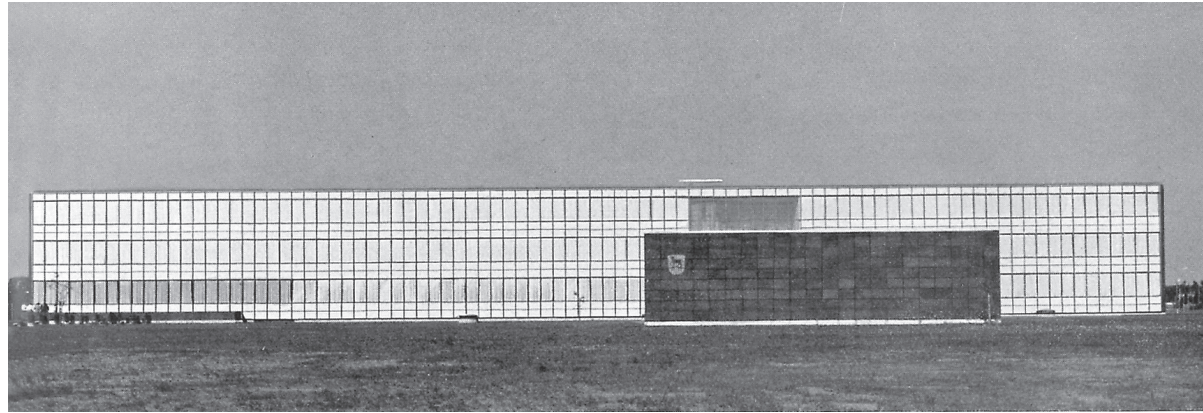


Figure 19. Arne Jacobsen, city hall in Rødovre, façade seen from the west with the council chamber wing before it. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 343; photo: Strüwing.

city hall, mentioned above for its suspended steel staircase, differs entirely through its process of rationalized prefabrication and the dominant use of glass, itself a result of a fascination for technology which is guided by both economic and aesthetic factors [Figure 19]. The accelerating technologization of international building construction is here for the first time in a monumental building task in the Nordic countries employed as an end in itself.

This development was criticized by some contemporary architectural writers. Even if, in a benevolent and accommodating read-

ing, one could here characterize it as a meeting between two opposed ideologies: a dominant objectivist philosophical stand and a more diffuse, romantic subjectivity. At the same time the development was seen as a betrayal of the central principle of the pioneering modernism of the 1920s and 30s, now an aestheticized and mannered neo-functionalism which was the opposite of the objective, generative modus and spirit of the modernist pioneers. Here we may compare with Gropius’ early vision of vibrant, organic architectonics brought into life by an animated yet rational, “machine” method-of-approach:



The artificial desires to conquer the natural, to find release from the antithesis in a new kind of fusion: this process is realized in a struggle of spirit with material. The spirit creates a new kind of life which is different from nature's.<sup>35</sup>

This proposal for an awakening had at first inspired the Nordic pioneers. However, a conclusion appears to be that the consolidation seen in the 1950s is two-faced. The paradigm for compositional analysis has changed with the times. The fact is that in the 1950s the development had moved on, but it could not have taken the form it did without the initial impetus created by that inspired building, the Bauhaus Dessau, in its function as a breakthrough and as the initiation of ideas within the early Bauhaus movement. Stating anything else would be a counterfactual argumentation. There were complex, related, international influences at play. What we see happen exemplifies an ongoing historical evolution in our time. Therefore, discussing on the basis of plan form and building elements what types of assimilation may be seen by the 1950s as a post-Bauhaus phenomenon appears a bit too indefinite an exercise. The delineation of an evolution should suffice.

## Endnotes

- 1 The research underlies my dissertation of 2000, Gerd Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur. Kritisk regionalisering i nordiska stadshus 1900–1955* (Stockholm: Arkitektur Förlag, 2000).
- 2 Walter Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press 1965/66). Originally published in 1935.
- 3 Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, 85.
- 4 James Marston Fitch, *Walter Gropius* (N.Y.: George Braziller, Inc., Masters of World Architecture, 1960), 11. The sentences set in italics are quotes made by Fitch from Gropius' manifesto, while here the plain typography shows Fitch's own comment.
- 5 Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, 20f.
- 6 Panayotis Tournikiotis, *The Historiography of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The M.I.T Press, 1999).
- 7 Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (N.Y. and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1966). Originally published in 1932 under the title *The International Style. Architecture Since 1922*.
- 8 The concept of genealogies in architectural historiography, and different versions of them, is discussed in depth by Tournikiotis, *The Historiography of Modern Architecture*, ch.1. The historian Nikolaus Pevsner, in his *Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius*, 1936, was one who identified Gropius with the rise of the modern movement, setting up a Gropius genealogy of three model buildings, as proposed here, but in which the third building was the model factory for the Deutscher Werkbund exhibition of 1914. This genealogy was objected to in 1960 by Reyner Banham, in his *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*; cf. Tournikiotis, 149.
- 9 Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, 47.
- 10 Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, 47.
- 11 Cf. Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, 23–25.
- 12 Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture. A Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson 1985, revised edition), 114. Originally published in 1980.
- 13 Cf. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, chapters 2 and 3.
- 14 An important recent publication, presenting significant national texts in English translation and covering architectural critical history from the mid-1920s on, with overview introductions for each nation by specialist architectural historians, is Michael Asgaard Andersen (ed.), *Nordic Architects Write. A documentary anthology* (Oxford and New York: Routledge 2008).
- 15 Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 103ff and note 35.
- 16 For a full account and discussion of international influence, cf. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*. ch.2. For a comprehensive general survey of international influences, in particular German ones into Sweden, with full literature references, see Atli Magnus Seelow, "From the Continent to the North—German Influence on Modern Architecture in Sweden", *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift/Journal of Art History* 85:1 (Stockholm 2016): 44–62. A recent volume of critical articles throwing light specifically on the evolution of Bauhaus design influence in the Nordic countries is Tobias Hoffmann (ed.): *Nordic Design. Die Antwort aufs Bauhaus. Nordic Design. The Response to the Bauhaus* (Bröhan-Museum, Landesmuseum für Jugendstil, Art Deco und Funktionalismus, Stuttgart 2019).
- 17 Cf. Raija-Liisa Heinonen, "Uuteen arkkitehtuuriin. Ulkomainen arkkitehtuurikirjallisuus Suomessa 1920- ja 1930-luvulla", in: *Taidehistoriallisia Tutkimuksia/Konsthistoriska Studier*



2 (Helsinki 1976), 13–32. This is an account of the foreign architectural literature in Finland between 1928 and 1935, with a summary in Swedish.

18 Under the leadership of the urban planner Uno Åhrén as chief editor 1929–32 *Byggmästaren* became the most representative organ in the Nordic countries for the new movement within residential building and urban planning, modeled on the previous, Danish, critical journal *Kritisk Revy* 1926–28; cf. the following discussion.

19 A relevant, full monographic study of the individual contributor/architect Edvard Heiberg, which at the same time reflects international influence into all the Nordic countries and contemporary critical writing, is Leif Leer Sørensen, *Edvard Heiberg og dansk funktionalisme--en arkitekt og hans samtid 1897-1958* (Copenhagen: Arkitektens Forlag, 2000). For a brief discussion of the differing Danish position in design, cf. Christopher Harlang, “Negotiating with the Surrounding Society”, in Asgaard Andersen (ed.), *Nordic Architects Write. A documentary anthology*, 9-17, as well as Tobias Hoffmann, “Danish Traditionalism—More Functionalist than the Bauhaus”, in Hoffmann (ed.): *Nordic Design. Die Antwort aufs Bauhaus. Nordic Design. The Response to the Bauhaus*, 156–61.

20 Markelius was at that time the most prominent of the Swedish younger architects, beside Gunnar Asplund. For his relation to Alvar Aalto, cf. the biography by Aalto’s friend Göran Schildt, *Moderna tider. Alvar Aaltos möte med funktionalismen* (Keuru: Wahlström & Widstrand 1985), 46-58; in English translation, *Alvar Aalto: The Decisive Years* (New York, Rizzoli 1986).

21 *Byggmästaren* 28, vol 10 (Stockholm 1931): 149–56.

22 Cf. Seelow, “From the Continent to the North—German Influence on Modern Architecture in Sweden”: 54–56.

23 The periodical PLAN, where the editors belonged to a group of recently educated architects

who formed the Association of Socialist Architects, came out in four issues in 1933. See PLAN, “Our Agenda”, in Asgaard Andersen (ed.), *Nordic Architects Write. A documentary anthology*, 227–37. PLAN wanted to go further than *Kritisk Revy* and *Byggmästaren* in their social focus.

24 Cf. for example, Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture. Settings and Rituals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1985), 702.

25 Cf. Frampton, *Modern Architecture. A Critical History*, ch. 15 and p. 138.

26 Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, 82.

27 Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 109–12.

28 For this case study and the following analysis, see Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 321–34.

29 For a detailed description of the production of these tiles, see Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 330-31.

30 Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 151f.

31 Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 145.

32 Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 172–74.

33 Cf. the discussion of grouping syntax and analysis, and in relation to the courtyard or piazza, in Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, 165–77.

34 For this discussion in-depth, cf. Bloxham Zettersten, *Nordiskt perspektiv på arkitektur*, ch. 3 in its entirety.

35 Walter Gropius, the Bauhaus Manifesto, 1919, cited by Keijo Petäjä, “The perception of real space”, in: *Abacus. Yearbook 1982* (Helsinki: SRM 1983), 247.

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# The Influence of German Siedlungen and Bauhaus on Helsinki's Prewar Housing Companies

Juhana Heikonen

This article sheds light on the Bauhaus movement and other types of German influence on 1930s housing companies in Helsinki by reassessing their reception by the Finnish architectural press at the time.<sup>1</sup> Unlike public sanatoriums, schools, libraries, and so forth, the housing companies were formed autonomously without control from above. Functionalism, as the Finnish interwar architecture is called, had reportedly arrived from Sweden through the close contacts between Finnish and Swedish architects. The main channels of influence were the joint Nordic conferences and other types of cooperation.<sup>2</sup> However, there is little direct proof of this transmission, and most such proof is circumstantial. This paper evaluates both

circumstantial and architectural evidence regarding German influence in the interwar period. Even though the scope of the Bauhaus movement and German influence is broad, ranging from town planning to spatial arrangement, the focus is on a single decade, a single building type, in a single city.

The greatest achievement of the Bauhaus movement in terms of volume was the new approach to affordable housing. However, the Bauhaus movement itself resulted in only a small number of architectural works, except for architect Walter Gropius' (1883–1969) own architectural practice with his students. The main volume of new buildings was the work of such architects as Ernst May (1886–1970), Bruno Taut (1880–1938), Martin Wagner (1885–1957), Hans Scharoun (1893–1972), and Hugo Häring (1882–1958). Both teachers and students were involved during the 1920s and 1930s in new

large-scale housing projects in Frankfurt, Berlin, and other German cities, as originally required by the new Weimar constitution of 1919, which attempted to tackle the housing crisis via new financing models. These new *Siedlungen* (subsidized housing estates) were made possible by the earlier models of *Baugenossenschaften*, or housing cooperatives,<sup>3</sup> which acted as the main contractors and owners of the property and were partially subsidized by the city or the state. This form of cooperative building was naturally in line with Walter Gropius' 1919 manifesto and based on cooperation between different parties.

## **The Finnish Joint-Stock Housing Companies, or Asunto-osakeyhtiö (Bostadsaktiebolaget)**

The city of Helsinki did not have the resources to subsidize any kind of housing,





and thus, the housing crisis was dire. However, the Finnish 1926 *Asunto-osakeyhtiölaki*, which replaced the 1895 Limited Liability Companies Act previously used to form jointly owned real estate ventures was partially developed for this purpose: to help build, finance, and maintain jointly owned real estate properties.<sup>4</sup> In short, a *housing company* is a normal joint-stock company that enables the stockowner (in many cases the owner-occupier, the thus habits and the apartment corresponding the stock) to own a specific flat. This new system enabled both the stockowner and the company to borrow money and finance the operation. This also enabled lending banks short on capital to borrow from abroad. Founding a company was a surprisingly effective way to battle the housing shortage, and it was also favored by the mainly social democratic cooperatives, which functioned as umbrella organizations for their members. The law proved to be a success both in increasing housing production and competition.

The Finnish *Asunto-osakeyhtiö* is a similar housing arrangement as with various type of American condominiums, *Wohnungseigentümergeinschaften*,<sup>5</sup> and so forth.

However, since the Finnish arrangement is legally a joint stock company, the history of mass housing in Finland differs from the rest of Europe. The *housing company* is based on private home ownership, comparable to real estate ownership, and therefore it should not be confused with various forms of tenant housing, although the stockowner is fully capable of renting out the apartment. In practice, this means that jointly shared real estate properties are built, traded, and administered as a joint stock *housing company*.<sup>6</sup> Compared to the widespread Swedish *bostadsrätt* system (*Dauerwohnrecht*, right for long term rent), which is as a system more closely resembling German models, the Finnish model was based on self-organizing and was more independent. Since the developers differed for each house, the houses also architecturally differed from one another based on personal preferences and were not part of some centrally organized greater entity (as in Germany).

The founders of these companies varied greatly. The majority were normal developers who built to sell. Those in the minority included the state, cities, Finnish co-ops and various *ad hoc* groups, such as railroad

workers, bankers, professors, or officers. They hired their own supervisors, builders, and other experts, and, as can be expected, oversaw the work of the architect as well. In all cases, the city of Helsinki provided the town plan and sold or rented the land.

### Foreign Influences

The earliest and still one of the best accounts of Helsinki's prewar housing situation has been written by architect Hilding Ekelund, *Helsingin kaupungin historia* (1962).<sup>7</sup> In Ekelund's view, the prewar influences came first from Sweden, Denmark, and Italy and then later Germany. According to Ekelund, Finnish functionalism was influenced by the 1930 Stockholm exhibition, but the influence had been greatly overestimated in later research.<sup>8</sup> The production and design of Helsinki's housing companies, and the professional press of the time, support Ekelund's claim.

Later studies have placed more importance on Nordic co-operation but offer no decisive conclusion as to which source was the most important since the new influences were brought to Finland by individual architects. The Swedish influence has been em-



phasized by Riitta Nikula and Pekka Helin as well as Petri Neuvonen in the updated reprint of the history of apartment buildings from 1880 to 2000.<sup>9</sup> According to Raija-Liisa Heinonen, the new wave was driven primarily by architects Alvar Aalto (1886–1976), Erik Bryggman (1891–1955), and Pauli E. Blomstedt (1900–1935), followed by Hilding Ekelund (1893–1984), Erkki Huttunen (1901–1956), and Yrjö Lindgren (1900–1952). These architects stood somehow in opposition to, according to Heinonen, the old guard of Sigurd Frosterus (1876–1956), Armas Lindgren (1874–1929), J. S. Sirén (1889–1961), Eliel Saarinen (1873–1950), and Lars Sonck (1870–1956). While Heinonen’s seminal work on Finland’s early functionalism does not concentrate on the influence of German *Siedlungen* or the Bauhaus movement as such, it also finds the German influence especially important with respect to town planning and public buildings.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the present article concentrates on a different group of architects and genre than previous research. Architect Kirmo Mikkola (1934–1986), in *Transition from classicism to functionalism in Scandinavia* (1985), has summarized the Nordic influence as fol-

lows: it was vital for 1920s classicism, which gave birth to functionalism.<sup>11</sup> Even though this transition included both public buildings and housing in the Nordic countries, Finnish housing took a slightly different route to functionalism due to private funding.

Research on German *Siedlungen*, or Bauhaus influence, has mostly focused on the Congrès internationaux d’architecture moderne, or International Congresses of Modern Architecture (CIAM), on building fairs, or in some cases, on direct person-to-person influence, like in the case of Aino (1894–1949) and Alvar Aalto. Recent important studies include the Bröhan Museum’s exhibition publication *Nordic Design. Die Antwort aufs Bauhaus*.<sup>12</sup> However, this publication does not focus on housing except for briefly mentioning Aalto’s two housing companies in Turku (1929). Regarding German influence in general, Atli Seelow argues that German influence was crucial in the development of 1930s Swedish architecture. Seelow also suggests that functionalism arrived in Finland through the work of Swedish architect Sven Markelius (1889–1972).<sup>13</sup> Markelius certainly had influence, but his own contributions to housing were modest, namely in the

form of *Berget 10* (1930) and *Kollektivhuset* (1935) in Stockholm. These projects do not bear much architectural similarities to Finnish examples.

The general research literature on housing companies in Finland includes *Kerrostalo 1880–1940, Kansanosake - Suomalaisen asunto-osakeyhtiön vaiheet*, and *Arkkitehtuurimme vuosikymmenet 1930–1950*.<sup>14</sup> The most comprehensive architectural study on housing companies in Helsinki is Tommi Lindh’s *Töölöläisfunktionalismin 4 vaihetta*. The study concentrates both on changing urban planning practices, the developers, and the lesser-known architects responsible for the new functionalist housing architecture. Lindh finds Hamburg’s new *Siedlung* architecture the most comparable to Helsinki’s functionalist architecture.<sup>15</sup>

In Finland, architectural style and thinking changed swiftly from Nordic Classicism to functionalism at the end of the 1920s and early 1930s. Even though it is nearly impossible to pinpoint how or why such a turn occurred, it has been quite generally thought that most of the influence came through the close collaboration among Nordic architects, such as Finnish architects Alvar Aalto, Erik Brygg-



man, and Hilding Ekelund collaborating with their Swedish counterparts Sven Markelius and Gunnar Asplund (1885–1940). Indeed, the ties were close especially because of the common language they all used – Swedish. However, there is also a different line of enquiry that concerns Finnish architects traveling to Germany and the resulting close collaboration, such as in the case of Alvar Aalto and Aarne Ervi (1910–1977).

The building and architectural press was mainly interested in trends in the U.S., the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany. On the quantitative level, the Dutch and the Germans were quick to build much new modern housing, unlike the Danes, Swedes, or even the French. Did architects travel to see the new types of architecture, then? Yes, they did, and Germany would have been the first choice for most. Beginning in 1914, the new steamship *Ariadne* took travelers from Helsinki to Stettin in just two days on a weekly basis. The focus of this article is on Bauhaus architects such as Walter Gropius and Ernst Neufert (1900–1986), their work, and their possible influence on Finnish housing company architecture through an assessment of the Finnish architectural press and

how it was stylistically or methodologically influenced by the Bauhaus movement.

### The Developers

Even though the construction activity of housing companies in Helsinki was first popular among the owner-occupiers and related investors, professional developers and master builders came along at the beginning of the 1920s. One of the most productive was master builder Leuto A. Pajunen (1888–1950), who built and founded especially so-called communal kitchen housing companies, where even the largest apartments rarely had fully equipped kitchens. This was not due to Soviet-inspired constructivist housing with similar arrangements, but instead, due to post-war inflation and a lack of means to afford private services. Food was prepared in the communal kitchens and sent to the apartments via service elevators. Pajunen built these communal kitchen houses between 1920 and 1927. The journal *Rakennustaito* later remarked on Sven Markelius' collective house (*Kollektivhuset*) in Stockholm by saying that Pajunen had already done the same, but it was never successful.<sup>16</sup> Architects Elna Kiljander (1889–1970) and Gustaf Strengel

(1878–1937) were more positive in their reviews due to far better other communal services in *Kollektivhuset*.<sup>17</sup>

In the 1930s, many professional developers and master builders started to unite and take charge of constructing and founding the housing companies. Before the 1929 financial crash, the more adventurous developers had caused many bankruptcies and a lot of negative publicity. For this reason, and for security reasons with respect to future stockholders, many developments were arranged among trusted friends, colleagues, or trade union members. Some of the professional developers and master builders returned and, for example, in Pajunen's case they did so with a modern touch. The change from stripped-down classical architecture to functionalism is noticeable, since Pajunen's own designs were widely considered of poor quality, with overly large frame depths, dark hallways, and unpractical plans. In a joint project with his colleague Uno Lehtinen (1934), differences in quality could still be observed between the neighboring houses, since Lehtinen hired architect Helge Lundström to design his own half of the joint project.<sup>18</sup>



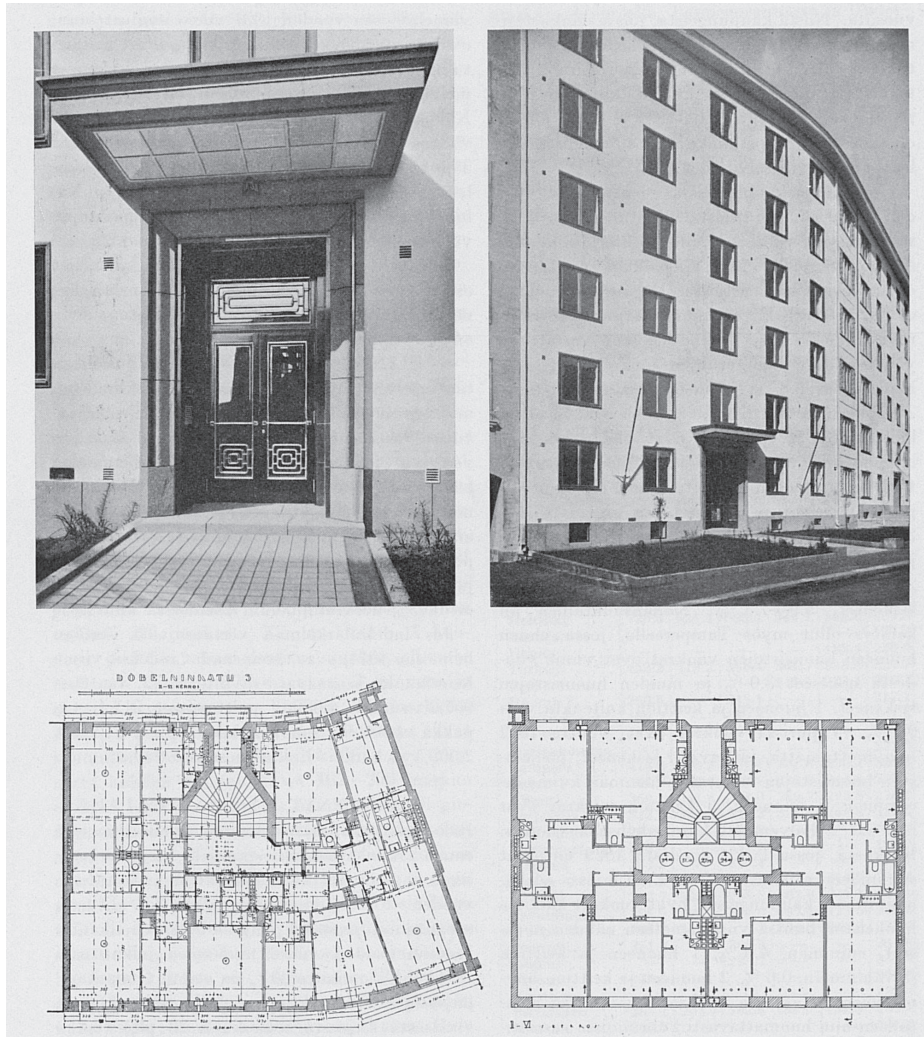


Figure 1. As. Oy Helsingin Döbelninkatu 3 (street view and plan on left side, Leuto A. Pajunen, 1934) and As. Oy Döbelninkatu 1 (street view and plan on right, Helge Lundström, 1934) show the preferences of two different designers, even though the façades are near identical except for the pompous marquee in Pajunen's design. *Rakennustaito*, no. 19 (15.9.1934): 19-20.

Until the 1929 financial crisis, most of Helsinki's housing company developers and founders were owner-occupiers. By the time building activities resumed in 1934, this had changed to the economic benefit of commercial developers. This naturally caused a great uproar among the general public, and new nonprofit developers, such as HAKA, SATO, Asuntoemissio Oy, and Asuntohankinta Oy, were founded to meet the needs of lower income families.<sup>19</sup> This was also due to Social Democratic Party winning the Conservative Party in Helsinki's communal elections (1930–1945). Co-operatives like HOK and Elanto had also been quite active in building small-scale housing companies for their members, which were purchased in installments or via direct housing company loans. The early adoption of functionalist design can also be seen in these projects.

Of the developers working at the time, Lauri and Lasse Reitz especially promoted functionalist architecture by architect Jalmari Peltonen (1893–1969), who designed major-





Figure 2. As. Oy Pääskylänrinne (Georg Jägerroos and Antero Pernaja, 1933), built by the HOK-Elanto cooperative. HOK-Elanto built several housing companies for their members during the 1930s. One of the common features of these companies was Elanto groceries, or other cooperatives services, such as restaurants. Helsinki City Museum.

ity of their projects.<sup>20</sup> Jalmari Peltonen's most famous housing company was most probably As. Oy<sup>21</sup> Etelä-Hesperiankatu 22, which was built for Lauri Reitz personally and is still owned by the foundation he created. One of its distinctive characteristics is the famous restaurant Elite, designed by designer Werner West (1890–1959) and realized by Stockmann/Keravan Puusepänteollisuus Oy. Another good example is As. Oy Topeliuksenkatu 1, by Reitz and Peltonen. The monumental stairwells of this corner house are in the style of Weiße Stadt in Berlin.<sup>22</sup> However, Reitz did not share the modern German idea of creating small frame depths for reasons of cost effectiveness.<sup>23</sup> This marks one of the main differences between the Finnish and the German developers.<sup>24</sup> Though Finnish architects mostly agreed publicly with the Germans, they did not always follow the German example in their work.

The main problem when discussing functionalist, or *Siedlung*, influence on the housing companies in Helsinki had to do with the adoption of new architectural ideas into an older grid town plan. In Germany, or Sweden, most modern architecture was built *carte blanche* on no previously existing town

plan. This would change after the Meilahti district master plan was approved in Helsinki 1939. In most cases, the influences of the developers and architects can be seen in the apartment plans, façade detailing, and construction technology. The *Siedlung* would be fully adopted after the war.

### **The Nordic Building Forums and Other European Fairs**

Nordic building forums were organized in Stockholm (1927), Helsinki (1932), and Oslo (1938). They have been considered very important for the exchange of ideas and architectural development in Finland. Other major Swedish building fairs have also been considered crucial for the turn in the 1920s from Nordic Classicism to functionalism.<sup>25</sup> Especially the Stockholm Exhibition (1930) showcased functionalistic architecture in the Nordic countries and was inspired by Stuttgart's *Weissenhofsiedlung* (1927). Though such influence cannot be disputed, it is important to remember that at this point functionalist architecture in the Nordic countries was still quite limited, or almost non-existent. The exhibitions did not showcase new housing as such. CIAM was another influential

and widely publicized disseminator of ideas, but Alvar Aalto was the only Finnish member of the organization.

Alvar and Aino Aalto had personal contacts with those in the Bauhaus movement and within CIAM circles. Alvar Aalto visited the Nordic building forums and new German *Siedlungen* estates and participated as the sole Finnish architect at the 1929 Frankfurt congress.<sup>26</sup> A particular Finnish architectural highlight of 1929 was the 700-year anniversary of the city of Turku. The journal *Arkki-tehti* devoted its June edition solely to it. The fairground pavilions, designed by Alvar Aalto and Erik Bryggman, were laid out like a German *Siedlung* housing estate and the kiosks were clearly modeled according to German and Dutch examples with overlapping graphics.<sup>27</sup>

In 1930, a minimum apartment exhibition (*Pienasunnon rationalisointinäyttely*) was arranged in Helsinki Kunsthalle. The main curators were Alvar Aalto and P. E. Blomstedt.<sup>28</sup> In this exhibition, Aino Aalto's first standard kitchen was also on display. The Nordic Building Forum of 1932 in Helsinki was far larger and considered a success. One of the highlights was the lamella competition, and





Figure 3. Southwest Finland Agricultural Cooperative Building, Turku, Alvar Aalto, 1928. Photo: Gustaf Welin, Museum of Finnish Architecture.



Figure 4. Standard Tenement House, Turku, Alvar Aalto, 1929. Photo: Aino Aalto, Museum of Finnish Architecture.



which showcased the cutting edge of modern housing architecture and master planning. Contributors included P. E. Blomstedt, Ekelund, Bryggman, and Kaarlo Borg.<sup>29</sup> At least for the Finnish architects, the long and thin lamellas of the competition would already have been familiar from German architectural publications on the new *Siedlungen* housing estates and *Deutsche Bauausstel-*

*lung* (1931) or from the *Weißenhofsiedlung* lamella itself (Mies van der Rohe, 1927).

The subsequent 1934 *Standard* exhibition in Stockholm received a crushing review from Hilding Ekelund.<sup>30</sup> All in all, most of the architectural press seemed more interested in Sweden's far better and more numerous public housing estates and their efficiency. This can be read in several accounts from

Finnish housing congresses organized at the time to tackle the housing shortage both in cities and the countryside.<sup>31</sup> Even though the Finnish architectural publications' focus on foreign projects was limited, except for travel reports, the near absence of a focus on Swedish projects is remarkable. Even though Sweden hopped onto the *Siedlung* housing estate bandwagon in the mid-1930s, archi-

tect Arvid Stille's (1888–1970) impressive Gärdet in Stockholm was only mentioned in passing in *Byggaren* (7/1934), or else anonymously mentioned by Hilding Ekelund in the context of the Etu-Reijola town plan.

What received wider publicity in the Finnish press was the *Deutsche Bauausstellung* in Berlin (1931). *Arkkitehti* published only Finnish architects' own impressions of the fair. Architect Harald Andersin (1883–1936) was overwhelmed by the fair's quality, but architect Birger Brunila (1882–1979) was dismayed by the fact that Finland was almost the only Nordic country to have a proper exhibition. Hilding Ekelund was not impressed by Mies van der Rohe's or Marcel Breuer's apartment designs and considered them unpractical and even cold. However, Walter Gropius' apartment tower design received much praise, and Ekelund saw strong prospects in it. Ekelund's finishing remarks parodied Germany's current architectural taste, ranging between the traditionalist right wing and the modernist left wing, with Ekelund in favor of the latter. Architect Martti Välikangas (1893–1973) concentrated on the technical and material exhibitions and their value for the forthcoming Nordic Building Forum in

Helsinki since he was also one of the curators of the forum. Välikangas wrote a longer report on the *Deutsche Bauausstellung* in *Rakennustaito*.<sup>32</sup> In this more technical report, he concentrated on housing production costs in Berlin and how much better they had been arranged than in Helsinki.

### Traveling Architects and the Press

The *Grand Tour* of Italy by Nordic architects has been widely considered crucial for the development of post-WWI architecture. The long tradition of traveling through Germany to Italy was seen an important part of completing an architect's education, and most Nordic architects at the time traveled to those countries. They included Alvar and Aino Aalto, Erik Bryggman, Hilding Ekelund, and Eva Kuhlefeldt-Ekelund (1892–1984). These tours produced some fine architecture along with hundreds of sketches depicting Italian *architettura minore*, later to be adapted for churches, schools, and apartment buildings throughout Finland. If Italian influence was self-evident for architects, why not then study modern German architecture on the way to Italy? One of the reasons may be that in general architects never sketched

contemporary architecture, although it was recorded with cameras, especially by Aino Aalto and Eva Kuhlefeldt-Ekelund. One of the other reasons could also have been that new German architecture was immediately published and distributed worldwide.

Gustaf Strengel, the widely traveled architect and promoter of modern lifestyle choices, wrote already in 1931 in *Uusi Suomi* about "The New Europe: 'Siedlung' – The New German Housing and Settlement Type." Strengell carefully explained the *Siedlung* concept to a wider readership, as well as why the free-standing lamella house was better and why they should be built. The lengthy illustrated article included pictures of Neues Frankfurt and Schütte-Lihotzky's Frankfurter Kitchen. The article mentioned all the common architectural design traits of the period: allowing for more sunlight and air circulation.<sup>33</sup> Architect Yrjö Laine continued with the same theme in *Kotiliesi* (Hearth), providing more German examples and showcasing the successes of the Lamella competition (1931).<sup>34</sup>

Of the several published architects' German travel reports, Eva Kuhlefeldt-Ekelund's report from 1931 is of special interest. Kuhle-





feldt-Ekelund already found modern German housing highly impressive just by the staggering number of places being built. Her interest, unlike in other architects' reports, is landscape architecture, utility spaces, and services at the new *Siedlungen* housing estates in Berlin, Frankfurt, and Dessau. Gropius' Dessau-Törten did not impress Kuhlefeldt-Ekelund much since the gardens were less successful.<sup>35</sup> This critical view was shared by architect Vietti Nykänen, who visited Dessau-Törten in 1928. Nykänen favored classical architecture and never followed his colleagues in promoting functionalism. Although he was impressed by the floor plans, the pace of building, and the technological achievements, in his judgment the designs were monotonous and ugly.<sup>36</sup> The article was fully illustrated with plans and sections for readers to form their own opinions. These views differed greatly from those of Sven Markelius, who celebrated Dessau-Törten in the Swedish press.<sup>37</sup>

It is safe to say that most of the architects had visited many of the new German *Siedlungen* housing estates and several of them the Bauhaus Dessau building as well, since it has become internationally famous almost

overnight.<sup>38</sup> After graduation, several Finnish architects either studied or worked in Germany. This was a logical choice due to the fact that the third language for Finns at the time, after Finnish and Swedish, was German or French. Many notable architects had worked in German offices, such as Selim A. Lindqvist (1867–1939) at the office of August Menke in Berlin. In general, in the early twentieth century the most favored places for students of architecture to complete their studies or work were Stockholm, Munich, Berlin, and Vienna.<sup>39</sup> A later Finnish functionalist architect who studied in Germany was Gösta Juslén (1887–1939), who also was well acquainted with Bauhaus and will be discussed later in the article.

The Finnish press was also highly interested in everything German at that time. The press wrote about architects, such as Alvar Aalto's and Erik Bryggman's trips to Dessau, Stuttgart, Berlin, and Hamburg.<sup>40</sup> More important, probably, was the professional press, namely *Arkkitehti/Arkitekten*, *Rakennustaito*, *Byggmästaren*, and *Teknikern*. These journals from early on wrote about German developments and about various building conferences and seminars. Also,

German architecture literature and pieces by the professional press were equally presented along with writings from the Swedish, American, and British press. The professional press also covered these subjects in their travel reports.

There was also much interest in new construction methods. The journal *Rakennustaito* was the most active publisher on this subject, and most of the articles concentrated on the U.S. and Germany. This was due to the new emphasis on the standardization of building parts, such as windows,<sup>41</sup> or new building blocks.<sup>42</sup> The latter topic focused especially on the new technology used in Ernst May's *Neues Frankfurt* and Walter Gropius' Dessau-Törten.

Walter Gropius was closely followed in Finnish circles, and the German building program was of great interest, as evident from the Finnish professional press's numerous book and journal reviews.<sup>43</sup> It would be misleading to say that only architects wholeheartedly adopted German ideas. Building designs also concerned clients and engineers, who began to take charge of the housing industry at the time. The influence of the Bauhaus movement did though begin to



generate interest among construction engineers as well. Paavo Kyrenius (1885–1955), a construction engineer, wrote an article based on Gropius' lecture in Stockholm, saying that he completely agreed with Gropius' grand plans for ten-story apartment blocks and related ideas regarding land policy, the shape of the apartment blocks, master planning, financing, new building materials, and labor force organization and administration. Kyrenius' view was that the efficient concrete high-rise apartment blocks would produce better living than current Finnish town planning.<sup>44</sup> In Helsinki, these types of apartment blocks were constructed after the war.

The Bauhaus publications were also closely followed, which may also have had an influence on *Arkkitehti*'s own layout renewal in the early 1930s. In the August issue of 1935, the editorial board of *Arkkitehti* even made a strong recommendation to use designer Paul Renner's (1878–1956) Futura design in the architectural material submitted for the journal.<sup>45</sup>

### The Aaltos and Bauhaus

Alvar Aalto is discussed separately here since he did not design a single housing com-

pany in Helsinki before the war but still had great influence both at home and abroad. Alvar Aalto had the closest relationship with those in the core of Bauhaus movement, namely through Gropius and artist László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946). The latter also visited Finland in 1931 and gave an enthusiastic interview on Finnish architecture to the newspaper *Turun Sanomat*.<sup>46</sup> The article concentrated more on Siegfried Giedion's appraisal of Alvar Aalto. Moholy-Nagy also directly influenced Aino Aalto's photographic experiments, which can be seen in pictures of the Aaltos' early work.<sup>47</sup> Alvar Aalto's close friend, client, and biographer, Göran Schildt (1917–2009), wrote several other books and articles specifically on Alvar Aalto's relationship with those in the Bauhaus movement. Alvar Aalto never admitted any Bauhaus influence in his work, but his biographer did not believe him and went to great lengths to prove Aalto wrong on the matter.<sup>48</sup> Following Alvar Aalto's early work, similarities can be drawn with Hugo Häring's work.<sup>49</sup> *Arkkitehti* also reviewed the work of Häring, Mies van der Rohe, and others as well as books by Ludwig Hilberseimer and Gropius, so Alvar Aalto must have been acquainted with their projects.

Interior design also received more attention in the press during the interwar years. Reviews of new Bauhaus steel furniture, textiles, cutlery, and pottery were not published, except in the case of Aino Aalto's interior design for the *Maalaistentalo* apartment building.<sup>50</sup> The 1929 issue of *Arkkitehti* also discussed two housing projects by Aino and Alvar Aalto in more detail: *Maalaistentalo* as well as "The Standard Tenement Building." The former was a more traditional and classical corner building with restaurants, a theatre, and other services for members of the co-operative that built it, with all the upper floors divided into apartments and partially decorated by Aino Aalto for the Turku fair with her own designs, Thonet furniture, and Marcel Breuer's Wassily chairs. The latter building was also built by the same contractor, J. Tapani. This tenement building was, however, completely different, even though designed at the same time. Aside from local building regulations and specifications in the site plan itself, it was built as a "lamella" in the German style. It also had curtained walls and a load-bearing system typical of the newly prefabricated concrete floors, supported by prefabricated blocks between the



apartments. These construction styles were already in use on an industrial scale in Germany but not in the Nordic countries. Both projects were completed by the time of the 1929 fair. Everything was marketed under the slogan standardization, a year before Markelius' *Berget 10*.<sup>51</sup>

One of the students of the Bauhaus movement, an assistant to Gropius on several projects, and later a professor of architecture, was Ernst Neufert. He became famous due to his revolutionary building manual *Bauentwurfslehre* (The Architects Data). Neufert knew Alvar Aalto personally and they visited each other at times. Neufert's first visit to Finland was in 1933, when he wanted to study the new bent plywood furniture for his forthcoming manual and to have detailed discussions on standardization.<sup>52</sup> Alvar Aalto also later introduced Neufert to the younger Finnish architects. The first manual was immediately partially reproduced in *Arkkitehti* and received much praise.<sup>53</sup> The first meeting between the two architects grew into a more state-level partnership during the war, since Finland sold module barracks to the German army and because, for PR reasons, Neufert visited Finland later in 1942 in the

context of the Finnish Association of Architects' standardization project.<sup>54</sup>

The 1938 Nordic Building Forum in Oslo was one of the turning points in Alvar Aalto's career. After designing Villa Mairea, his own house, and several others, his speech called for a standardization based on nature that would not shackle the architect too much and would hopefully provide endless ways to combine different standards. Also, he made a plea that town planning should do the same.<sup>55</sup> This represented a direct and conscious counteraction to the ideals of the Bauhaus movement.

### Urban Renewal

Examples of the German-type *Siedlung* housing estates were built only occasionally in Finland before the war. The only exceptions in Helsinki were Puu-Käpylä housing (Birger Brunila, Otto-Iivari Meurman, Martti Välikangas and Akseli Toivonen, 1920s) and Olympiakylä (Martti Välikangas and Hilding Ekelund, 1938–40). The first one was a low-cost, partially prefabricated wooden garden suburb, representative of Nordic Classicism, while the latter already softened functionalist style in stone with saddle roofs. Both were

financed and built by the city of Helsinki's own non-profit building company. The main reason for the lack of German-type *Siedlungen* housing estates was funding – the city of Helsinki did not have the money, and neither did any other city. Brunila also made several suggestions of plans for Reijola, Meilahti, and Kulosaari districts in the early 1930s, based on lamellas, but these plans were only partially adopted in Helsinki, which also owned most of the land.<sup>56</sup> In 1940, Ekelund suggested improvements for Reijola, which were partially adopted. In comparison, Ekelund's plans clearly illustrated that the planning of housing should not be done separately from general planning and clearly show Gropius' influence from the 1931 *Bauaustellung*.<sup>57</sup> This is one of the main differences compared to P. E. Blomstedt's attempts at town planning.

Hilding Ekelund attacked the slow development of housing by stating three problems that Helsinki was facing at the time: town plans, profit-seeking developers, and the architects themselves.<sup>58</sup> The developers added to lamella's frame depth, and the city sold building plots in auctions, which in turn led to land speculation and higher prices. Ekelund's



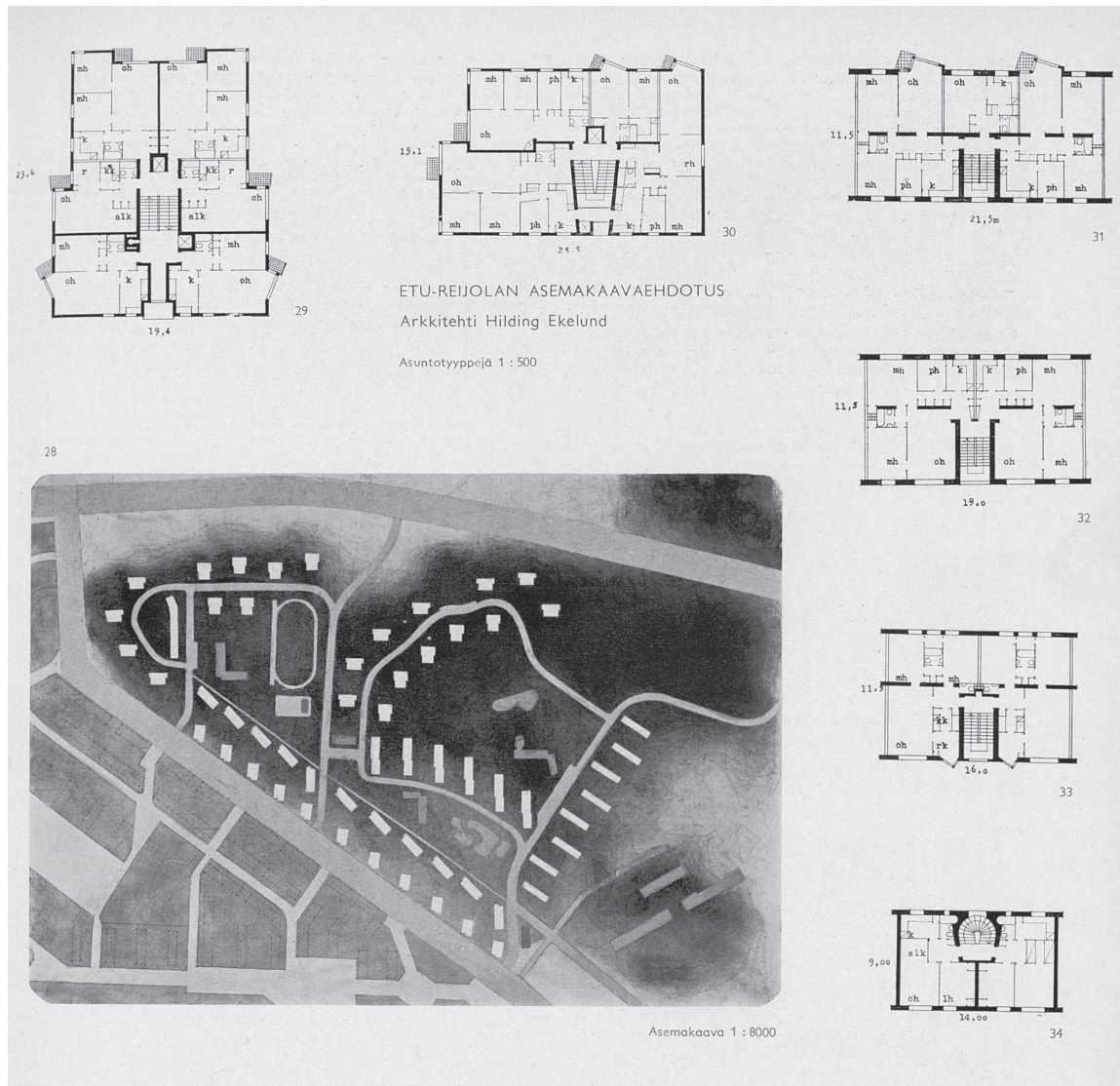


Figure 5. Hilding Ekelund's masterplan of Etu-Reijola and model apartments for lower income people, 1940. *Arkkitehti* 1.3.1941, no 3, p. 47.

solution was to rent the land, which could then be more ideally planned, and to favor developers that were owner-occupiers, as was done before. For the architects, he suggested some professional pride.

Ekelund's answers to the problem of poor housing quality had included his two proposals for lamella competition at the 1932 Nordic Building Fair in Helsinki. The first one was a typical lamella block house, but the second proposal, that of large, semi-detached atrium housing in the "Roman" style, was unusual.<sup>59</sup> Ekelund was quite familiar with the concept due to his travels in Pompei. Atrium houses only gained in popularity in the Nordic countries two decades later.

In the 1930s, the only other project in Helsinki region comparable to Puumäki and Olympiakylä was Alvar Aalto's Munkkiniemi plan, consisting of several lamellas a hundred meters long for the M. G. Stenius company, but it was never realized. One of the reasons was that Helsinki wanted to annex the M. G. Stenius company land for its own purposes, and to further this objective the city basically cut off the water supply to Munkkiniemi, which crippled the company. This meant that the town plans and housing ar-



chitecture designs were made by different teams, a fact best illustrated in Taka-Töölö and Meilahti.<sup>60</sup> Olympiakylä would remain the only German-type *Siedlung* housing estate in Helsinki before World War II.<sup>61</sup> Even though Pauli E. Blomstedt did not design housing, he devised competitive plans for rearranging Siltaaari, Töölönlahti, and Norrmalm (Stockholm) in the early 1930s.<sup>62</sup> The urban structure based on long lamellas is reminiscent of the German *Siedlungen*.

In 1939, *Arkkitehti* published a special edition (no. 5–6) to cover the late town planning development by Birger Brunila's team. Linnankoskenkatu, Meilahti, and Olympiakylä areas were well on their way, and several other developments, such as Lauttasaari (architect Ole Gripenberg), were on the drawing board. All the new town plans were based on lamella buildings, while the Lauttasaari plan also included ten-story apartment blocks. However, as mentioned before, these plans were not comparable to the German or even Swedish plans, since all the land was owned by the city of Helsinki and it was to be sold parcel by parcel to a multitude of developers and contractors.<sup>63</sup>

### The New Modern Apartments

Design of the housing apartments changed during the 1920s. The overall size of the apartments became more uniform: middle class built their own housing companies, and the working class did the same with more modest apartments, usually consisting of a room and a kitchen. During the hard years of the early 1920s, the servants' stairs virtually disappeared since the middle classes could not anymore afford servants. The salon, dining room, and other specified representational spaces were adjoined as a living room.

In 1929, several cabinet and furniture manufacturers from city of Lahti sent a delegation to Germany to study three different carpentry schools to establish a new school in Lahti. Among the participants were interior designer Werner West and architect Gösta Juslén along with the director of the furniture company Keravan Puusepäntehdas Oy. In their report, they deemed the school in Leipzig old fashioned, while they considered the *Berliner Tischlerschule* adequate and the *Bauhaus Dessau* most promising. In two separate articles, they praised the entire curriculum and teachers as being exemplary.<sup>64</sup>

Architect Salme Setälä (1894–1980) was among the early Finnish propagandists of

the modern house, acknowledging the influences of Le Corbusier, Lily Reich, Mies van der Rohe, and Ludwig Hilberseimer in the new journal *Tulenkantajat*.<sup>65</sup> The Finnish journal *Domus* (2/1932) presented a model flat for a self-supporting woman built inside the Stockmann department store in Helsinki. The model flat was designed by Werner West and included functionalist furniture, while the plan was a typical *Existenzminimum* plan with a foyer, toilet, kitchen cabinet, and one room. West's study trip to Dessau and the Bauhaus movement seemingly had an influence on this *Existenzminimum* ribbon-windowed design.

Haus am Horn for the Bauhaus *Werkschau* (Georg Muehe, Weimar, 1923), the new concept of modest living spaces without the previous variety of utility rooms, was among the first of its kind, an architectural masterpiece designed by Bauhaus students. One of its most advanced features was the built-in kitchen by Benita Otte and Ernst Gebhard. The concept of a kitchen as a laboratory was something new, and this feature would be repeated all around the world during the next few decades. As Germany was already well ahead in this development,



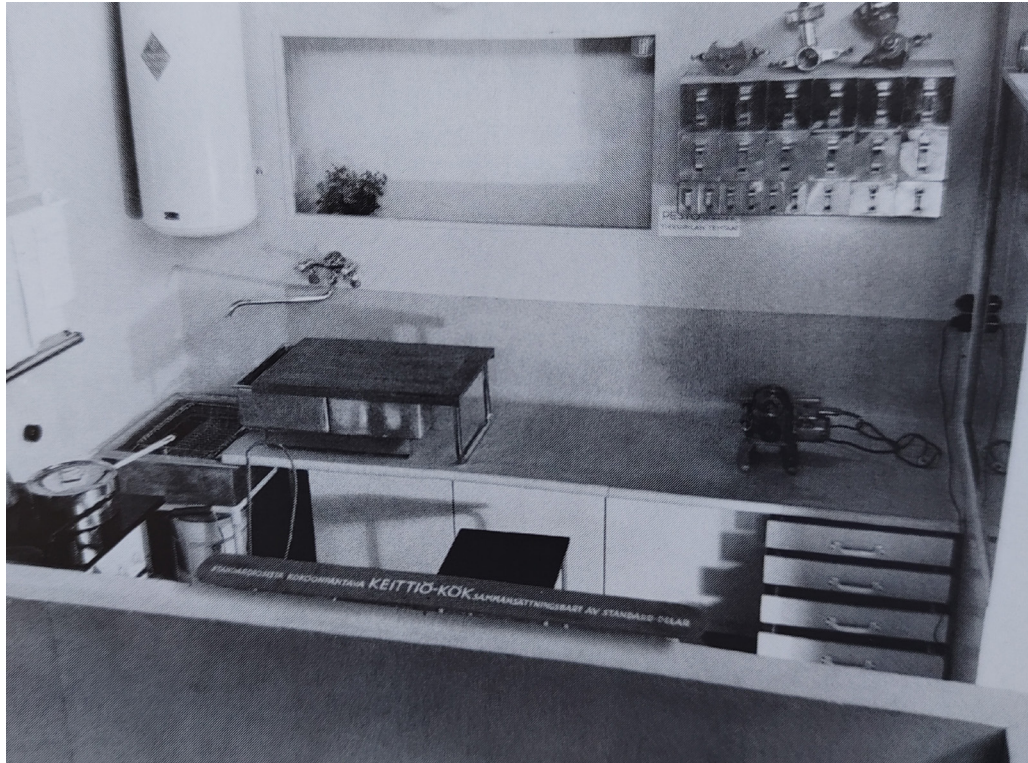


Figure 6. Kitchen from the Minimum Apartment Exhibition (Pienasuntonäytely) in Helsinki, 1930. Aino Aalto's kitchen cabinet clearly shows Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky's influence. Photo: Aino Aalto, Museum of Finnish Architecture.



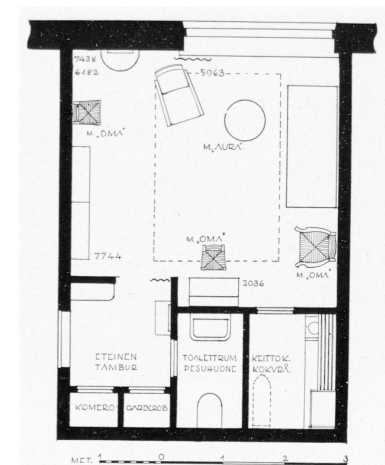
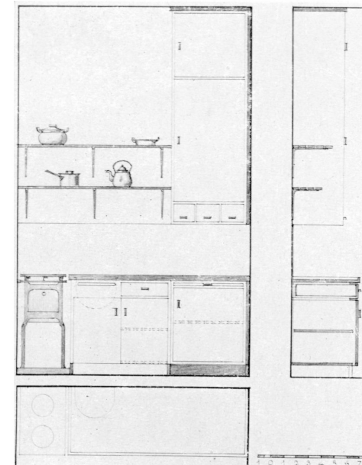
Figure 7. Frankfurt Kitchen, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, 1926, in MAK Vienna. Photo: Juhana Heikonen.





Figure 8^ . "Bygge och Bo" exhibition at Liljevalchs Konsthall, 1928. A kitchen by Sven Markelius, which differs greatly from those of his German or Finnish contemporaries. Tekniska Museet, Stockholm.

Figure 9> .Apartment for an independent woman by Werner West and Keravan Puusepänteollisuus Oy, exhibition at the Stockmann's department store. The Existenzminimum and an inbuilt modern kitchen cabinet. *Domus* 2/1932.



the concept was later perfected by architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (1897–2000) with her *Frankfurter Küche* (1927), which was eventually installed in more than 10,000 of Ernst May's *Neues Frankfurt* apartments. According to Schütte-Lihotzky, the main concept came from train restaurant car kitchens, with their limited space. Cooking was separated as a space from eating. This space was usually in immediate proximity, though, just behind the next door. The discussion on whether the kitchen cabinets were too small continued in Finland throughout most of the 1930s, especially in the context of windowless kitchen cabinets with bad ventilation. While Erik Bryggman praised the new German *Siedlungen* housing estates, he also noted the problem with the kitchen cabinets using train restaurants as an influence.<sup>66</sup> This notion proves that he was familiar with Schütte-Lihotzky's work, probably through Aino Aalto, who was among the first Finnish architects to analytically study the working economics and ergonomics of an apartment kitchen.<sup>67</sup> According to Kirsi Saarikangas, the development of kitchens from isolated laboratories into an integrated living space in Olympiakylä was a crucial factor

in Ekelund's creation of the modern family home.<sup>68</sup>

Swedish architects, working closely with the general public, also developed a new kitchen, called *Standardköket*, and these results were also published and displayed by the Helsinki Gas and Electric Works in a 1925 exhibition.<sup>69</sup> The interest in a functional kitchen design was widespread at the time, ranging from private individuals to the national *Martha* Organization,<sup>70</sup> and new solutions were actively published in journals like *Kotiliesi* and *Rakennustaito*. This new interest in in-built kitchens also gave rise to manufacturers like Keravan Puusepänteollisuus Oy, which was later owned by the department store Stockmann Oy.

As is typical in the Finnish case, the new wave of innovations first appeared in open design competitions. The insurance companies Elonvaara and Pohja organized a competition for a new, mixed-used office and apartment building in Helsinki (Kaisaniemenkatu). The winner was architect Oiva Kallio (1884–1964), while second prize was given to Hilding Ekelund. Both designs had ribbon windows, but eventually the apartments were rejected and the result became

a full office building. Hilding Ekelund's proposal was an example of full functionalism, with efficient small apartments along with the required office spaces.<sup>71</sup> The finished building was published in *Arkkitehti*.<sup>72</sup> This brief prelude of functionalist housing architecture design was cut short by the 1929 financial crisis, only to be continued after 1933.

### The End of Bauhaus and the Becoming of War

The closure of *Bauhaus Dessau* was immediately reported in *Arkkitehti*.<sup>73</sup> At the beginning of the 1930s, the mood had already turned against modern architecture. Germany's responsible administration was transformed to reflect the new regime and its tastes. This was already noted by Hilding Ekelund in his 1931 report on the *Deutsche Bauausstellung*. Ekelund later published an article by Professor Dr. Schmidt on the *Deutsches Siedlungswerk*, with Ekelund noting in his opening words that it did not represent the extreme views of the current regime. Schmidt wrote positively about the previous architectural style, even though he favored the new *Heimatstil* design with small houses, kitchen gardens, and sheds for animals and fodder.<sup>74</sup>







Figure 10. The cover of *Arkkitehti* 5/6, 1943. This issue presented the new RT manual (on the cover) for rebuilding purposes, partially based on Ernst Neufert's *Bauentwurfslehre*.

Those affiliated with the Bauhaus movement fled Germany and became exiles throughout the world, but their influence on architecture continued, probably even more strongly in places like Tel Aviv and the U.S. But not all of them fled, like Neufert. He found new work in standardization and war mobilization under Albert Speer and the National Socialist regime.<sup>75</sup> He was also responsible for one of the most influential books on architecture ever: *Bauentwurfslehre*, first published in 1936 and selling out in weeks. The catalogue gave measures for everything from a toaster to an aircraft hangar, with thousands of illustrations, and it is still in print. This impact on design was, and is, beyond measure. Finnish standardization manuals are also based on Neufert's work, with *Arkkitehti* already reporting on the new manuals in issue no. 5/6, 1943 (the *RT-kortisto*).<sup>76</sup> Much of Neufert's influence cannot be detected in Finland before the war. However, Neufert's direct influence is evident in post-war rebuilding efforts all over the world. The journal *Rakennustaito* also analyzed the adoption of German modules and measurements (125 cm). Co-operation with Germany and the exporting of wooden-type housing to

that country was relatively extensive at the time, namely by the company Finnish Puutalo Ltd.<sup>77</sup>

Finland also cooperated in standardization practices with Sweden, but it was of less importance. The stark scale of progress between Germany and Sweden was best discussed in *Arkkitehti* (5/6, 1943), where Woldemar Baeckman wrote about the Swedish standardization project concerning standard doors. This was in stark contrast against Neufert's massive building manual.

The journal also reviewed one of the German wooden emergency lamellas designed to cover the housing shortage due to aerial bombings. It closely resembled some later postwar housing in Finland. The major national newspapers published discussions on standardization and post-war rebuilding efforts, including detailed discussions on the adoption of Neufert's modules and standard measurements.<sup>78</sup>

The manual's influence on housing companies in prewar Finland has not been well researched, but considering its immediate fame and usability, it must have strongly influenced the detailed design of apartment and floor plans since discussion on the German *Existenzminimum* style continued during



the 1920s, throughout the war, and probably until the present day in certain medias. As an example, architect Ole Gripenberg (1892 – 1979) cited Neufert's manual already in 1938 in a disagreement concerning door widths.<sup>79</sup> The 1939 house fair was held in the brand-new functionalist Helsinki Expo and Convention Centre, partially built to house the 1940 summer Olympics in Helsinki. The main curators were Hilding Ekelund and Kaj Englund. Aarne Ervi, one of the curators, wrote a short account of the fair and its features, including the new bomb shelters and the need to create architecture that conveyed softer lines and a sense of coziness and that was closer to nature, as in the new Olympiakylä, which was built to house future Olympic guests. This echoed Alvar Aalto's earlier stance in *Arkkitehti*. Aarne Ervi was overjoyed with the success of the opening on October 7, 1939, but regretted that the fair was shut down on the fourth day because the army confiscated the site for mobilization purposes.<sup>80</sup> War broke out the next month.

### **Helsinki's Prewar Housing Companies and the German Influence**

Over 20 000 new modern apartments were built in Helsinki between 1930 and 1939. The

developers and builders were very varied, but the majority were normal housing companies. The following examples are selected due to their varied developers and founders, and their architectural relevance to Bauhaus and German *Siedlungen*, such as the lamella, frame depth, façade detailing, or their architects known contacts to Bauhaus.

The housing company As. Oy Artturinlinna (Matti Välikangas, 1931–32) was originally founded by Arthur Nyman and later completed by several insurance companies. Välikangas celebrated the fact that the frame depth was between 7.5 and 11.5 meters, according to German principles.<sup>81</sup> The first sketches resembled more a ribbon windowed streamlining, such as in Hans Scharoun's work.<sup>82</sup> Välikangas designed several functionalist housing companies, such as As. Oy Eerikinkatu 33 (1933), also built as a tenement building.

The housing company As. Oy Lapinlahdenkatu 9 (Ole Gripenberg, 1933) was built by the Hartwall mineral water company for its employees. This very simple building consisted of medium-sized apartments (63–70 m<sup>2</sup>) and was fully furnished by Stockmann's Keravan Puusepänteollisuus Oy.<sup>83</sup> At this

point, Gripenberg belonged to the older generation of architects, but he still had an interest in updating his skills and ideas. One of the reasons could be that he was, like his many of colleagues throughout the first part of the century, also a developer.<sup>84</sup>

Harald Andersin also tried to re-open some previous urban structures in Sörnäinen. His designs for re-opening blocks 331 and 340 to Hämeentie partially succeeded, but only three lamellas were built before the war. He began his presentation in *Arkkitehti* by emphasizing the importance of large gardens and playgrounds.<sup>85</sup> The only lamellas built before the war were designed by architects Väinö Vähäkallio, Georg Jägerroos, and Antero Pernaja.<sup>86</sup> The more successful of these kinds of urban interventions was block 84 in Punavuori, facing Sinebrychoff Park. The traditional 19<sup>th</sup>-century closed-block plan was redesigned to include two block-length lamellas and, in between, two smaller buildings. Since the land was owned by the Sinebrychoff brewery, the plan was a relatively rare private development. The original plan by architect Karl Lindahl continued the surrounding closed-grid plan, despite the hilly terrain. Hilding Ekelund attacked this





Figure 11. As. Oy Artturinlinna by Martti Välikangas, 1932. Photo: K. Havas, Helsinki City Museum.



Figure 12. As. Oy Bulevardia, by Niilo Kokko, Arvo Aalto, and J. Saari, 1937. Photo: R. Roos, Helsinki City Museum.





Figure 13. As. Oy Pohjois-Hesperiankatu 21, nicknamed "Töölön Helmi," Kaarlo Borg, 1932. A modern apartment room with strip windows. Photo: A. Pietinen, Finnish Heritage Agency.



Figure 14. As. Oy Pohjois-Hesperiankatu 21, nicknamed "Töölön Helmi," Kaarlo Borg, 1932. The modern kitchen cabinet. Photo: A. Pietinen, Finnish Heritage Agency.



Figure 15. Lallukka, Gösta Juslén, 1933. Photo: A. Pietinen, Finnish Heritage Agency.





Figure 16. As. Oy Tullinpuomi, Olli Pöyry, 1940. Photo: A. Pietinen, Helsinki City Museum.



Figure 17. László Moholy-Nagy's photograph of Bauhaus balconies in Dessau, 1927. Photo: László Moholy-Nagy, Bauhaus-Archiv.



old plan publicly in 1931,<sup>87</sup> prompting an irritated reply from the city in the next issue.<sup>88</sup> Eventually, the brewery sold the land to investors and a new town plan was devised. The new founders of the As. Oy Bulevardia housing company included architects Niilo Kokko, Arvo Aalto, and J. Saari (for the lamella facing the park).<sup>89</sup> The other founders in the neighboring housing companies included the developer-architect Ole Gripenberg, who also was part of this urban renewal scheme.<sup>90</sup> One of the functionalist housing companies was designed by Kaarlo Borg, but with a humorous classical feature added to the bay windows: they were covered with diglyphs and metopes.

If Alvar Aalto had failed with his 14-story lamellas in Munkkiniemi, the new As. Oy Bulevardia housing company (1937) was the longest lamella in Finland at the time. The company also laid the foundation in an old-fashioned way: the building project was executed from start to finish by the shareholders. Forty-two of the housing company's flats were directly owned by the shareholders and another 54 by the company itself, thus by the shareholders as well. In addition to garages and a fine restaurant designed



Figure 18. Olympiakylä, Hilding Ekelund, 1940. Image: A. Pietinen, Helsinki City Museum.

by the architects, the rents covered all the maintenance charges and later actually paid dividends to the shareholders. This kind of an arrangement was still quite typical in the 1920s, but it started to die out after the 1929 financial crash. Niilo Kokko together with Arvo O. Aalto developed a similar kind

of project in Lauttasaari (As. Oy Kloorantie 9), but architecturally, with its diagonally stepped balconies, it belonged more to the post-war style compared to As. Oy Bulevardia's 1930s-style functionalism.<sup>91</sup> Similar stylistic attempts at affecting town planning were made by Kaarlo Borg for a vacant plot on



Tehtaankatu. His designs for six vast lamellas were never realized, though.<sup>92</sup> However, he designed several other housing companies, such as As. Oy Pohjois-Hesperiankatu 21, nicknamed “Töölön Helmi” (1932), which was a tenement building with very expensive interior decorations, fridges and marble fireplaces.<sup>93</sup> The façade is dominated by bay windows and adjoining steel tube balcony fences in Bauhaus style.<sup>94</sup> Töölön Helmi was built by the businessman Lauri Hallman as a personal investment. Borg’s later work was assisted by students such as architect Ilmari Niemeläinen, who had visited Germany in 1936.<sup>95</sup>

One of the important groups of housing companies are the housing companies built by the co-operatives HOK and Elanto, which quite often adopted the *Existenzminimum* style. The smallest example was As. Oy Castréninkatu (Hilding Ekelund, 1934).<sup>96</sup> Even though it was rebuilt on a closed city block, the 40 flats, ranging from 23.5 m<sup>2</sup> to 32 m<sup>2</sup>, were well designed with a kitchen cabinet and toilet/shower. The builder was most probably Elanto (after it purchased part of the plot from the Finnish Lutheran Evangelical Society), and the building included a convenience store covering the whole

ground floor.<sup>97</sup> The building also had a rooftop terrace and a kindergarten. The façade is representative of typical functionalist style in Helsinki, except for the drawn-in balconied corner, which gives the false expression of two orthogonally colliding lamellas.<sup>98</sup>

One of the most interesting functionalist projects in Etu-Töölö was the “Lallukka” housing company (Gösta Juslén, 1931–32). This was not a normal housing company of the time since it was executed after holding an open artistic design competition financed by Juho and Maria Lallukka. Above all, Lallukka was an artist residence. The competition caused a huge uproar, and no first prize was given. Eventually, Gösta Juslén’s competition proposal, “Des Pudels Kern,” was further developed. The published entries all represented the apex of the modernist movement, but they were mostly dismissed by the jury as unpractical.<sup>99</sup> Juslén’s proposition was further developed from ribbon windows to more traditional framing without losing its modern design. The finished house was published in *Arkkitehti*, demonstrating the building’s exceptional façade, modern kitchens, and public areas with their tubular steel furniture.<sup>100</sup> The highly modern interiors

were already familiar because of Juslén’s previous work with the Fazer confectionery and café (interior by architect Jarl Ekelund, 1930), which were partially furnished (again) by Stockmann and Werner West, with whom he had already visited *Bauhaus Dessau*.

Since Juslén had worked and studied in Germany, a certain resemblance can be detected with the small balconied façade and Bauhaus dormitory in Dessau. This Bauhaus feature was also noticed by Nils Gustav Hahl, one of the founders of Artek, who wrote an article on the finished house and its brightly colored detailing, reminiscent of Bauhaus.<sup>101</sup> In Lallukka’s case, the client was the design competition jury, consisting of two artists, two lawyers, and as chairman the architect Onni Tarjanne. Juslén designed several housing companies in Helsinki for a variety of clients, from banks and foundations to private investors. One of the more unusual ones was the housing company As. Oy Merimiehenkatu 39 (1938), which was the only completed example of a double frame lamella house, already proposed by Hilding Ekelund at the 1932 Nordic Building Forum based on an even earlier design by Ole Gripenberg (1930).<sup>102</sup>



The housing company As. Oy Tullinpuomi (Olli Pöyry, 1939) was built by the nonprofit building company HAKA after a design competition, where Pöyry came in second.<sup>103</sup> In the new town plan, the newly proposed Tullinpuomi building represented well the new functionalist style, and it was rather special for being eight stories high and including a rooftop restaurant and cinema as well as ground-level shops. Moreover, this was still meant to be low-income housing. The white façade was dotted with evenly placed small boxy balconies, already a familiar design feature from Juslén's Lallukka and *Bauhaus Dessau*.<sup>104</sup> Since the floorplans did not correlate with the façade, and since one apartment may include two or three balconies, Pöyry's balcony arrangement can be seen as an intentional stylistic choice pointing to Dessau.

This article has provided a brief overview of some prewar examples of housing companies in Helsinki, where the influence of the German *Siedlungen* or Bauhaus movement can be detected. The principles of German *Siedlungen* were not executed in buildings in Helsinki before Olympiakylä, but instead in more distant locations like the industri-

al town Sunila (Alvar Aalto, 1936–39). This complex of mass housing estates required centralized funding and planning, and thus, does not concern private housing companies constructed individually based on a ready town plan. However, the finer details were adopted: lamella, frame depth, sun angles, new functional living arrangements, such as inbuilt kitchens.

### Conclusions

Since most of the exchange of architectural ideology and practice is circumstantial, when not a direct copy, we must study personal networks, movements, and literary influences. When the Bauhaus movement became well known among Finnish architects and the wider public it was most probably the result of indirect influence, and the results can be detected in the original designs of Helsinki's housing companies and their reception in the press. Especially Gropius' writings and public speeches influenced Helsinki's architects, engineers, contractors, and developers. I argue that Neufert's influence on the design of housing in general was greater, particularly during the postwar decades, but his role and meaning has not been researched before.

The mixed views on Swedish influence were perhaps best described by Nils Erik Wickberg in *Byggnadskonst i Finland* (1959). The 1929 Turku Fair, which preceded the 1930 Stockholm Fair, represented the breakout moment for functionalism in Finland, and its architects were inspired by their close friend Gunnar Asplund's turn from classicism to functionalism as much as by Le Corbusier and Bauhaus.<sup>105</sup> Architect professor Nils Erik Wickberg's view was identical with Ekelund's opinion about the overestimation of Swedish influence. Wickberg and Ekelund were colleagues and contemporaries in promoting functionalism, unlike later researchers on the subject. It is possible that the personal and amicable contacts among Nordic architects has been overemphasized in prior studies at the expense of other direct and literary contacts to Germany. On the other hand, prior research has not distinguished between the various building types characteristic of Finnish modernism, such as public and private buildings. The architects of Helsinki's housing companies were a different group from the more famous architects of public buildings. Alvar Aalto's Standard Tenement Building in Turku (1929) had its forerunners





in Germany, not in Sweden. On a more practical level, with respect to housing companies the Germans had by 1930 built modern hygienic and compact mass housing units in the tens of thousands and the Dutch in the thousands, whereas the French had built close to zero and the Swedes none at all. This would also mean that Finnish architects had mostly been exposed to German examples both through their travels to Germany and in printed publications.

The postwar rebuilding of Finland and Helsinki to house the demobilized army and the 430,000 (1/8 of the whole population) refugees from Soviet-annexed Karelia witnessed new town planning based on *Siedlungen*. Such planning was executed by several contractors and individual housing companies and backed by state loans. The production of housing in Helsinki during the 1950s and 1960s was in relative and absolute numbers a third higher than at any time since. This was due to a shifting ideology regarding the involvement of the state and the city in housing production and town planning. The reliance on markets solely had proven unable to resolve the dire need for housing. Architects based their plans on the German model of

*Siedlungen* and standardization. Standardization was based largely on Neufert's work. He had close connections with Finland, he was part of the Bauhaus movement, and before his later career in the National Socialist regime Neufert had worked directly under Gropius.

The German *Siedlungen* received the greatest share of publicity in the Finnish professional press, and the Bauhaus movement was well known from the start. Finnish architects and engineers were well read on the subject, many of them had visited Weimar and Dessau and some of them personally knew the people involved with the Bauhaus movement. Even though direct prewar influences are harder to pinpoint, they can be found in discussions concerning Gropius, building frame designs, and even in some detailing borrowed for Helsinki's housing companies.

## Endnotes

1 This research has been conducted as part of the University of Helsinki's "Law, Governance and Space: Questioning the Foundations of the Republican Tradition" project (director Prof. Kaius Tuori) and has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC), under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 771874). I would also like to thank Prof. Kirsi Saarikangas, Ad. Prof. Renja Suominen-Kokkonen, Dr. Erik Hieta, the editors of this publication, and the two anonymous reviewers for their help.

2 See endnote 4 and below in *Foreign influences*.

3 *Baugennossenschaft* closely resembles a housing cooperative or a housing association and should not be mistaken for a building cooperative.

4 *Osakeyhtiölaki*, Limited Liability Companies Act, previously used to form jointly owned real estate ventures before the 1926 Limited Liability Housing Companies Act.

5 *Wohnungseigentümergeinschaft* is a private association-like entity often formed either *ipso jure* in a building with multiple owner-occupancies, or by a real estate developer for the purpose of marketing, managing, and selling homes and lots in a residential subdivision. In Germany, the members are also registered individually as owners of the allotted plot of land, where, in contrast with a *housing company*, the owner owns only stock.

6 Further on, *housing company* even though there is no exact translation to this specifically Finnish model of building, owning, financing, and trading of real estate, etc.

7 Hilding Ekelund, "Rakennustaide ja Rakennustoiminta 1918–1947," in Ragnar Rosén, Erik Hornborg, Eino Jutikkala and Heikki Waris (eds.), *Helsingin kaupungin historia*, Vol. 1 (Helsinki, 1962), 101–136. Hilding Ekelund (1893–1984) was



an architect and later also worked as a teacher at the Department of Architecture and as a town planner in Helsinki.

- 8 Ekelund, "Rakennustaide ja Rakennustoiminta 1918–1947", 119.
- 9 Riitta Nikula, "Funktionalismi," in *Ars - Suomen taide*, Vol. 5 (Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava, 1990), 96; Pekka Helin, "Asumisen arkkitehti," in Timo Tuomi (ed.), *Hilding Ekelund (1893–1984) — Arkkitehti, arkitekt, architect* (Suomen rakennustaiteenmuseon monografiasarja, 1997), 178; Petri Neuvonen (ed.), *Kerrostalot 1880 - 2000 - Arkkitehtuuri, rakennustekniikka, korjaaminen* (Rakennustieto Oy, 2006), 54.
- 10 Raija-Liisa Heinonen, *Funktionalismin läpimurto Suomessa* (Helsinki: Rakennustaiteen museo, 1986). The focus throughout the book is on Swedish influence, but the book also includes examples of German influence. On Birger Brunila, see 202; on Alvar Aalto, see 203, 219, 239; on P. E. Blomstedt, see 266; on the foreign architectural press reviewed in Finland, see 282.
- 11 Kirmo Mikkola, "The transition from classicism to functionalism in Scandinavia," in Asko Salokorpi (ed.), *Classical Tradition and the Modern Movement* (Finnish Association of Architects, Museum of Finnish Architecture, Alvar Aalto Museum, 1985), 42–74.
- 12 Tobias Hoffman (ed.), *Nordic Design. Die Antwort aufs Bauhaus* (Stuttgart: Bröhan Museum und arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2019).
- 13 Atli Magnus Seelow, "From the Continent to the North - German Influence on Modern Architecture in Sweden," *Konsthistorisk tidskrift*, 85, no. 1 (2016): 49.
- 14 Petri Neuvonen, Erkki Mäkiö, and Maarit Malinen, *Kerrostalot 1880–1940* (Rakennustietosäätiö Oy, 2002); Esko Nurmi, Laura Puro, and Martti Lujanen, *Kansanosake - Suomalaisen asunto-osakeyhtiön vaiheet* (Suomen Kiinteistöliitto Ry, 2017); Elina Standerskjöld, *Arkkitehtuurimme*

*vuosikymmenet 1930–1950* (Suomen rakennustaiteen museo, Rakennustietosäätiö RTS and Rakennustieto Oy, 2008).

- 15 Tommi Lindh, *Töölöläisfunktionalismin 4 vaihetta* (Teknillinen korkeakoulu, 2002), 119.
- 16 *Rakennustaito*, no. 14 (6.7.1935): 14–15.
- 17 *Uusi Suomi*, "Sunnuntailiite," no. 179, 8.7.1934, 2; *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, no. 222, 16.8.1936, 8.
- 18 *Rakennustaito*, no. 19 (15.9.1934): 19–20. Elna Kiljander made her career in designing functionalist housing and especially kitchens.
- 19 Nurmi, *Kansanosake - Suomalaisen asunto-osakeyhtiön vaiheet*, 85–91.
- 20 Tommi Lindh, *Töölöläisfunktionalismin 4 vaihetta* (Teknillinen korkeakoulu, 2002), 58–61.
- 21 *As. Oy* is an abbreviation for *Asunto-osakeyhtiö*, or as translated word for word, *Limited Liability Housing Company*.
- 22 *Rakennustaito*, no. 19 (24.9.1937): 340.
- 23 *Rakennustaito*, no. 8 (21.04.1939): 124–125.
- 24 *Lamella house* is probably a less well-known term in the anglophone world. A lamella would be a unit of housing consisting of a main staircase, usually two or three apartments per landing. By connecting such lamellas, one gets the typical, sometimes even hundreds of meters long, *lamella houses*.
- 25 See endnote 4 and *Foreign influences*
- 26 *Turun Sanomat*, no. 301, 03.11.1929: 1.
- 27 *Arkkitehti*, no. 7 (1.7.1929): 114–116. For a closer look at the Turku fair, see Elina Standertsskjöld, "The Turku fair of 1929, a manifesto of functionalism," in Riitta Nikula (ed.), *Erik Bryggman 1891–1955, arkkitehti, arkitekt, architect* (Suomen rakennustaiteenmuseon monografiasarja, 1991).
- 28 Riitta Nikula, "Funktionalismi", 95.
- 29 *Arkkitehti*, no. 6 (1.6.1932); Raija-Liisa Heinonen, "Funktionalismin läpimurto Suomessa," 214–216.

- 30 *Arkkitehti*, no. 7 (1.7.1934): 108.
- 31 *Arkkitehti*, no. 9 (1.9.1937): 33–35. A short report by Hilding Ekelund on the third general housing congress.
- 32 *Rakennustaito*, no. 17 (22.8.1931): 257–266.
- 33 *Uusi Suomi*, "Sunnuntailiite," no. 310, 15.11.1931, 1: 4. Gustaf Strengell (1878–1937) was an architect and among the crucial architectural theorists and polemists until the 1930s.
- 34 *Kotiliesi*, no. 16 (15.8.1932): 614–616.
- 35 Eva Kuhlefeldt-Ekelund, "Matkakertomus," *Arkkitehti*, no. 2 (1.2.1932): 26–28. Eva Kuhlefeldt-Ekelund (1892–1984) was married to Hilding Ekelund, with whom she travelled widely in Europe.
- 36 *Rakennustaito*, no. 1 (1.1.1928): 6–8. Vietti Nykänen (1884–1951) was probably more active in far-right wing politics than architecture. He was also an active member of several far-right political organizations, including the Finnish National Socialist Party. His more direct activities included a planned military coup to overthrow the left-center government in 1938. This could also explain his highly critical view of Dessau's left-wing housing projects.
- 37 Atli Magnus Seelow, "The Stockholm Exhibition 1930 – The Swedish Reception of German Functionalism," in *Nordic Design. Die Antwort aufs Bauhaus*, 101.
- 38 Timo Tuomi, Elina Standerskjöld, Kristiina Paatero, Eija Rauske, and Esa Laaksonen (eds.), *Matkalla! En Route!* (Museum of Finnish Architecture, 1999). The excellent book gives a closer look at Finnish architects' excursions in Europe.
- 39 Petri Neuvonen, Erkki Mäkiö, and Maarit Malinen, *Kerrostalot 1880–1940* (Rakennustietosäätiö Oy, 2002), 17.
- 40 *Uusi Aura*, no. 157, 10.06.1928: 1; *Turun Sanomat*, no. 157, 10.06.1928: 1; Åbo *Underrättelser*, no. 158, 10.06.1928: 1; *Turun Sanomat*, no. 301, 03.11.1929: 1.
- 41 *Rakennustaito*, no. 4 (23.2.1935): 49–52.



42 *Rakennustaito*, no. 1 (16.1.1932): 2–8.  
 43 *Teknikern*, no. 1582 (19.10.1927): 6.  
 44 *Teknillinen aikakauslehti*, no. 12 (1.12.1931): 616–618.  
 45 *Arkkitiehti* 1.8.1935, no 8: 30.  
 46 *Turun Sanomat*, no. 180, 10.7.1931: 1, 4. The focus of the article was Siegfried Giedion's article on Finnish architecture (*Bauwelt*, 18.6.1931). Finland also affected Moholy-Nagy's family: his daughter was named Hattula to honor the medieval church of Hattula and its frescos. Professor Hattula Moholy-Nagy is currently responsible for cataloguing her father's estate.  
 47 Mia Hipeli, "Aino Aalto as a Photographer," in Ulla Kinnunen (ed.), *Aino Aalto*, (Alvar Aalto Museum, 2004).  
 48 Göran Schildt, "Aalto, Bauhaus and the Creative Experiment," in Kirmo Mikkola (ed.), *Alvar Aalto vs. the Modern Movement* (Rakennuskirja Oy, 1981). Göran Schildt (1917–2009) was, among other pursuits, an art historian, but he became famous as Alvar Aalto's first biographer. As in the context of Bauhaus, he was very often highly critical of his friend.  
 49 Peter Blundell Jones, *From Essence to Appearance: Parallels Between the Working Methods of Alvar Aalto and Hugo Häring* in Arq (London, 2015), 334–348.  
 50 *Arkkitiehti*, no. 3 (1.3.1926): 40.  
 51 *Arkkitiehti*, no. 6 (1.6.1929).  
 52 *Turun Sanomat*, no. 265, 1.10.1933: 1.  
 53 *Arkkitiehti*, no. 9 (1.9.1936): 35–36. The model illustrations show a woman ironing a shirt and the required space for it, as well as the measurements of a boxing ring, where the knocked-out opponent is lying on the floor.  
 54 *Aamulehti*, no. 334, 10.12.1942: 5. In *Aamulehti*'s report, Aalto spoke again about the need to base standardization on nature and the human factor, and to avoid aiming for monotonous types of houses. Neufert gave a speech on the German

standardization process as well. *Arkkitiehti*, no. 5–6 (1.5.1943). The whole issue was about the new RT manual.  
 55 *Arkkitiehti*, no. 9 (1.9.1938): 129–131.  
 56 On Reijola, see *Arkkitiehti*, no. 4 (1.4.1931): 50–51; on Kulosaari, see *Arkkitiehti*, no. 6 (1.6.1931): 50; on Meilahti, see *Arkkitiehti*, no. 9 (1.9.1932): 34.  
 57 Timo Tuomi, "Hilding Ekelund kaavoittajana," in Tuomi, *Hilding Ekelund (1893–1984)*, 166; *Arkkitiehti*, no. 3 (1.3.1941): 48–48.  
 58 *Arkkitiehti*, no. 3 (1.3.1938): 34–35.  
 59 *Arkkitiehti*, no. 6 (1.6.1932): 84–86.  
 60 Riitta Nikula, "Rakennustaitteen 1920- ja 1930-luku," in *Ars - Suomen taide*, Vol. 5. 106.  
 61 *Arkkitiehti*, no. 3 (1.3.1934): 35.  
 61 Riitta Nikula, "Funktionalismi," 95; Pekka Helin, "Asumisen arkkitehti," 181.  
 62 On Siltasaari, see *Arkkitiehti*, no. 4 (1.4.1935): 49–50; on Töölönlahti, see *Arkkitiehti*, no. 3 (1.3.1937): 39; on Norrmalm, see *Arkkitiehti*, no. 6 (1.6.1934): 87.  
 63 Birger Brunila, "Asemakaavoitus 1918 – 1945," in *Helsingin kaupungin historia*, Vol. 1, 63–64.  
 64 Lauri Kuoppamäki, "Puuseppäteollisuuden ammattiopisto," *Lahti*, no. 49, 30.04.1929: 5; "Dessaun puuseppäkoulu," *Lahden Sanomat*, no. 53, 16.05.1929, 4. Gustav "Gösta" Juslén studied in Helsinki but completed his studies in Munich before WWI, where he also worked for a brief period. Werner West was head of design in the furnishing design department at Stockmann department store and among the first designers of tubular steel furniture in Finland. Director Peltonen, of Keravan Puusepänthdas Oy, later owned by Stockmann department store, was responsible for furnishing hundreds of kitchens in Helsinki. Both newspapers spell Juslén incorrectly as Juslin. This mistake is easily made when transcribing from cursive. Also, there was no architect named Juslin, while on the other hand Juslén's older brother, Karl Eskil Juslén (1881–1958), was the procurator of both Keravan

Puusepänthdas Oy and its owner, Stockmann. Juslén would cooperate with the latter companies (and his brother) throughout his career.  
 65 *Tulenkantaja*, no. 1–2 (3.1.1929): 15–17. The article "Huomispäivän koti" was widely cited in other journals, such as *Puuteos*, no. 1 (1.2.1929).  
 66 *Granskaren*, no. 7–8 (1932): 91–93. This special issue was published for the Nordic Building Forum in Helsinki and its subject was functionalism in general. The issue also included critical comments on apartment standardization by Gunnar Granqvist, Anna-Lisa Stigell, Sigurd Frosterus, J. S. Sirén, Walter Qvist, and Bertel Jung in the main articles by Lars-Ivar Ringbom, Alvar Aalto, Sven Markelius, and C.-E. Olin.  
 67 Renja Suominen-Kokkonen, "The Silent Personage - the Architect Aino Marsio-Aalto," in Ulla Kinnunen (ed.), *Aino Aalto*, (Alvar Aalto Museum, 2004).  
 68 Kirsi Saarikangas, "Järkiperäinen ja tarkoituksenmukainen pohjaratkaisu," in Tuomi, *Hilding Ekelund (1893–1984)*, 198–218.  
 69 *Arkkitiehti*, no. 1 (1.1.1925): 6–13; *Rakennustaito*, no. 16 (1937): 279–283. The latter journal published detailed model drawings of a kitchen that seems to have been greatly influenced by Schütte-Lihotzky.  
 70 The Martha Organization is a Finnish home economics organization, founded in 1899 to promote well-being and quality of life in the home. It carries out cultural and civic education and does advocacy work in Finland.  
 71 *Arkkitiehti*, no. 8 (1.8.1928): 118–122.  
 72 *Arkkitiehti*, no. 8 (1.8.1930); see also Hilding Ekelund, "Rakennustaide ja Rakennustoiminta 1918–1947," 120.  
 73 *Arkkitiehti*, no. 1 (1.1.1931): 2.  
 74 *Arkkitiehti*, no. 8 (1.8.1934): 117–118.  
 75 On Gropius' earlier standardization, when Neufert was his assistant, see Atli M. Seelow, "The Construction Kit and the Assembly Line—Walter



Gropius' Concepts for Rationalizing Architecture," *Arts*, 7, no. 4 (2018): 95. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts7040095>.

76 *Arkkitehti*, no. 5–6 (1.05.1944): 57–60. In this new review, *Arkkitehti* already mentions that the Finnish RT manual has copied parts of Neufert's manual. In English, for more on the relationship between Neufert and Aalto based on earlier research, see Nader Vossoughian, "Alvar Aalto, Ernst Neufert, and Architectural Standardization in Germany and Finland, 1933–45," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 1 (June 2020); 79, no. 2: 202–212. A more profound study based on original material (unlike Vossoughian) on standardization and Puutalo Oy will soon be published by Laura Berger, Philip Tidwell, and Kristo Vesikansa: *New Standards. Timber Houses Ltd. 1940–1955* (Garret Publications, 2021).

77 *Rakennustaito*, no. 22–23 (30.11.1944): 343–350.

78 *Helsingin Sanomat*, 30.1.1943: 3, 8. The same story was run in other major national newspapers with model plans for apartments and spreadsheets showing mass-produced housing standards.

79 On Asuntokiinteistö, see *Suomen asuntokiinteistöliiton julkaisu*, no. 11 (1.11.1938): 94.

80 *Arkkitehti*, no. 10 (1.10.1939): 145–148.

81 *Arkkitehti*, no. 7 (01.07.1933): 100–102.

82 *Arkkitehti*, no. 1 (1.1.1935): 3; Riitta Nikula, "Rakennustaitteen 1920- ja 1930-luku," in *Ars - Suomen taide*, Vol. 5, 98.

83 *Arkkitehti*, no. 3 (1.3.1934): 35.

84 As mentioned before, the architects developing and speculating with housing companies had a long history in Helsinki. The number of architects acting as the housing companies' founding shareholders form a rather long list: Ole Gripenberg, Sigurd Frosterus, Lars Sonck, Onni Tarjanne, Gustav Nyström, Usko Nyström, Toivo Päiviö, Viljo Revell, Heikki Riihimäki, Niilo Kokko, Arvo O. Aalto, and

several others.

85 *Arkkitehti*, no. 2 (1.2.1933): 20–21.

86 *Arkkitehti*, no. 7 (1.7.1934): 103.

87 *Arkkitehti*, no. 2 (1.2.1931): 32.

88 *Arkkitehti*, no. 3 (1.3.1931): 21. Ekelund repeated his outcry with same words in *Arkkitehti*, no. 6 (1.6.1936): 81–82.

89 Niilo Kokko (1907–1975) was probably the most famous of the three. Together with Viljo Revell (1910–1964) and Heimo Riihimäki (1907–1962), they won the design competition for the Lasipalatsi as students. All three became prominent housing architects, but especially Revell, who later achieved fame for designing the Toronto City Hall.

90 Birger Brunila, "Asemakaavoitus 1918–1945," in *Helsingin kaupungin historia*, Vol. 1, 55. Tommi Lindh, *Töölöläisfunkcionalismin 4 vaihetta*, 131.

91 *Arkkitehti*, no. 5–6 (1.5.1939): 92–93.

92 *Arkkitehti*, no. 7 (1.7.1934): 94–95.

93 *Arkkitehti*, no. 6 (1.6.1932): 81–82.

94 *Helsingin Sanomat*, no. 168, 23.06.1932, 9.

95 Ilmari Niemeläinen (1910–1951) participated in the 1936 Berlin Olympics in diving, placing 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. During this trip, he also visited sites representative of modern German architecture. He was less successful in the 1948 London Olympics (placing 19<sup>th</sup>), but he received a bronze medal in urban design for his Kemi city master plan, when urban design was still a competitive sport.

96 *Arkkitehti*, no. 8 (1.8.1934): 122. In the following issue (no. 9, 1934) of *Arkkitehti*, Ekelund himself "anonymously" condemned the flats for being too small and unsatisfactory.

97 Kiinteistökortisto: 344 Kiinteistökortisto, 11. kaupunginosa (Kallio), kortteli 324.

98 HKRAVA 75-078676, 18.4.1934 (Helsinki, building permission drawing database).

99 *Arkkitehti*, no. 4 (1.4.1931): 58–63.

100 *Arkkitehti*, no. 7 (1.7.1934): 96–100.

101 *Domus* 5 (1933): 130–132. Nils Gustav Hahl (1904–1941) was an art historian and one of

the original founders (together with the Aaltos, Maire Gullichsen, and others) of the furniture company Artek in 1935. He was also the last editor in chief of the Finnish journal *Domus* and had a wide international network of contacts, including several German contacts, and he surely knew exactly what the Bauhaus movement was when he compared it to Juslén's work. See: Pekka Suhonen, *Artek* (Artek, 1985).

102 Kalevi Saanilahti, *Arkkitehdin kahleet vai ohjakset* (Teknillisen korkeakoulun arkkitehtiosaston tutkimuksia, 1996/10); HKRAVA 75-033803 (Helsinki, building permission drawing database).

103 *Arkkitehti*, no. 7 (1.7.1943): 71–75; Hilding Ekelund, "Rakennustaide ja Rakennustoiminta 1918–1947," 127. Olli Pöyry (1912–1973) continued with an academic career, but he had also travelled widely in Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden.

104 HKRAVA 76-025656, 76-025657 and 76-025662 (Helsinki, building permission drawing database).

105 Nils Erik Wickberg, *Byggnadskonst i Finland* (Söderströms, 1959), 86–89. Nils Erik Wickberg (1909–2002) was an architect, a professor of architecture history and an editor in chief at *Arkkitehti*.

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# From Immaterial to Material: Some Reflections on the Art Historical Genealogy of the Bauhaus Design Icons

Adriana Kapsreiter

A model, an experiment, a myth, a legend, a school, a movement, a failure, an idea, the epitome of modernism – the Bauhaus has been given a plethora of characterisations and still, even a hundred years after being founded, it has not lost its quasi-mysterious aura.<sup>1</sup> From an art historian's point of view, it has become a phenomenon not only because of its actual historical development and impact during its fourteen years of operation, between 1919 and 1933, but because of its afterlife. The subsequent reception of the Bauhaus amounts to its own history as

Bauhaus-images continue to serve as projection surfaces for various perspectives on art and design depending on the zeitgeist.

After the Bauhaus was pressured to close its doors by the Nazis in 1933, the ideas, design principles and approaches that had been developed throughout its fourteen years did not vanish. On the contrary, the Bauhaus students, professors and masters carried their own personal Bauhaus with them, most of them after emigrating from Germany. Several attempts were made to found a new Bauhaus or at least a second kind of Bauhaus.<sup>2</sup> Each made reference to the original school but related to different aspects, emphasizing different focuses; each had their own idea of what the Bauhaus originally was or should have been, implementing the different political and socio-cultural conditions they found in their specific times and places. The Bauhaus ideas, although carried into the world

by original Bauhaus students and teachers, started to develop a life of their own through the further expansion of design and architecture after World War II.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, the Bauhaus was consequently built up as the epitome and original source of modernist design in art historical reception.<sup>3</sup> This reception was based on documenting the development of the historical school on the one hand, but on the other, it was also an attempt to legitimise modern art movements, especially design in general, by constructing a legendary historiography not only for the historical Bauhaus but all the other schools, movements and design ideas that had sought inspiration in the original school. From a contemporary point of view, the Bauhaus has therefore become a role model and figurehead for practicality, functionality, rationality and modern serial fabrication because, although they



were not necessarily essential for the historical Bauhaus, these aspects have become essential for design development since.

The important role the Bauhaus has gained throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its meaning as a projection surface for everything “modern”, minimalistic or functional in design has led to a lot of misunderstandings regarding the historical school. On the one hand, the general achievements of the Bauhaus have been overvalued, implying everything modern was first done at the Bauhaus, which led to immoderate adoration of the school and an almost cultish following. On the other hand, various countermovements have tried to push the Bauhaus off its pedestal by proving a general failure of its original goals. Besides the early political criticism coming from conservative and far-right perspectives<sup>4</sup>, the historical Bauhaus also had to face harsh critique coming from artistic and intellectual contemporaries such as Bertolt Brecht<sup>5</sup> and Theo van Doesburg who heavily influenced the direction of the school<sup>6</sup>. After World War II, critical theory<sup>7</sup> and post-war modernity<sup>8</sup> (“*Nachkriegsmoderne*”) traditionalized critique towards Bauhaus in the cultural and intellectual milieu and, since then, each gen-

eration begets their own arguments as to why the Bauhaus should not be seen as the epitome of modernism but rather, its failure.

A major critique of the historical school from its inception until today refers to Bauhaus production itself, questioning whether or not the objects designed there fulfil the ideology of merging art and industry in a functional and rational way. Since the 2000’s the Walter Gropius era in particular has been under suspicion of having gained its fame through marketing and propaganda by Gropius himself whilst manufacturing luxury products for the wealthy few. As such, this object-based critique mainly focuses on the material aspects of the Bauhaus designs while blending out those immaterial implications that cannot be retrieved in terms of form or material only.

In this paper I attempt to trace how the material production of functional, rational and minimalistic objects within the Bauhaus was not the main goal of Walter Gropius’ concept for his school. In my perspective the Bauhaus during the Gropius era was mainly driven by immaterial ideas, pedagogical concepts and philosophical conceptions on how to work in the machine age by combining art and technology. Many of these immaterial

aspects can also be found in Bauhaus precursors and document a certain *Kunstwollen* of the time, driven by German Neo-Romanticism and Idealism.

A material based Bauhaus critique which excludes the immaterial aspects deriving from Gropius’ idealism can best be displayed in a case study of one of the most prominent Bauhaus designs.

### **Marianne Brandt’s Tea Infuser: Iconic Design or Stumbling Block?**

Marianne Brandt’s tea infuser Model *MT 49/ME 8* (Fig. 1), an early work designed in 1924 in the metal workshop of the Weimar Bauhaus, is one of the most famous Bauhaus objects. With the design based on geometrical forms, the circle and the sphere, the little X-shaped foot of the tea infuser can either be perceived as a combination of triangles or square segments. The formal reduction, the apparent omission of ornament and concentration on geometry, assumes the external appearance of a product manufactured by a machine, although it was never industrially produced. Only eight exemplars were fabricated during the Bauhaus era, seven of them were handcrafted in exquisite materials that





Figure 1. Marianne Brandt, tea infuser Model MT 49, 1924. Photo: Lucia Moholy. Copyright VG Bildkunst Bonn. Bauhaus Archiv - Museum für Gestaltung Berlin.

range from tumbac to brass to bronze as well as silver and ebony.<sup>9</sup>

The tea infuser is not only one of the most prominent Bauhaus designs ever made, it is also the centrepiece of Robin Schuldenfrei's critique on the Walter Gropius -Bauhaus.<sup>10</sup> For Schuldenfrei, the use of not only traditional but also expensive and exclusive materials like silver – often associated with the bourgeoisie – in combination with the “old fashioned” way of handcrafting an original single piece contradicts with the oft-cited motto “Art and Technology – a new Unity” proclaimed by Gropius in 1923. For that reason, the tea infuser proves “[t]he failure of Gropius's Bauhaus to merge art and technology – to move from the production of individual, luxury objects to mass reproduction”<sup>11</sup>.

Her argumentation thereby takes famous Bauhaus catchwords, “Sachlichkeit, functionality, hygiene and the use of modern material and construction methods” as starting points of the overall Bauhaus design goals.<sup>12</sup> By not following modern serial fabrication during the expansion of the Bauhaus design, *Sachlichkeit*, rationality, and functionality only seem to be formal aspects at first sight. A deeper look reveals the true colours of the object as



one which merely pretends to be produced industrially but is actually a traditional luxury product for upper-class homes. The detailed price list assembled by Schuldenfrei<sup>13</sup> of Bauhaus products from 1923 and 1928 – the Gropius era – proves this is the case. Most of the products were handcrafted with prices far too high for working-class members, such as the tea infuser.<sup>14</sup> The iconization of the tea infuser as well as its criticism focus on the object's material implications: the rational form, functionality and modern fabrication. Within Schuldenfrei's approach, the tea infuser therefore becomes an "object [...] of discourse, the material evidence of a series of debates on handcraftsmanship, machine production, and taste"<sup>15</sup>. But what if the object was not just material evidence, but rather a material manifestation of the immaterial goals Gropius had in mind?

### **Bauhaus Education and Work: Teaching the Unteachable**

Schuldenfrei's premise is based on Gropius's 1923 proclamation "Art and Technology – a new Unity". For her, this new theme appears to express the goal of turning Bauhaus into a production site for mass production, quot-

ing Hannes Meyer's famous dictum "people's needs instead of luxury needs" with the comment: "[B]ut would he have been moved to make such a declaration if Gropius had successfully carried out his stated aims?"<sup>16</sup>. Following Schuldenfrei's argumentation, achieving the goal of merging art and technology is measured in the amount of designs that would go into industrial production and that could afterwards be purchased for affordable prices – a somewhat materialistic approach to the subject. Without a doubt, the 1923 statement was meant to herald the start of a new Bauhaus chapter, or in Gropius' words from 1922:

*In its present form, the Bauhaus stands or falls with the recognition of the necessity to accept commissions. I would consider it a mistake if the Bauhaus were not to face the realities of the world and were to look upon itself as an isolated institution.*<sup>17</sup>

Still, this development was rather connected to the previous Bauhaus chapter than to an overall turn into a production site. Without the historical development that both the Bauhaus and Gropius's mindset underwent from 1919 to 1923, the turning point of "Art und Technology – a new Unity" can only be insufficiently understood.

As the statutes clearly show, the Bauhaus founded by Gropius in 1919 was meant to be a school. The scope was consequently "to educate artistically gifted men and women to become creatively designing craftsmen, sculptors, painters or architects. Thorough training of all students in the crafts provides the unifying foundation."<sup>18</sup> The idea of unification can already be found in this earlier document and is part of Gropius's Bauhaus from the founding of the school until his departure. It derives from German 19<sup>th</sup> century idealism that combined the idea of the total work of art with the cult of the artistic genius. For Gropius, true art was always the work of a genius and therefore something that could not be taught: "The origin of art transcends all methods; in itself it cannot be taught, but the crafts certainly can be."<sup>19</sup> The scope of educating artistically gifted students to become creative designers obviously included training in traditional crafts,<sup>20</sup> but Gropius's attempt to teach the unteachable, i.e., artistic creativity, went further than that: "We are not in a position to awaken creative powers and to develop the innermost thoughts and feelings of young people through educational means. This can only be done through what





we call personality.”<sup>21</sup> To develop personality, Gropius promoted a joyful community for the students, providing food, housing and social interactions in post-war Weimar.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, he attempted to manifest the development of personality within the educational concept. The so-called “Vorkurs,” the preliminary course invented by Johannes Itten in 1919,<sup>23</sup> was meant to encourage experimentation and reflection on the properties of materials as well as thinking creatively and practically ‘outside the box’. His conceptual idea of confronting students with their personal perception and an awareness for individual approaches “can be best summarized in a pair of opposites: ‘intuition and method’, or subjective experience and objective recognition’.”<sup>24</sup> Itten shared the idea of universality with Gropius, although his background was much more spiritual as he was a disciple of the Mazdaznan<sup>25</sup>. He taught under the motto “Play becomes party – party becomes work – work becomes play”<sup>26</sup> as well as implementing meditation and breathing exercises into his courses to promote subjective, internal experience. Itten’s lessons, therefore, were often challenging for the students, as Oskar Schlemmer described:

Itten gives ‘Analysis’ in Weimar. Shows pictures which students then have to draw in terms of one or another essential – usually movement, line, curve. He then illustrates these in the example of a Gothic figure. Next, he shows the weeping Mary Magdalene from the Grünewald Altar. The students attempt to extract some basic element from the very complicated composition. Itten looks at their efforts and explodes: If any of them had any artistic sensitivity at all, then when faced by such a powerful depiction of weeping, the weeping of the whole world, rather than trying to draw it they would simply sit down and burst into tears themselves. Then walks out slamming the door behind him.<sup>27</sup>

In this sense, Itten was not interested in commercial art. For him, the centre of production was the internal, subjective and spiritual development of ideas. This led to a confrontation with Gropius in 1922:

Recently, Master Itten demanded from us a decision either to produce individual pieces of work in complete contrast to the economically oriented outside world or to seek contact with industry. [...] Let me at once clarify this: I seek unity in the fusion, not the separation of these ways of life.<sup>28</sup>

“Unity in fusion” is also what Gropius sought with his motto “Art and Technology – a new Unity”, which must be regarded in close connection with the dispute with Itten. After the first years in Weimar – that had been dominated by the post-war lack of materials and tools, and the preference for crafting, artistic

experiments, philosophical discourses on art and spirituality – Gropius wanted to move towards a production that would spread the Bauhaus goals and ideas to a wider audience. By contrast, Schuldenfrei identifies:

[...] the Bauhaus’s difficult position of trying to be modern while existing within the context of Kunstgewerbe, the applied arts, with the skilled training in the traditional crafts that it required. The workshops continued to occupy an unclear position between their role as producers of the unique art object and as designers of prototypes for mass reproduction.<sup>29</sup>

Yet it was precisely this unclear position that Gropius sought. The workshops were not meant to be based on *either* traditional crafting skills *or* industrial design – for Gropius they were meant to be both, with all the contradictions and ambiguities implied.

### **How to Design: Some Notions on the Creative Idea and Functionality**

The finished piece of work was not the final goal in Gropius’s perspective, but a manifestation of the fusion between artistic creativity and production skills based on handcraft and psychology, i.e. artistic training. In this sense personal experience and development were also part of the productive process, especially in relation to the development of innovative



design solutions. A well-known but insistent example clearly illustrates the correlation between the material product and the immaterial process of creating the design. Marcel Breuer's famous tubular steel furniture *Club Chair B3* (Fig. 2) became the most prominent showpiece of Bauhaus design<sup>30</sup> that later went into serial production, although not as a Bauhaus product, but one independently marketed by Breuer.<sup>31</sup>

Analysing the form, construction and historical references of the chair, all the catchwords of "Bauhaus-Style" can, in fact, be retrieved: modern, industrial materials and fabrication, minimalism, rational design, clear shapes focused on functionality, light and practicality. In the case of the Gropius-Bauhaus, another layer must be revealed: the process by which Marcel Breuer came to develop the design of such "modern" furniture. An anecdote reveals the origin of the idea for the design: Breuer's newly purchased Adler bicycle inspired him to use steel tube, a rather new and until then exclusively industrial material, for the interior of private homes.<sup>32</sup> Apparently this is a good example of what Gropius meant by saying that artistic personality should fuse with professional skills:



Figure 2. Marcel Breuer, tubular steel furniture Club Chair B3, 1925. Bauhaus Archiv - Museum für Gestaltung Berlin.



Even outside of the Bauhaus workshop, in his free time, Breuer's perception of the world surrounding him was focused on creative solutions as well as the properties of materials.

The *Club Chair B3* was developed in 1925 while the Bauhaus moved from Weimar to Dessau. While the Dessau period (1925–1932) seems to embody the heyday of the rational and the functional in Bauhaus, it was neither the first chapter in its history nor in Marcel Breuer's oeuvre. An earlier piece of Breuer from 1921 illustrates previous stages of the institution's history and his personal development as a student. The so-called African Chair<sup>33</sup>, one of Breuer's first collaborations with Gunta Stölzl in Weimar, resembles an indigenous tribal throne and was a unicum that could hardly be described as rational or even practical but was rather a creative and expressive way of approaching the subject "chair" from a non-academic tradition. It was not considered that a piece like this would be brought to serial production. The idea and execution were experimental with Gunta Stölzl weaving the fabric directly onto the wooden structure of the completely handcrafted chair. In this sense, the Bauhaus

product implies the process of developing a creative and original idea as well as materially executing the piece. In Gropius words: "The work is not an end in itself; [the philosophical conception] gives it direction and cohesion."<sup>34</sup>

From a contemporary perspective, functional design is meant to completely fulfil its function without any distracting details or disruptive elements that restrict practical use of the object. In this sense, Breuer's *Club Chair B3* is a perfectly functional design, especially at a time when furnitures were mostly heavy and difficult to move. But having the immaterial implications of personal development and philosophical concept in mind, even the most famous Bauhaus slogan attains distinction: Although functionality has become of vital significance for modern design, especially in relation to the popular image of the Bauhaus that exists today, the philosophical concepts behind the design were of even more import to Gropius. As I will now go on to discuss, this is an idea vividly expressed in Gropius' own architecture of the famous Bauhaus school building in Dessau.

While the Bauhaus in Weimar had its residency in a building by Henry van de Velde,

the move to Dessau was advantageous in that a new building could be created from scratch, one that would be Bauhaus to the core (Fig. 3). Designed by Gropius in 1925, it soon became the most prominent reference for Bauhaus itself and a symbol or trademark for the ideas of the school.

The most prominent part, the workshop block with its great curtain wall glass façade and the glass corner, has become an icon of modernity in architectural history. The intended function, however, was not just practicality. With the building's huge glass façade, it was almost impossible to heat the workshops in winter while one can imagine they must have been incredibly hot in summer. The function of this workshop building was in fact to formally represent a new modernity, aesthetically reacting to the innovations that the Machine Age had brought – an immaterial function that can also be witnessed in the detail of the auditorium.

The auditorium in Dessau (Fig. 4) was planned to be used as multifunctional room connecting the workshop building with the canteen and the dorms. It was a place for gatherings of all kinds including theatre plays, lectures and readings and could be extended





Figure 3. Walter Gropius, Bauhaus Building Dessau, 1925-1926, entrance and workshops. Bauhaus Archiv - Museum für Gestaltung Berlin.

to almost double its size by opening into the canteen. It was also one of the areas that was most accessible to the public. Although most Dessau residents did not attend the readings and theatre plays which were considered too wild and radical, Gropius also had the idea to show movies in the auditorium to bring more people into his building. Therefore, the auditorium attempted to express as much modernity as possible with radically minimalistic lights, a precursor of the fluorescent tube; ceiling paint enriched with tiny metal particles to reach a shiny, almost glittery surface for the lamps; doors inspired by Japanese bridal cabinets designed by Gropius himself; and seating design by Marcel Breuer, a special foldable version of his steel tube furniture with a modern canvas covering. A further detail of the interior expresses Gropius's notion of functionality: the radiators are displayed like sculptures mounted at eye level. For the heating itself, this was utterly unfunctional because the heat rose to warm the ceiling rather than the seating area. The function here was to display the clean shape of this technological innovation rather than the practicality of the design. Through their clean industrial shape the radiators symbol-





Figure 4. Walter Gropius, Bauhaus Building Dessau, 1925-1926, auditory. Photo: Erich Consemüller. Copyright Stephan Consemüller. Bauhaus Archiv - Museum für Gestaltung Berlin.

ize a vision of a new and modern life with all the comfort and convenience technical inventions could offer.<sup>35</sup> Hence, they become a manifestation of a philosophy that embraces technical innovations and proclaims an optimistic zeitgeist and attitude towards the machine. The radiators thus illustrate how philosophy has the potential to enrich the object with immaterial values.

### Zeitgeist and “Wesensforschung“

Schuldenfrei remarks on what was happening in Bauhaus design between 1923 and 1928: “Bauhaus objects employed a stripped-down vocabulary of forms while reducing applied ornament.”<sup>36</sup> While this is certainly not the case with all the Bauhaus objects of the Weimar era which were often one-off expressionist solutions like the aforementioned African Chair,<sup>37</sup> it appears to be true when it comes to the tea infuser. No applied ornament obscures the sharp silhouette of the pure geometrical forms. Yet considering this design as a simple formal reduction, or some kind of omission of distractive parts, is not wholly in line with Gropius’s design principles. Within Gropius’s conception, a design like this was much more about find-



ing the essential substance, the true nature of the object, and expressing this essence through a characteristic form. Form is the keyword here, although not in a *formalistic* but intensely *idealistic* sense. Even before the Bauhaus was founded, a particular strain of German zeitgeist driven by romanticism, the notion of total work of art (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) and Nietzsche's ideas on art as a kind of substitute religion, exalted form as a manifestation of greater ideas or ideologies.

As I have drawn out in my dissertation on the German Werkbund, there was already a tendency towards form as an ultimate expression of immaterial values before World War I.<sup>38</sup> The Werkbund, an association of artists, industrial entrepreneurs and craftsmen, was founded in 1907 with the goal of "the ennoblement of [...] work in synergy of art and industry"<sup>39</sup>. This association nurtured a vivid discourse on the character and effectuality of art within the Industrial Revolution in its first years after its foundation 1907, debating relevant topics such as machine work, company organization and social questions including various assessments of industrial entrepreneurs and artists. Yet quite soon, collaborations between artists and industrial-

ists were riddled with misunderstandings as well as struggles for the status quo. A paradigm shift occurred in 1910/1911 with the Werkbund changing its main goal to "*Durchgeistigung*", an artistic spiritualization and intellectualization of the Werkbund discourse that excluded the material aspects of industrial production and the voice of the entrepreneurs. Within this paradigm shift, the artistic form was explicitly valued higher than material production because it was seen as a manifestation of the artistic genius. In this sense, form became an abstract vessel, a carrier of ideas, that was meant to influence society in a deeply meaningful way by cultivating the individual mind.<sup>40</sup> This mindset is exemplified to the extreme in a furniture exhibition from 1910/11 which showed machine produced furniture with a minimalistic formal vocabulary designed for the working class. The vision of this design was to find a genuine formal expression for working-class culture to prevent the proletariat from rebelling against their oppressors or voting for the social democrats.<sup>41</sup>

Although this kind of idealism seems crude and naive from today's perspective, the members of the Werkbund strongly believed

that the mere reception of a spiritualized and intellectualized ("*durchgeistigt*") form would make a decisive difference.

Walter Gropius entered the Werkbund at the end of 1910, just as the association was undergoing its shift towards "*Durchgeistigung*". He was not only building up his career as an architect at the time but his entire mindset and the world of ideas that would later evolve to form the Bauhaus. Although Gropius was heavily influenced by Werkbund ideas and contributed strongly to "*Durchgeistigung*"<sup>42</sup>, the interrelation between Gropius and the Werkbund has been underrated in research literature so far. When in 1922<sup>43</sup> Gropius emphasized how philosophical concepts give design work direction and cohesion, this kind of pre-war idealism was revitalised. As such, form was related not only to formalist design, but to a manifestation of higher immaterial values, ones capable of altering culture and society. In the case of the Dessau building, the philosophical concepts giving "direction and cohesion" were the attempt to express a new zeitgeist, a new lifestyle of the Machine Age driven by innovation, flexibility and pace. In the case of Marianne Brandt's tea infuser, the design



philosophy is strongly connected to Gropius's vision of "*Wesensforschung*".

According to Gropius, every object had its own nature and specific character (*Wesen*) that had to be investigated (*Forschung*) before a design could be created. This investigation of the object's nature was dependent on "the laws of mechanics, statics, optics, acoustics" and, especially, proportion, which was, in his perspective, "a matter of the intellectual/spiritual world (*geistige Welt*)".<sup>44</sup> "*Geist*" (spirit/mind), a recurring keyword in Gropius's texts,<sup>45</sup> implies the immaterial artistic genius that lies behind creation as well as the individual personality. "*Wesensforschung*" therefore unifies materiality and immateriality, just as the Bauhaus education tried to unify training in craft skills within the workshops and the development of personality in artistic classes such as the preliminary course. If "*Wesensforschung*" was followed consequently, the nature of the object could be revealed clearly as a design "*Typus*" – a prototype with a form so essential and typical for the object's nature that it could be reproduced endlessly without losing its inner core, its "*Wesen*", while simultaneously carrying influential ideas on how to creatively express

the Machine Age and its new lifestyle in the realm of household items.

Summarizing all these aspects, Marianne Brandt's tea infuser is a perfect manifestation of what Gropius considered the fusion of immaterial *and* material aspects central to his idea of the Bauhaus. For the same reason, Brandt handcrafted her tea infuser, since manipulating the material with her own hands was part of "*Wesensforschung*". On the one side, the handcrafting process was a pragmatic part of developing professional skills within the metal workshop, whilst on the other, it was the simplest and most effective way of investigating the nature of the object and the materials at hand.

The form itself is faithful to the nature of the object; to "tea infuser" as well as to personal experience. It's essential character is to contain tea extract, thereby becoming a vessel for an essential substance and as such bearing symbolic meaning within Bauhaus idealism.<sup>46</sup> To choose a round-shaped form for a vessel (an object meant to hold liquid) is typical. On the other hand, the Russian tea ceremony – where the infuser originally comes from – was part of the everyday Bauhaus routine, since Wassily Kandinsky

had introduced it to the school, a specific Bauhaus practice.<sup>47</sup> Yet Brandt's personal experience reveals an even more specific and particular background. Looking back, she remarks on being a woman in the metal workshop:

At first, I was not accepted with pleasure – there was no place for a woman in a metal workshop, they felt. They admitted this to me later on and meanwhile expressed their displeasure by giving me all sorts of dull, dreary work. How many little hemispheres did I most patiently hammer out of brittle new silver, thinking this was the way it had to be and all beginnings are hard. Later things settled down, and we got along well together.<sup>48</sup>

To still choose a (hemi)sphere as the basic form for her tea infuser after this experience at the metal workshop and with her own work says a lot about Brandt's personality. The fact that the chosen materials were, amongst others, silver and ebony, can equally be interpreted to that effect. The choice of material derives from an idea that was also born before World War I – the idea of handcrafted work having a greater value than machine work because it was considered more human, more skilful, experienced and time-consuming, including personal patience, effort and hardship.<sup>49</sup> The machine, on the other hand, although capable of effort-



less, steady and precise non-stop operation, could never replicate the value of individual effort. The personal effort and hardship of the human condition were supposed to be honoured through expensive materials to express greater value.<sup>50</sup> Because Brandt handcrafted the piece, her personal work in this matter justified the use of a valuable material like silver – in opposition to machine-made objects like the steel tube furniture.

Thus we see how all these immaterial aspects – their idea of the zeitgeist, training in crafting skills, “*Wesensforschung*”, the process of fabricating and Brandt’s individual and very personal experiences – are unified in the form, production and material of the tea infuser.

### **Conclusion: From Immaterial to Material**

More than 20 years after closing the Bauhaus, Gropius himself pointed out how the goals of his era were widely misunderstood, especially regarding purely rational interpretations of functional design. In the speech he held within the opening ceremony for a new building of the Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm (Ulm Design School) in 1955, he

emphasised “the importance of the magical over the logical”, further explaining:

The hypertrophy of the sciences has suppressed the Magical within our lives, the poet and the prophet have been treated as orphans of the overly practical objective human being due to the unprecedented triumph of the logical sciences.<sup>51</sup>

Even almost 30 years after the founding of the Bauhaus, Gropius’s 19<sup>th</sup> century mindset – an artistic idealism nourished by ideas of artistic genius and the total work of art – was still a fundamental part of his perspective on what the school he had founded: it was meant to be what might be best described as a “radical utopian community”<sup>52</sup>. Well aware of the Bauhaus image built up after World War II he tried to make clear:

Nevertheless, a fallacious portrait of the pioneers of modern architecture has been projected that exposed them as fanatic proponents of rigid mechanical principles, glorifying the machine and having become cold towards deeper human values in service of ‘*Neue Sachlichkeit*’ (New Objectivity). [...] Functionalism to us was not synonymous to an efficient approach only; it also involved psychological issues.

A combination of today’s rational and materialistic perspective on design with some art historians desire to define art history as rational science based on material evidence

only serve to dilute the underpinnings of Gropius’s Bauhaus. Psychological issues, the development of a creative personality directly following the trauma of World War I and the attempt to nourish “*Geist*” und “*Wesensforschung*” through artistic creativity on the one side and handcraft on the other, can neither be understood through an exclusively material approach nor by mottos such as functionalism and rationalism that developed in meaning years and even decades afterwards.

The development of the historiography of modernism with the Bauhaus being perceived as the primordial mother of “*Sachlichkeit*”, functionalism, practicality, etc. was bound to generate a countermovement to accompany this genealogy. The history of the Bauhaus leaves space for criticism through attempts to get closer to the historical reality of the famous school in Germany. There is no doubt that the Bauhaus did not invent everything “modern”, it was a school that tried to provide a field for experimentation. Due to this, any considerations of the Bauhaus that exclude immaterial aspects – work and design processes, the psychological model of creation within, philosoph-





ical concepts, personal development and zeitgeist behind Bauhaus creation – remain insufficient. While Gropius and his contemporaries were well aware of the immaterial as being fundamental to artistic production (“*Durchgeistigung*”), art historical reception partly turned these immaterial aspects into material criteria of perception. The tea infuser by Marianne Brandt deserves the label “Bauhaus in a nutshell”<sup>53</sup>, simply because of the very specific immaterial aspects and narration within its formal physical appearance.

As such, art history’s challenge is to reconstruct the immaterial values that are implied within the material object and to tackle ‘bygone’ ideals even if they seem crude, illogical and conflicting to our mindset today. To differentiate, and therefore come closer to historical phenomena in all their complexity and ambiguity, art historians might well wander away from the path of material examination and instead welcome that which is partly ungraspable: the immaterial.

## Endnotes

1 With a variety of events, discourses, exhibitions, and publications the Bauhaus centennial in 2019 has proven that there is no distinct or consistent Bauhaus image in today’s reception.

2 The most prominent ones being the New Bauhaus Chicago, founded by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy in 1937, the Black Mountain College in North Carolina, founded in 1933, and later on, Josef and Anni Albers’s sphere of activity, and the Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm (Ulm School of Design), founded by Max Bill in 1953.

3 The first profound monography on the Bauhaus that is still relevant today is Hans Maria Wingler’s publication from 1968, often referred to as the “Bauhaus Bible” and first published in English in 1969 (Wingler, *The Bauhaus*).

4 See Emil Herfurth’s pamphlet against the Bauhaus “Weimar and the Staatliche Bauhaus”, February 1920, printed in Hans Maria Wingler, *The Bauhaus. Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press 1978), 37f. See also Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus 1919–1933* (Köln: Benedikt Taschen 1998), 48–50.

5 Bertolt Brecht, “Nordseekrabben oder die moderne Bauhaus-Wohnung“, printed in *Geschichten und Gespräche*, ed. Gerhard Seidel (Berlin: Eulenspiegel 1987), 31–44.

6 Droste, *Bauhaus*, 54–58.

7 Theodor W. Adorno, Kulturindustrie. Aufklärung als Massenbetrug“, in Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente* (Berlin: Fischer 2008), 43–130.

8 Rudolf Schwarz’s article „Bilde Künstler, rede nicht!“ (“Create, artist, don’t talk“) in 1953 initialized the so-called “Bauhaus-debate”, see *Die Bauhaus-Debatte 1953. Dokumente einer verdrängten Kontroverse*, ed. Ulrich Conrads. Peter Neitzke (Wiesbaden: Vieweg 1994).

9 One of them, now to be found at the Neue Galerie in New York, was created on a spinning lathe, a first attempt of industrial fabrication. For a full list of the eight exemplars see Annemarie Jaeggi, “Unity in diversity”, in *original Bauhaus*, ed. Nina Wiedemeyer (Munich, London, New York: Prestel 2019), 36–37.

10 Robin Schuldenfrei, „The Irreproducibility of the Bauhaus Object“, in *Bauhaus Construct. Fashioning Identity, Discourse and Modernism*, ed. Jeffrey Saletnik, Robin Schuldenfrei (London, New York: Routledge 2009).

11 Ibid., 38.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., 43.

14 Her argumentation does not only exemplify Marianne Brandt’s tea infuser, but several other design examples from the metal workshop, as well as Josef Hartwig’s chess set designed in 1924, another famous Bauhaus icon.

15 Schuldenfrei, “Irreproducibility“, 38.

16 Ibid., 37.

17 Walter Gropius, “The Necessity of Commissioned Work for the Bauhaus“, Notes, dated December 9, 1921, printed in Wingler *Bauhaus*, 51.

18 § 1 of the teaching regulations set in the statutes of the Staatliche Bauhaus Weimar in 1921. See Wingler *Bauhaus*, 44.

19 Gropius “Commissioned Work“, 51. Gropius’s belief in the artistic genius can already be proven in his early articles and speeches like “Monumental Art and Industrial buildings” from 1911 (Walter Gropius: “Monumentale Kunst und Industriebau“, printed in *Walter Gropius: Band 3: Ausgewählte Schriften*, ed. Harmut Probst, Christian Schädlich (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn 1987), 28-51) as well as in the correspondence with Alma Mahler, starting in 1910.

20 The famous pedagogical concept of combining art lessons with crafting at the workshops derives from this idea.

21 Gropius “Commissioned Work“, 51.



22 For further remarks on how Gropius provided food, housing and personal company see Ute Ackermann, *Das Bauhaus isst* (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann publishing 2008), 8–29. A very picturesque story tells about the students in Weimar wandering through Ilm park, the old park where Goethe once had his garden house, carrying self-made artistic lanterns, discussing philosophy and arts while surrounded by fireflies. Felix Klee, „Meine Erinnerungen an das Bauhaus Weimar“, printed in Droste and Friedewald, *Unser Bauhaus*, 170.

23 At that time Itten was already experienced in art education and had led a private art seminar in Vienna. When he came to Weimar, several of his Viennese students followed him.

24 Droste, *Bauhaus*, 25.

25 Founded by Otoman Zar-Adusht Ha'nish at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Mazdaznan is a religion or religious cult that derives from Zoroastrianism and focuses on the idea of the universal spirit in mind and body. Mazdaznan principles like the vegetarian diet, breathing exercises and meditation were part of Itten's everyday spiritual practice at the Bauhaus. See Paul Citroen, „Mazdaznan am Bauhaus“, printed in Droste and Friedewald, *Unser Bauhaus*, 64-70 for a quite vivid description of Mazdaznan rituals and their meaning for daily life at the early Bauhaus.

26 Droste, *Bauhaus*, 37.

27 Oskar Schlemmer, Letter to Otto Meyer-Amden of 16.5.1921, quoted in Droste, *Bauhaus*, 29. Similar experiences of braking mental boundaries are delivered from Paul Klee's classes: „*The absoluteness [...] to which Klee opened our eyes had initial effect of overwhelming and inhibiting us. Thus, suddenly transported into a world of perception for which we were not yet mentally equipped, we naturally felt shaky, or as if in a trance.*“ Marianne Ahlfeld Heymann, „Erinnerungen an Paul Klee“, in *Und trotzdem überlebt* (Konstanz: Hartung Gorre 1994), 78, English translation: Elizabeth Otto, „Bauhaus Spectacles, Bauhaus Specters“, [https://](https://www.academia.edu/34882840/Bauhaus_Spectacles_Bauhaus_Specters)

[www.academia.edu/34882840/Bauhaus\\_Spectacles\\_Bauhaus\\_Specters](https://www.academia.edu/34882840/Bauhaus_Spectacles_Bauhaus_Specters), 57

28 Walter Gropius, „The Viability of the Bauhaus Idea“, Notes, dated February 3, 1922, printed in Wingler, *The Bauhaus*, 51.

29 Schuldenfrei, „The Irreproducibility“, 50.

30 Breuer's design was also a fundamental part of the interior of Gropius's master house in Dessau. Ise Gropius demonstrated the lightness and mobility of the tubular steel chair in the documentary film „New Living“ („Neues Wohnen“) from the series *How Can We Live Healthily and Economically*, directed by Richard Paulick for Humboldt-Film GmbH Berlin, 1926.

31 Although Breuer's design went into serial production and therefore seems to exemplify the Bauhaus goals of mass production according to Schuldenfrei's point of view, she does not include it in her argumentation.

32 Christopher Wilk, *Marcel Breuer, furniture and interiors* (New York: MoMA catalogue 1981), 188. Besides, Elizabeth Otto has pointed out a correlation between Breuer's chair designs and spiritual aspects like spirit photography, see Otto, „Bauhaus Spectacles“, 46–48.

33 Although this chair became famous as „African Chair“, the name occurred later after World War II and was originally identified in as „romantic leanchair“ („Romantischer Lehnstuhl“).

34 Gropius, „Commissioned Work“, 51.

35 Walter Gropius, „Die neue Baugesinnung“, printed in: Probst and Schädlich, *Walter Gropius Schriften*, 93.

36 Schuldenfrei, „The Irreproducibility“, 41.

37 Another quite vivid example is a door knob designed by Naum Slutzky in 1921 that shows such a destructed, edged metal solution, Oskar Schlemmer joked about it, you could never use it without getting bloody fingers. Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus 1919-1933* (Köln: Taschen Bibliotheca Universalis 2019), 170.

38 Adriana Kapsreiter, *Kunst und Industrie – Veredelung der Arbeit und moderne Fabriken im Diskurs des Deutschen Werkbundes 1907 bis 1914*, (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann 2021).

39 Werkbund Statutes, §2. *Satzung vorgelegt von dem geschäftsführenden Ausschuss für die erste Jahresversammlung des Deutschen Werkbundes zu München am 11. und 12. Juli 1908*, ed. Deutscher Werkbund (Werkbund Archive Berlin)

40 Gropius explicitly repeated this idea in a speech in 1955: Walter Gropius, „Dynamische Tradition in der Architektur“, printed in Probst and Schädlich, *Walter Gropius Schriften*, 179.

41 Theodor Heuss, „Der Hausrat des Proletariats“, *Die Hilfe, Wochenschrift für Politik, Literatur und Kunst*, (1911), 318–319 or Robert Breuer, „Prinzip der Wirklichkeit“, in *Fachblatt für Holzarbeiter, Illustrierte Monatshefte für die fachtechnische und kunstgewerbliche Fortbildung* (1911), 125–127.

42 Among Gropius's achievements for the paradigm shift are his speech of 1911 (Gropius, „Monumentale Kunst“) followed by an exhibition of modern industrial architecture in the same year and several articles in the Werkbund-Jahrbücher in 1912 and 1914.

43 See note 24.

44 Gropius, „Baugesinnung“, 95.

45 „*Geist*“ or „*geistig*“ can be found more than once in every text by Gropius quoted in this article.

46 Originally the tea infuser was placed on top of the samovar containing the tea extract that can be diluted with hot water from the samovar.

47 Jaeggi, „Unity“, 38.

48 Marianne Brandt, „Letter to the younger generation“, in *Bauhaus and Bauhaus People*, ed. Eckhard Neumann (New York et al.: Van Nostrand Reinhold 1970), 98.

49 This is one of the results of my dissertation concerning the first Werkbund years 1907 and 1908, when the Werkbund intensely discussed material



aspects of production like the modes of work, the differences between individual and machine work and the expression of the value of work.

50 Kapsreiter, "Kunst & Industrie", 63–72.

51 Gropius, "Dynamische Tradition", 179.

Translated by the author of this article. German original: "*Bedeutung des Magischen gegenüber dem Logischen*": „Die Hypertrophie der Wissenschaften hat ja das Magische in unserem Leben verdrängt, der Poet und der Prophet wurden zu Stiefkindern des überpraktischen Zweckmenschen infolge des beispiellosen Siegeszuges der logischen Wissenschaften.“

52 Otto, "Bauhaus Spectacles", 45.

53 Former Bauhaus curator Klaus Weber in a statement to *The International Herald Tribune*, quoted in Elizabeth Otto, "Marianne Brandt's Experimental Landscapes in Painting and Photography during the National Socialist Period", *History of Photography* 37, no. 2 (May 2013), 167–181.

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# Bauhaus-skolan en modell för Konstfackskolan 1944



Kerstin Wickman

Under åren som lektor från 1984 och som professor i design- och konsthantverkshistoria från 2002 till 2008 på Konstfack fördjupade jag mig ett antal gånger i Bauhaus-skolans respektive Konstfacks bakgrund, historia och utveckling. Jag höll bland annat en rad föreläsningar om Bauhaus och modernismen, ur olika aspekter. Bauhaus-skolans 100-årsjubileum 2019 innebar att jag som reseledare och föreläsare för några grupper med svenska formgivare besökte jubileumsutställningarna i Berlin, Weimar och Dessau.

Kvaliteten på den konstindustriella utbildningen i Sverige var ett problem under de första decennierna på 1900-talet, enligt kretsen kring Svenska Slöjdföreningen (sedan 1976 Svensk Form). Kritiken var återkommande.

Bauhaus-skolan hade uppfattats som en omtumlande innovation i Weimar 1919, vilken förändrat estetiken och pedagogiken på ett genomgripande sätt men som slutat i en tragedi 1932–33. Konstfack har överlevt både kritik, upproriska studenter och en rad omdaningar och är nu 176 år. Den har sedan den blev högskola 1976–78 genomgått ytterligare förändringar. Här kommer jag ta upp några av beröringspunkterna med Bauhaus.

”Slöjdskolan” (nuvarande Konstfack) fick sitt nya namn ”Tekniska skolan” och en ny utbildningsplan 1878–79. Det var en skola för slöjd, konsthantverk, formgivning och blivande teckningslärare. Här fanns även en byggnads- och maskinteknisk avdelning. Dess ursprung var Söndagsritskolan för hantverkare som grundats 1844. Ett år senare blev Svenska Slöjdföreningen huvudman och skolan kallades därefter allmänt för ”Slöjdskolan”. Staten tog över det ekonomiska

ansvaret 1859, och som nämndes ovan fick skolan 1879 en ny, då modern utbildningsplan.

En viss modernisering skedde därefter kring sekelskiftet. Vid sidan av undervisningen i stilhistoria och ornament fick eleverna teckna direkt från naturen. Men sedan upphörde förnyelsen. På 1920- och 1930-talen klagade Svenska Slöjdföreningen på att undervisningen var otidsenlig. Upplägget, metodiken och pedagogiken hade inte väsentligt förändrats sedan 1879. Skolan hade lunkat på med i stort sett samma pedagogiska upplägg.

Stockholmsutställningen 1930 blev ett genombrott för funktionalismen (modernismen) i Sverige för arkitektur, konstindustri och formgivning. Men Tekniska skolan var inte representerad på utställningen, med undantag för de elever som studerade för monumentalmålaren och kyrkomålaren Olle





Bild 1. Konstfacks byggnad idag på LM Ericssons väg i Stockholm. Skolan fick i början av 2000-talet, liksom Bauhaus-skolan 1932, flytta in i f. d. telefonfabrik. L.M. Ericssons telefonfabrik uppfördes 1938 till 1940 i funktionalistisk stil efter ritningar av arkitekt Ture Wennerholm. Foto: Ivar Johansson. CC.

Hjortzberg (1872–1959). Hans undervisning ansågs nämligen vara den enda som svarade mot moderna behov. Hans elever fick måla teaterscenografier och en del paviljonger på utställningen. En av eleverna var prins Sigvard Bernadotte (1907–2002), som senare blev en av Sveriges första industri-designer.

### Krav på förnyelse

Efter Stockholmsutställningen började det emellertid ta fart. Utställningens energiske kommissarie, konsthistorikern Gregor Paulsson (1889–1977), Svenska Slöjdföreningens direktör, museimannen Erik Wettergren (1883–1961) och föreningsmedlemmen, arkitekten Hakon Ahlberg (1891–1984) utformade en skrivelse till skolöverstyrelsen med synpunkter på hur en modern utbildning i formgivning och konstindustri borde se ut. Skrivelsen publicerades i *Form*, Svenska Slöjdföreningens tidning.<sup>1</sup> Här några rader ur texten: "Skolan är i behov av en radikal omorganisation. Den moderna konstindustrin fordrar sålunda långt mer ingående tekniska kunskaper och en djupare insikt om industriens arbetssätt och ekonomiska förhållanden. Den hämtar sina former icke ur





Bild 2. De nya lokalerna av Konstfackskolan på Valhallavägen i Stockholm invigs i November 1959 av kung Gustaf VI Adolf och drottning Louise. Foto: Jan Ehnemark, Stockholms stadsmuseum, Fotonummer: SvD 27567.

ett förråd av ornament i olika stilarter eller av tillfällig karaktär utan den söker att nå fram till konstnärlig verkan i främst rummet genom ett inträngande studium av materialets inneboende möjligheter i dess samverkan med konstruktion och ändamål.”<sup>2</sup>

Åsikten att det var materialen i sig som skulle vara utgångspunkten delade de tre förslagsställarna med lärarna och ledningen för Bauhaus-skolan, samt även med många dåtida avantgardekonstnärer. Det var en av de stora förändringarna jämfört med 1800-talet och sekelskiftet, då stilhistorien respektive återgivningen av naturen varit i fokus.

Förslagsställarna hade fler krav: ”Stor uppmärksamhet bör ägnas åt metodiken vid denna konstnärliga fackutbildning och därvid böra erfarenheter från utlandets ledande konstindustriskolor studeras. Skolan måste sålunda utrustas med verkstäder eller laboratorier för respektive fack och det är önskvärt att dessa i möjligaste mån förses med de tekniska hjälpmedel av vilka industri och hantverk i praktiken begagna sig. [---] Skolans facklärare böra även själva om möjligt hava direkt kontakt med industri och hantverk. Skolan böra i viss mån kunna tjänstgöra såsom modell- och mönsterverkstad för

resp. industrier, och eleverna böra sålunda i den utsträckning det är möjligt sysselsättas med direkta beställningar från industrien eller med att framställa säljbara mönster.”<sup>3</sup>

Det som föreslås liknar alltså inte endast programmet för Bauhaus-skolan. Förslagen är näst intill identiska med Walter Gropius utbildningsplaner, som handlade om att utveckla nya prototyper för tysk industri.

### Tyskland – inte längre en förebild

Men det politiska händelseförloppet i Tyskland på 1930-talet var ett problem. Tyskland var inte längre ett exempel att följa. I *Form* år 1933 tog Gregor Paulsson avstånd från utvecklingen i det land vars kultur hade betydelse så mycket för honom.

Både kulturen och pedagogiken tog en annan väg efter 1932, efter nazisternas maktovertagande. I *Form* publicerades 1933 en lista på ett tjugotal museichefer och professorer som då tvingades lämna sina arbeten, bl. a. den kände förkämpe för den moderna typografin, Jan Tschichold (1902–1974), lärare i grafisk formgivning i Leipzig. Även chefredaktören för den tyska tidskriften *Der Form* entledigades. Dess svenska motsvarighet, *Form*, konstaterade att Walter Gropi-

us och Ludwig Mies van der Rohe hade gått ur *Deutscher Werkbund*, som nu fått en partitrogen, nationalsocialistisk ledning.<sup>4</sup>

Men vad innebar det för konsthantverkskolorna? Skribenten Hans Rabén<sup>5</sup> rapporterade i *Form* om en resa till Hamburg och skriver: ”Syftet med besöket var att se hur den nazistiska pedagogiken fungerade i praktiken på en konstindustriskola.” Hans artikel har rubriken ”En tysk konstindustriskola under den nya regimen”.<sup>6</sup> Rabén är ömsom kritisk och ömsom ironisk i sin artikel. Den kände, tidigare rektorn för skolan hade sparkats. Orsaken var hans förkärlek för modern konst och för de idéer som tillämpats på den forna Bauhaus-skolan i Dessau. Rabén påpekade i sin artikel att de nu förbjudna idéerna var desamma som de vilka i Sverige kallades funktionalism. Några nya pedagogiska linjer erbjöd inte den nazistiska omställningen, konstaterade han.

Man hade återgått till att teckna av naturen och gamla gipsmodeller, ”i stället för att utgå från materialet som varit Bauhauskolans modell”. Periodvis fick eleverna ägna sig åt ”lantbruksarbete enligt den nazistiska Blut und Boden-ideologin”. I arkitekturutbildningen fick de lära sig ”att taket ska inta två tred-



jedelar av hushöjden och utformas i samma anda som den nordtyska allmogekulturen". På textilavdelningen ägnade man sig inte åt färgning av garn. "Växtfärgning saknas nästan helt, vilket kan tyckas egendomligt med den kult av det jordvuxna som nu bedrivs i Tyskland", ironiserade han.<sup>7</sup>

### Omdaningen tog form

Skrivelsen ledde till att skolöverstyrelsen tillsatte en kommitté med yrkessakkunniga 1936 som skulle ta fram en ny utbildningsplan och ett förslag på omorganisation. Förslaget var klart två år senare men det dröjde till 1945 innan det blev officiellt beslutat av regering och riksdag.

Undervisningen på Konstfack var fram till 1978 – då skolan blev högskola – indelad i en lägre och högre avdelning, den tvååriga Dagskolan och den tvååriga Högre Konstindustriella Skolan, HKS. Till den sistnämnda antogs man genom inträdesprov. Åren 1968–70 ändrades detta och godkända elever kunde automatiskt fortsätta till HKS. Det fanns även en treårig Aftonskola för elever som yrkesarbetade dagtid. Utbildningen där motsvarade den tvååriga Dagskolan. Många av dem som togs in på Dagskolan hade först

gått ett till tre år på Aftonskolan, som emellertid upphörde 1978 när Konstfack blev högskola.

Aftonskolan och Dagskolan gav eleverna en gemensam konstnärlig bas och möjlighet att fundera över vilket fack de därefter eventuellt ville gå. Jämfört med Bauhaus tog eleverna på Konstfack längre tid på sig för att ta en examen. Men de var betydligt yngre än dem som kom till Bauhaus-skolan i Weimar och hade inte lika grundliga konststudier bakom sig.

Konstfacks nya namn visade att utbildningen nu byggde på fack. Dessa leddes dels av huvudlärare som ansvarade för elevernas konstnärliga och professionella utveckling, dels av hantverkare som undervisade i olika tekniker. Modellen var alltså densamma som på Bauhaus. Dessutom fanns en rad andra lärare som bidrog till elevernas kunskaper om färg, form och ljus, precis som det funnits på Bauhaus. Bauhaus-skolan var alltså en förebild.

Men det fanns också en skillnad. För Walter Gropius, som den arkitekt han var, var "byggnaden" målet. Flera arkitekter knöts ju också till Bauhaus som lärare. Svenska Slöjdföreningens målgrupp, liksom sakkun-

niggruppens, var landets konstindustrier, något som kom att prägla utbildningen. Målet var att få fram fler skickliga formgivare som kunde bistå den svenska industrin. (Den byggnads- och maskintekniska avdelningen hade redan avknoppats 1938 från Tekniska skolan, och blivit ett nytt tekniskt läroverk i Stockholm.)

År 1946 utsågs konsthistorikern Åke Stavenow (1898–1971) till rektor för Konstfack. Han kom från Svenska Slöjdföreningen, för vilken han varit direktör. Han hade också ingått i den kommitté som utformat den nya utbildningsplanen. Hans uppdrag var att förnya skolan enligt de riktlinjer som föreslagits i debattartikeln 1933 och i den omdaning som riksdagen beslutat 1945. Den akademiskt eller hantverksmässigt utbildade lärarkåren som funnits på Tekniska skolan var inte alltid med på noterna. (Detsamma hade Gropius upplevt i Weimar.) De fanns dock undantag, bl.a. konstnären Nils Nixon (1912–1998), som fördjupat sig i László Moholy Nagys pedagogiska övningar på New Bauhaus i Chicago. Nixon arbetade som lärare i konstpsykologi på skolan, ett ämne som också omfattade perceptionsövningar. I och med att nya huvudlärare anställdes





upphörde motståndet mot förändringarna. Stavenow rekryterade några av dåtidens främsta yrkesverksamma formgivare och konstnärer i Sverige.

Flera av lärarna på Konstfackskolan arbetade i ett abstrakt formspråk och direkt med materialen, dvs. med yttringar som på 1920-talet betraktats som avantgarde, men som blev rådande efter andra världskriget. Att utgå från och fördjupa sig i materialen och färgerna, att förutsättningslöst närma sig problemen och att ha ett experimentellt förhållningssätt till skapande var de pedagogiska idéer som Konstfackskolan kom att omfatta efter kriget, precis som Bauhauskolan gjort före kriget.

### **Fack baserade på material**

På keramik- och metallfacken ingick industriella formgivningsuppgifter, medan textilfacket var fokuserat på textil konst och hantverk. Ett fåtal textilkonstnärer sadlade efter examen om till mönsterformgivare på textilindustrin eller sökte till NK:s (Nordiska Kompaniets) Textilkammare, där Astrid Sampe (1909–2002) var chef. Hon hade börjat på Tekniska skolan (Konstfack) 1928 och sedan studerat på Royal College of Art i London.

Där lärde hon känna den tidiga brittiska modernistgenerationen. Precis som *Bauhauslern* Otti Berger (1898–1944), som under en period ansvarade för undervisningen i vävning på Bauhaus i Dessau, var Astrid Sampe oerhört intresserad av industriella textiltekniker och nya fibrer som cellulosa, cellofan, viskos, rayon och glasfiber.

Otti Berger hade kommit till Sverige i april 1929 för att följa en kurs på Johanna Brunssons vävskola, den så kallade Praktiska vävnadsskolan, under elva veckor. Kursen avslutades med en växtfärgningsperiod med Barbro Nilsson som lärare. (Nilsson blev senare huvudlärare för textilavdelningen på Konstfackskolan.) I januari 1930 visade Otti Berger sina textilier på Galerie Moderne i Stockholm samtidigt som en utställning med ”radikal” modernistisk svensk bostadsarkitektur – liknande den tyska – presenterades. Hon fick en kort, uppskattande recension i *Dagens Nyheter*. *Form* publicerade en artikel och i tidningen *Spektrum, Arkitektur och samhälle*, nr 2, 1933, ingick hennes intressanta och analytiskt skärpta artikel ”Rätt fibrer på rätt plats”. I den beskriver hon vilka funktioner textilier ska ha i inredningen och hur strukturer och färger påverkas av material och ljus.

Sådana kunskaper anammades av Astrid Sampe. Genom Otti Bergers vistelse och hennes föreläsningar i Stockholm 1929 spreds Moholy-Nagys betoning på olika materials unika och taktila egenskaper till svenska formgivare. Enligt modernister som Sampe och studenterna på Konstfackskolan, skulle textilierna samspela med den nya moderna funktionalistiska betongarkitekturen. Inga små, räddhågsna mönster dög i fönstren. Det skulle vara storskaliga, abstrakt mönstrade eller enfärgade textilier, som fångade dagsljuset och hämmade skarpa ljud, slitstarka möbeltyger, som framhävde möblernas formspråk och stora textila konstvävar, som bidrog till intressanta interiörer.

### **Vad hände sedan**

I samband med 150-årsjubileet 1993 bytte Konstfackskolan officiellt namn till Konstfack, som skolan då inofficiellt hade kallats under fler decennier. Jubileet firades bl. a. genom att en stor jubileumsbok gavs ut. Konstnären Gösta Wessel (f. 1944), professor vid skolans avdelning för Färg och Form var en av skribenterna.

I och med att Konstfack blev högskola 1978 fick skolan då en speciell avdelning,



”Färg och Form”, som stod för en tredjedel av all undervisning på skolan och som skulle säkerställa att eleverna fick den konstnärliga träning de ansågs behöva. Lärarna på avdelningen hade samma roll som Johannes Itten, Paul Klee och Wassily Kandinsky haft på Bauhaus. ”Målet var att utveckla studenternas seende och färdigheter och medvetandegöra dem om hur färgers och formers utseende påverkas av komplexa sammanhang,” formulerade Gösta Wessel.<sup>8</sup> Under de två följande åren fördjupades det konstnärliga experimenterandet och sökandet under Färg- och Formperioderna – även det en likhet med vad som skedde på Bauhaus-skolan.

Gösta Wessel var väl förtrogen med både Johannes Ittens och Josef Albers färgteorier och han byggde upp ett färglaboratorium på skolan. Där undersökte han bland annat hur färgpigment och texturer påverkades av bindemedel och hur detta i sin tur påverkade vår upplevelse av färgerna.

Gösta Wessel anknöt i sin artikel i Konstfackhistoriken till Bauhaus: ”All utbildning vid Konstfack vilar på konstnärlig grund både av tradition och målmedveten vilja. [...] I likhet med Bauhaus anser vi på Färg och Form

att det finns vissa allmänna grundläggande kunskaper i färg och form som är viktiga för en konstnärlig utveckling. [...] Kurserna i fritt måleri på Bauhaus gav upphov till ändlösa diskussioner om konstens roll i förhållande till teknik och design. Dessa diskussioner pågår sedan lång tid tillbaka hos oss och kommer förhoppningsvis att fortsätta även i framtiden. De samlade erfarenheterna från Bauhaus och Bauhaus-traditionens utveckling under 1900-talet är för oss en viktig kunskapskälla.”<sup>9</sup>

Under åren 2006–08 utvecklades institutionen för Färg och Form successivt. Flera konstnärer försvann, gick i pension eller slutade av andra orsaker. Undervisningen blev mer konceptbaserad med ökade krav på teoretiska kunskaper. Konstfack var ju högskola vilket innebar att studenterna skulle ägna sig åt akademisk forskning.

En konstnärlig utbildning är inget slutet kärl. Den är beroende av företeelser i samhället och av impulser och idéer i tiden. Bauhauskolan var inte statisk utan förändrades genom dess egen, inre utveckling och genom skeenden i omvärlden. Så har också Konstfack gjort. Men det är svårt att stoppa studenters egen drivkraft. Materialexperimenten är nu tillbaka.

Bauhauspedagogiken tog ytterligare en väg in i Sverige och det via New Bauhaus i Chicago. Konstnären Adelyne Cross-Eriksson (1905–1979) studerade där på 1940-talet. László Moholy-Nagys övningar i form, textur och struktur samt hans metoder att utveckla sinnesförmåelserna påverkade henne. Utifrån dessa kunskaper byggde hon under andra världskriget upp en utbildning i Los Angeles för arbetare, husmödrar och andra, övertygad om att alla har en konstnärlig förmåga.

Hon gifte sig med en svensk, sjömannen Per Eriksson. Joseph McCarthys förföljelse av vänsterradikala tvingade dem att lämna Los Angeles och de emigrerade till Sverige 1950. Hon blev senare lärare på Folkuniversitetet, dvs. kursverksamheten vid Stockholms universitet. En rad kända kulturpersoner anslöt sig till hennes undervisning. Allt fler blev fascinerade av hennes pedagogik. 1967 startade några av dem tillsammans med Adelyne Cross-Eriksson ”Levande Verkstad”, som i sin tur har påverkat många konstpedagoger i vårt land. Det visar hur idéer kan vandra vidare, transformeras och ibland ta nya vägar.



## Referenser

- 1 Svenska Slöjdföreningens tidskrift hade 1932 döpts om efter den tyska *Die Form*, som publicerades 1926–1934 av Deutscher Werkbund. Den svenska *Form*-tidskriften utges fortfarande.
- 2 *Form* nr 4/1933: 81–86.
- 3 *Form* nr 4/1933: 85.
- 4 *Form* nr 8/1933, "Tredje riket och konstindustrin", ej numrerad sida i bakvagnen.
- 5 Hans Johan Rabén, (1905–1988), senare förlagschef och medgrundare av förlaget Rabén & Sjögren, 1942, som gav ut barnböcker bl.a. Astrid Lindgrens *Pippi Långström* -böcker och som anställde henne som redaktör på förlaget.
- 6 *Form* nr 3/1935: 6–69.
- 7 *Form* nr 3/1935: 68.
- 8 Wessel, "Den konstnärliga grunden". I Widengren, Gunilla, red. *Tanken och handen, Konstfack 150 år* (Stockholm, 1994), 48.
- 9 Wessel, "Den konstnärliga grunden", 47–51.

**Kerstin Wickman (f.1941) är professor emeritus i design- och konsthantverks-historia, Konstfack. Hon har föreläst om design och konsthantverk sedan slutet av 1960-talet runt om i världen och sedan början av 1970-talet på Konstfack. Hon var under drygt 40 år redaktör på tidskriften *Form* och har medverkat i ett fyrtiotal böcker om design och konsthantverk.**



# Bauhaus in the Archive

Christina Pech

Institutions collecting and exhibiting architecture and design profoundly influence how materials and subjects are selected, safeguarded, and, subsequently, communicated to larger audiences. When ArkDes, the Swedish centre for architecture and design, noticed the Bauhaus centennial, it seemed appropriate to highlight the institution's collection and its role; what can the archives kept at ArkDes tell us about the Bauhaus' influence on design and architecture in Sweden?

This text builds on a series of three public talks arranged during fall 2019 – “Bauhaus in

the Archive”<sup>1</sup> – and engaged with urban planning, interior design, and the realm of ideas. In keeping with the ambition to explore the collections, material from the repositories of ArkDes was made available on every occasion – original drawings, sketches, photographs, documents, correspondence, books. The first conversation with the city architect of Kristianstad, Roger Jönsson<sup>2</sup>, revolved around architect and planner Fred Forbat (Alfréd Fischl, 1897–1972), who worked for Walter Gropius at the Bauhaus and later became an influential urban planner in Sweden. In the second talk, design historian Kerstin Wickman<sup>3</sup> discussed her archival findings and travels to the Bauhaus school with ArkDes' design specialist Jonas Olsson. Finally, the Swedish functionalist manifesto *Acceptera* from 1931 was put in context by three scholars. Atli Magnus Seelow<sup>4</sup>, architect and architecture historian, Helena Kåberg<sup>5</sup>, cu-

rator at Nationalmuseum, and philosopher Sven-Olov Wallenstein<sup>6</sup> have previously researched the book and joined a conversation that traced its roots to the continent spurred by the recent translation to German (Seelow, 2018<sup>7</sup>).

## Canon and Archive

The relationship between a canon, commonly considered established accounts of past events, and an archive, the supposedly indiscriminate accumulation of material remains, is undeniably intriguing.<sup>8</sup> It is by any means a contested realm where different interests and methods will inevitably privilege some narratives and silence others.

The collections of ArkDes contain archives of some 600 architects that practiced in Sweden. Embedded in less illustrious piles of protocols, bills, and itineraries, is evidence of Swedish architects' interests in





**Figure 1. Stockholm suburb Bandhagen designed by Fred Forbat, Bengt Karlsson and Curt Strehlenert. Photo: Sune Sundahl, 1956. ArkDes collections.**

the avant-garde movements on the European continent and their connections with the Bauhaus. The 2019 anniversary series not only confirmed that such linkages were plentiful, and longstanding and that affinities and relationships were manifest between individuals as well as among professional networks and organizations, but they also presented examples of how archives can show, sometimes with high precision, how ideas, people, and objects migrate.

In the first presentation, Roger Jönsson pointed out how Forbat's memoirs in ArkDes' collections tell of an émigré architect's recollections from the meeting between experiences gained in and around the Bauhaus and his new homeland.<sup>9</sup> Their contents can bring unique aspects to the history of Swedish architecture in the post-war years. In the second talk, Kerstin Wickman's fine-grained review of documents of architect Sven Markelius' (1889–1972) – one of the main protagonists of modern architecture in Sweden – archive showed how new data can add to the margins of already charted historical territory. Carefully preserved travel reports, photos, and itineraries disclose how Markelius, traveling on a grant in 1928 to visit air-



ports, seems to have spent more time studying Bauhaus housing projects. With equal attention to archival details, Atli Seelow described in the third talk that by judging from dedications in books, the Swedish art historian and advocate of design reforms Gregor Paulsson (1889–1977) stayed in close contact with colleagues in Germany also well after the Second World War.<sup>10</sup>

Looking at the Bauhaus and Scandinavia, it is a crucial and intriguing historical circumstance when a broader introduction of modernism in Scandinavia coincided with the Bauhaus' difficulties maintaining operations around 1930 and its eventual closure in 1933. When the radical avant-garde came to a halt on the continent, it gained speed in Sweden. This temporal disjuncture opens speculations on what could have happened in art, design, and architecture if the Bauhaus hadn't been forced to close, and teachers and staff hadn't been dispersed around the world or tragically lost their lives in the war. In view of the continuation of modern Swedish architecture, it stands almost as an alternative history, testing whether the radicality of the Weimar Republic could be sustained under different political circumstances. Af-

ter all, in Sweden, a fully-fledged modernist program was eventually implemented in a reformed political environment that catered to non-revolutionary socialism, as opposed to the often politically radical spirit of the continental movements.<sup>11</sup>

The example of the Bauhaus challenges the established histories of the modern movement, which were often written from national perspectives. The school's profound influence that diffused internationally makes it more appropriate to speak about transnational phenomena and modern movements in the plural rather than coherent national developments. However, this would make comparisons between different nations or regions such as Scandinavia even more relevant. And admittedly more complex. As it were, the Scandinavian "periphery" demonstrates sensitive and differentiated notions of adaptation and resistance towards the alleged "center".

### **Forbat – Architect in Four Countries**

One of these fascinating transfers, bringing a radical-minded architect from the centre of the Bauhaus to flourish in a politically more moderate European periphery, is manifest in

the career of the Hungarian-born Fred Forbat. Roger Jönsson, who has researched Forbat's architectural oeuvre between the wars,<sup>12</sup> pointed out that the architecture training at the Bauhaus never reached the scale of urban planning. However, Forbat was drawn to city planning and that brought him to Munich to study for Theodor Fischer. Searching for new and progressive architecture, he moved from there to work for Walter Gropius in Weimar. Later, he was hired as a professor in city planning at Johannes Itten's art school in Berlin for a short period and declined a position as professor at the Bauhaus offered to him by Gropius' successor Hannes Meyer (according to Jönsson, probably because Forbat feared difficulties working with the increasingly radical Meyer). An offer to go to the Soviet Union on the Ernst May brigade to plan linear cities must have appeared "irresistible" for the progressively minded Forbat. However, the negative consequences of a top-down and consistently implemented large-scale planning doctrine soon proved disappointing to him.<sup>13</sup> The transfer to Sweden in 1938 was aided by the international network of Swedish architects, Uno Åhrén among them, and Forbat's previous expe-



riences would combine in a long career as an architect and town planner. According to Jönsson, Forbat strongly contributed to shaping the new profession of the urban planner in Sweden. From his first official assignment, the general plan for Lund in southern Sweden – a town that shared many similarities with his native Pécs – which was assigned to him by former Bauhaus student Sune Lindström<sup>14</sup>, to numerous plans for communities around the country. The Swedish colleagues were particularly curious about Forbat's experience from the Soviet Union. Forbat had much to contribute concerning the projective and prognosis methods developed for comprehensive planning. His general plan for the city of Skövde came to set the standard for planning mid-size cities, Jönsson argues, much due to the way Forbat employed scientific methods.

Forbat remained an essential link between foreign and Swedish architects as secretary to the Swedish CIAM group. Modernist at heart, an interim period of practice in Hungary in the early 1930s nevertheless indicated an interesting alternative strand, according to Jönsson. Compared to his radical designs in the early 1920s, a series of small houses

for mainly Jewish commissioners – receiving commissions and practicing as a Jewish architect in Central Europe had become increasingly difficult by this time – shows a situated architecture rich in local influences. Even though these projects remained exceptions in Forbat's oeuvre, they, Jönsson speculated, could have developed into an exciting practice that indicated a possible turn also in Bauhaus' approaches and would have resonated well with several contemporary architects in Sweden.<sup>15</sup> Still, as Forbat recognized the need for specialization in modern architecture, planning remained his focus in Sweden. However, the memoirs reveal that this was somewhat to his regret as Forbat describes how his carefully designed city plans sometimes came to be occupied by poorly designed houses. The ArkDes talk ended with a lively discussion among audience members about the Stockholm district Reimersholme.

### **Design Education Reformed**

The establishment in 1945 of Konstfack, the independent university of Arts, Crafts, and Design was an influential institutional adaptation of the Bauhaus in Sweden. In the

second talk, centered on crafts and design, Kerstin Wickman spoke about the national redesign of higher education in arts and crafts and how it was investigated for decades.<sup>16</sup> While still integrated with the so-called Tekniska skolan, the pedagogy and understanding of the arts became increasingly outdated. Wickman noted somewhat sardonically that some students managed to get themselves appropriate training *despite* their education at the existing school, such as furniture designer and architect Greta Grossman, and textile designer Astrid Sampe who both successfully adopted ideas of modern design.

Representing the progressive Svenska Slöjdföreningen, art historian Gregor Paulsson was one of the harshest critics of the existing organization of design education. Paulsson owed his idea to reform architecture through craft partly to his education in Germany and his sympathies for the principles of the Deutscher Werkbund. The Werkbund's ambition to break up existing hierarchies between the arts and crafts and rethink the creative transfer between art and industry was carried on to the Bauhaus – even if not entirely followed through – and



was subsequently also integrated into the pedagogy of Konstfack. At the start, every department was headed by both an artistic director and a more technically oriented professional, a master craftsperson. In her talk, Wickman emphasized the Bauhaus' technical advancements— highlighting particularly the artistically and financially successful textile workshop as an extraordinarily advanced department – which helped disseminate the school's ideas throughout Europe. Students at the Bauhaus were encouraged to travel and learn from other schools and industries.<sup>17</sup> This is how, for instance, Bauhaus textile designer Otti Berger spent time in Sweden as a pupil of Johanna Brunsson's weaving school in Stockholm. Even if Berger, according to Wickman's archival findings, seemed less interested in the aesthetic orientation of the workshop, it was a well-reputed school in Europe that attracted many international students.<sup>18</sup> Students of the Bauhaus were also supposed to promote their school's ideals, and extant correspondence tells how Hannes Meyer encouraged Berger to lecture and inform about the Bauhaus in Sweden. In 1929 she became instrumental in introducing Bauhaus textiles (her

own among others) at the Galleria Modern in Stockholm, an avant-garde gallery that staged a series of exhibitions in the late 1920s that would pave the way – and the critique – for the Stockholm Exhibition in 1930. Berger's stay resulted in a report back to the Bauhaus on Swedish weaving techniques and articles in *Svenska Slöjdföreningens tidskrift* (now *Form*) and the culturally radical *Spektrum*.<sup>19</sup> According to Wickman, these writings demonstrate Berger's creativity and technical skills in textiles, which included both a new sense of space and new ideas about hygiene and functionality.

### **A Swedish Manifesto?**

Such cultural transfers and relays proved central also to the third and concluding talk, focused on *Acceptera*, the Swedish functionalist manifesto published in 1931. Sven-Olov Wallenstein recalled that it was the “dela” of modernism to Sweden that first turned his attention to the publication. More specifically, it was Italian architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri's claim that the Siemensstadt housing project had proved that it was impossible for architecture to both maintain autonomy as an art form, and answer to the capitalist real-

ity of production at the same time. After that moment, modernism could only exist as a form of “self-deception, an ideology or a mirage,” Wallenstein argued, referencing Tafuri.<sup>20</sup> Yet, the politically and financially backed implementation of modern architecture and design in Sweden contradicts Tafuri to some extent. It is this notion of ideology and power, and architecture becoming one agent among many in an assemblage that fascinates Wallenstein as a philosopher. Swedish modernism is distinguished by a more flexible way of thinking about modernization, a certain pragmatism. It could be explicated with Michel Foucault's notion of biopolitics, Wallenstein argued: a power structure that taps into life not by external disciplinary measures but by creating a surplus-value, thus shaping the individual subject inward-out and not top-down. Similarly, the originality of *Acceptera* consists of asking the reader to identify with modernity based on a new assemblage of freedom and the individual.

Helena Kåberg's and Atli Magnus See-low's work with translations of *Acceptera* to English and German was also sparked by the relationship between the Swedish modern movement and the continental radical





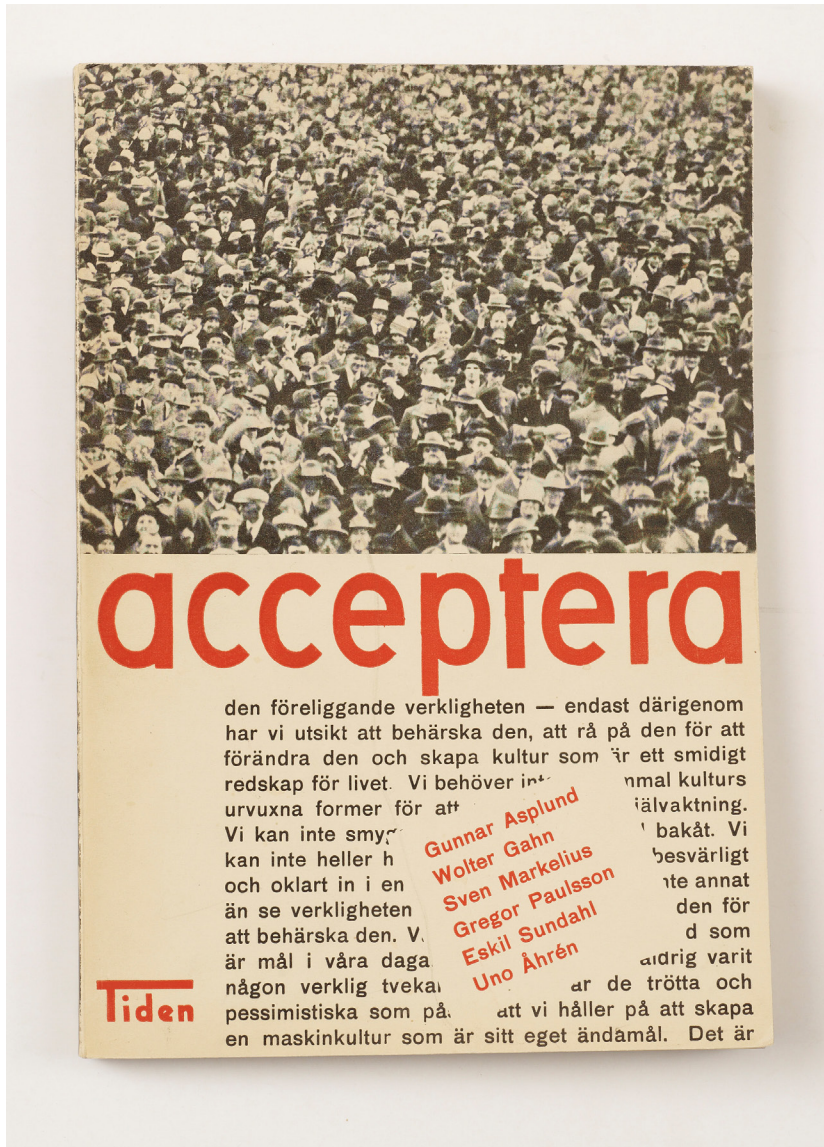


Figure 2. The cover of *Acceptera* (1931).

avant-gardes.<sup>21</sup> Kåberg, while teaching in the US, experienced a lack of original source material translated to English. The publications available at the time would fall short in introducing international students to the nuances and genealogies of thought and the actors beyond the heroic narratives of Swedish design. Seelow became aware of the importance of the Stockholm exhibition and *Acceptera* in disseminating modernism to the rest of Scandinavia while researching Icelandic modernism. And, in turn, he noted how heavily the publication relied on contemporary propaganda texts or manifestoes published on the European continent, especially in Germany.<sup>22</sup> The authors of *Acceptera* borrowed images, even entire paragraphs, from magazines like *Das Neue Frankfurt*, the Bauhaus journal<sup>23</sup> or books like *Schönheit der Technik* by Franz Kollmann, a popular edition in Germany at the time but lesser known in Sweden.<sup>24</sup> This transfer ‘from the continent to the north’<sup>25</sup> fascinated Seelow and spurred his translation of *Acceptera*. However, the transfer is neither straightforward nor passively received. Notably, the authors of *Acceptera* could not claim a revolutionary spirit similar to many of the Euro-



pean publications, thus much of their book revolves around creating a superstructure to support their argument.<sup>26</sup> But such pragmatism united many contemporary architects on the continent, too. Archival research and close readings of texts tell of a more adaptable spirit less prone to overthrow existing power structures than the rhetoric would suggest. Le Corbusier's famous *Architecture ou révolution*<sup>27</sup> intended to present architecture as a way of avoiding revolution, not an argument for revolution, Wallenstein reminded us.

Modern architects found different ways of signalling modernity, not the least by integrating other arts and media with architecture. This expansion of architectural discourse to photography, advertising, and moving images became integral to edifying a new architecture.<sup>28</sup> Kåberg characterized *Acceptera*'s novel layout as an all-immersive experience where image and text are insoluble. It offered a new way of reading, almost cinematic, that followed the New Typography Movement; it is visual media as much as text. The language, too, was saturated by such experiments, Wallenstein added. To create a young, cheeky, and eager effect similar to

the Bauhaus practice to abandon the capitalization of nouns in German, the Swedish authors of *Acceptera* dropped the traditional plural forms of verbs.<sup>29</sup>

The panel's conversation made clear that the continental sources, ideas, or aesthetics of *Acceptera* were not imported one to one. Instead, the Swedish protagonists co-created a variety of artistic and political collages for the new context. They varied from typographic and graphic innovations such as the sans serif typeface to more wide-ranging ideological claims. For example, the authors aligned with Gustaf Näsström's building typology analyses demonstrating that Swedish vernacular architecture was inherently modern.<sup>30</sup> And to further enhance the rationality of domestic building traditions, the key protagonists established the word "funktionalism" for their architecture in Swedish, rather than using another German, but more aesthetically charged concept, the *Neues Bauen*.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Power of Archives**

The profound influence that institutions collecting and exhibiting exert on historiography became evident even in this small program series. For instance, Helena Mattsson's

and Wallenstein's book *1930/31 Swedish Modernism at the Crossroads* (2008) was commissioned by the Documenta exhibition in Kassel with an ambition to map multiple modernities. The same year, the MoMA published the commented translations of *Three Founding Texts* (including *Acceptera*) co-edited by Helena Kåberg. The founding of the Bauhaus-Archiv in 1961 can not be underestimated. For the Swedish context, the Archiv's early contacts with Forbat are significant. They would lead not only to an international traveling exhibition (introducing Forbat also to Swedish audiences<sup>32</sup>) but also encouraged him to collect and author his memoirs. Their 2019 publication by the Bauhaus Archiv, eventually made a "Bauhäusler's" recollections travel from oblivion in an ArkDes archive into the Bauhaus canon.

While the Swedish Nationalmuseum was relatively late with including modern furniture and objects from the Stockholm Exhibition in their collections, today, the idea of merging the arts – brought to Sweden from the Deutscher Werkbund and the Bauhaus by Gregor Paulsson among others – is guiding the museum's new permanent exhibition. Helena Kåberg, the responsible curator of



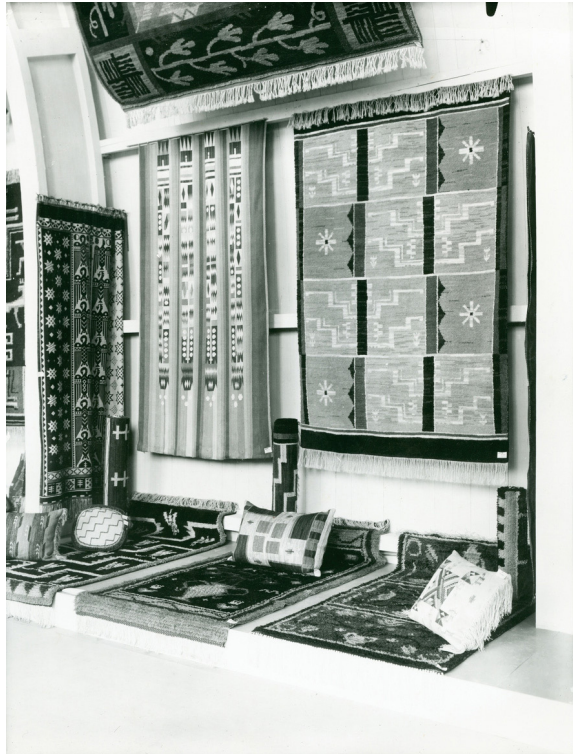


Figure 3. Textiles of Johanna Brunsson's weaving school presented at the Stockholm Exhibition 1930. Photo: Vänersborgs museum.

the display, anecdotally revealed how she hung the portraits of Paulsson and Herman Bergman, an art caster and the founder of an influential foundry, next to each other in the museum's restaurant. Even if the two gentlemen disagreed on arts and crafts in their lifetime, their debate could continue in spirit by juxtaposing within the museum's walls.

Inadvertently, "Bauhaus in the Archive" at ArkDes became a call for further research. The series pointed to the fundamental importance of the artistic movements on the continent for the theory and practice of modern architecture and design in Sweden, and how much more is to be done. The transfer of ideas from the Bauhaus to Sweden occurred during an extended period and involved more individuals than typically acknowledged in the abbreviated canon narratives. The archive also bears witness to difficult histories seldom communicated. Jönsson pointed out that in Forbat's case, even though he was successfully integrated into a new country, the archive reveals outright confrontation with colleagues because of his non-Swedish origin. And his files kept at the Swedish intelligence service can further detail the hardship facing an architect in times

of war. Wickman's research makes evident that there is more to dig out about the education and networks of female designers in Sweden who practiced before equal possibilities to professional training were available.<sup>33</sup> And Seelow described how he keeps stumbling across printed matter that later re-surfaced in *Acceptera*, tying it still closer to the continent and its contested histories. With the help of the archive, the individual actors, events, and instances can be gathered to form a fuller picture. Or, as Kerstin Wickman pointed out in her presentation, "the archive can show us how ideas become manifest."



## Endnotes

- 1 The series was initiated by the author, at the time research coordinator at ArkDes, and organized in collaboration with ArkDes library and collections through head librarian Lena Björnstad Wranne and curator of collections Frida Melin. For the content of this article, I am indebted to the information provided by the guests of the series. Unless otherwise stated I am referencing information voiced during public talks on September 10 (Roger Jönsson), October 1 (Kerstin Wickman), and November 5 (Helena Kåberg, Atli Magnus Seelow and Sven-Olov Wallenstein).
- 2 Roger Jönsson is an architect and gained his PhD through the Faculty of Engineering (LTH), Lund University for a doctoral dissertation on Fred Forbat in 2004.
- 3 Kerstin Wickman is former Professor at Konstfack, design critic and author.
- 4 Prof. Dr. -Ing. Atli Magnus Seelow is currently based at the Friedrich-Alexander University in Erlangen-Nuremberg. 2015-2019 he was associate professor of history and theory of architecture at Chalmers university of Technology in Gothenburg.
- 5 Helena Kåberg, PhD, is an art historian and senior curator at Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.
- 6 Sven-Olov Wallenstein is Professor of Philosophy at Södertörn University.
- 7 Asplund, Gunnar, Åhrén, Uno, Gahn, Wolter, Markelius, Sven, Paulsson, Gregor & Sundahl, Eskil, *Akzeptiere: das Buch und seine Geschichte*. Translation to German with introduction and comments by Atli Magnus Seelow, (Erlangen: FAU University Press, 2018).
- 8 Cultural anthropologist Aleida Assman explores cultural memory and the relationship between canon and archive in Aleida Assman, "Canon and Archive", in a *Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, eds. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010).
- 9 Forbats memoirs, written in German, were

published in the "Bauhäusler" series by Bauhaus Archiv in 2019. Forbat, Fred, *Erinnerungen eines Architekten aus vier Ländern*, (Berlin: Bauhaus-Archiv, 2019). The memoirs of Werner Taesler who studied at the Bauhaus and came to settle in Sweden were also published in 2019. Taesler, Werner, *Flüchtling in drei Ländern: ein Bauhaus-Architekt und Sozialist in Deutschland, der Sowjetunion und Schweden: kommentierte Edition seiner Aufzeichnungen*, (Stuttgart: Edition Amici im Verlag opus magnum, 2019).

10 Atli Seelow mentioned among others the former Professor at TU Munich, Johannes Ludwig who had strong ties with Sweden.

11 This topic was elaborated especially by Seelow and Wallenstein in the third talk of the series.

12 Jönsson, Roger (2004). *Arkitekt i mellankrigstidens Europa: Fred Forbat och funktionalismen*. (Lund: Lund University, 2004), doctoral dissertation.

13 Ibid., 279ff.

14 At the time of the plan (1939–1942) Lindström had just set up his office and lacked time to fully engage in the assignment. Although co-authored with Lindström, Jönsson argues the plan was mainly conceived by Forbat. Jönsson 2004, p. 397ff.

15 Jönsson states that Forbat became an undogmatic 'outsider' among the Hungarian CIAM members. Jönsson 2004 p. 392.

16 See also Kerstin Wickman's article in this publication.

17 For further orientation on Bauhaus weaving theory and the writings of weavers active at the Bauhaus, see Smith, T'ai, *Bauhaus Weaving Theory. From Feminine Craft to Mode of Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

18 Rosell-Åström, Kristina (red.), *Johanna Brunsson: pionjär inom svensk vävkonst* (Göteborg: Gustaf Werner AB, 1982).

For more on the history of Konstfack, see Beckman, Ulf, *Tanken och handen: Konstfack 150 år*.

(Stockholm: Page One, 1994); Helgeson, Susanne (red.), *175 år av kamp, glädje och misslyckanden*, (Hägersten: Konstfack, 2019).

19 Kerstin Wickman, "Impulserna kom från Tyskland", <https://www.goethe.de/ins/se/sv/kul/sup/bhs/21697875.html>, accessed 2020-07-30. See also Widar Halén's studies on Berger and the Nordic countries at <https://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/en/stories/explore-the-collection/otti-berger-og-norden-eng/>, accessed 2021-09-05.

20 See also Helena Mattsson and Sven-Olov Wallenstein, *1930/31 Swedish Modernism at the Crossroads*, (Stockholm: Axl Books, 2009), 34f, and Manfredo Tafuri, *Progetto e utopia* (Bari: Laterza, 1973). Trans. by Barbara Luigi la Penta as *Architecture and Utopia* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976).

21 Creagh, Lucy, Kåberg, Helena & Lane, Barbara Miller (eds.), *Modern Swedish Design: Three Founding Texts*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2008).

22 Seelow mentioned particularly Gropius' *International architecture*, Walter Behrendt's *The Victory of the New Building Style* and Adolf Behne's *The Modern Functionalist Building*, alongside Le Corbusier's books.

23 For commented facsimile editions of the Bauhaus journal, see Bähr, Astrid & Müller, Lars, *Bauhaus journal 1926-1931: facsimile edition*. (Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2019).

24 The connection was not discovered by Seelow until after the 2018 translation was published and does not appear in the annotations.

25 Atli Magnus Seelow, "From the Continent to the North – German Influence on Modern Architecture in Sweden", *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History*, vol. 85:1 (2016): 44–62.

26 See Seelow's introduction to the translation of *Acceptera*.

27 Intended as the original title of *Vers une Architecture*, "Architecture ou révolution" was kept as



the heading of the books final and most well-known chapter. See for example Brott, Simone, “Architecture et Révolution: Le Corbusier and the Fascist Revolution”, *Thresholds* 41 (Spring 2013).

28 Architecture theorist Beatriz Colomina has published extensively on this matter, most notably *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994).

29 In the beginning of the 1930s the singular forms were still considered experimental in published text. Fiction writers would increasingly adopt the singular throughout the 1930s, media in the early 1940s, and in 1967 the plural forms were eventually banned from legal texts too. Gertrud Pettersson, *Svenska språket under 700 år*. (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1996) 162.

30 Gustaf Näsström...

31 Eva Rudberg....

32 The exhibition that opened in Darmstadt 1969 was shown in Stockholm 1970. *Fred Forbat: arkitektur och stadsplanering i Tyskland, USSR, Ungern och Sverige 1919-1969*, Stockholm: Sveriges arkitekturmuseum, 1970.

33 In a related field, Catharina Nolin’s research on Swedish female landscape architects shows extensive international connections. Catharina Nolin, “Networking and Collaborating: Notes on Swedish Women Landscape Architects 1935–1970”, in Mikael Andersson and Christina Pech (eds.), *ArkDes Research Symposium on Architectural History 2018* (Stockholm: ArkDes, 2020).

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# Bauhaus Suomessa? Tapauksena Birger Carlstedtin Chat Doré-kahvila

Susanna Aaltonen

**Näyttelyarvio: ”Kultainen kissa – Le Chat Doré. Birger Carlstedt, 1907–75”. Amos Rex, Helsinki, 11.10.2019–12.1.2020.**

Amos Rexissä avattiin syksyllä 2019 kattava näyttely kuvataiteilija Birger Carlstedtista. Näyttelyn kuraattorit Synnöve Malmström ja Tuomas Laulainen nostivat näyttelyssä esille Carlstedtin monipuolisuuden taiteilijana. Hän oli paitsi taidemaalari myös sisustusarkkitehti, muotoilija, arkkitehti ja lavaste-taiteilija. Näyttelyn teemoihin liittyen ilmestyi myös ensimmäinen taiteilijasta julkaistu monografia, ”*Birger Carlstedt. Modernismin haaste*”, jossa käsitellään taiteilijan elämää ja tuotantoa eri näkökulmista. Kirjassa Raulo Endénin ja Tuomas Laulaisen biografiaosuus ”*Birger Carlstedt 1907–1975*” käy läpi

Carlstedtin elämänvaiheet ja kokoaa kirjan teemat yhteen. Liisa Kasvio, joka on tutkinut Carlstedtin kuvataidetta jo 1980-luvulla, kirjoittaa ”*Nuoresta modernistista*”. Marie-Sofie Lundström käsittelee tuoreena näkökulmana matkailun vaikutusta Carlstedtin taiteeseen otsikolla ”*Afriikka oli tosiaan minun paikkani*”. Uudenlaisia lähestymistapoja Carlstedtin kuvataiteilijuuden tarkasteluun tarjoaa niin Synnöve Malmströmin artikkeli ”*Surrealism ja maagisen realismin välissä*” kuin Tuomas Laulaisen ”*Kohti konkreettista harmoniaa – Birger Carlstedtin abstraktin metodeja jäljittämässä*”.<sup>1</sup>

Kirjoitin itse Birger Carlstedtista taideteollisuuden edustajana otsikolla ”*Le Chat Doré. Hetki Pariisia Helsingissä*”. Artikkelin otsikko on lainaus Le Chat Doré -kahvilan mainoksesta.<sup>2</sup> Kirjoituksessa pohdin Suomen taidehistoriassa ensimmäisen funktionalistisen sisustuksen maineen saaneen kahvilan

90-vuotista elinkaarta sen syntyvaiheista tähän päivään.<sup>3</sup> Vaikka vuonna 1929 Helsingin Unioninkatu 24:ssä avattu kahvila-ravintola lopetti toimintansa jo 1930-luvulla, sen historia ja merkityksen tulkinta on jatkunut näihin päiviin.

Kahvilan keskeisestä asemasta Birger Carlstedtin taiteilijauralla kertoo se, miten usein se on nostettu valokeilaan. Kultainen kissa oli alkupiste Carlstedtin kuvataiteilijan uralle ja myöhemmälle 1940- ja 1950-luvun uralle teatterilavastajana. Kahvilan rooli oli keskeinen myös Amos Rexin näyttelyssä, jossa pääosassa olivat Carlstedtin maalaukset ja pitkä kuvataiteilijan ura, mutta jonka nimenä oli Kultainen kissa Le Chat Doré. Viimeisimpänä vaiheena kahvilan biografiassa onkin Amos Rexiin luotu kahvilan rekonstruktio.<sup>4</sup> Museonäyttelyyn rakennetussa kahvilassa saattoi nauttia kovaa teetä 1920-luvun kieltolain hengessä. Lisäksi Amos Rexin





Kuvat 1 ja 2.  
Amos Rexin Birger  
Carlstedt -näytte-  
lyyn rekonstruoitu  
Chat Doré -kahvila  
syksyllä 2019. Valo-  
kuva: Stella Ojala.  
Amos Rex.

näyttelyssä oli mahdollista tutustua virtuaalisesti, VR-tekniikan avulla, Le Chat Dorén takahuoneeseen, niin sanottuun venäläiseen saliin.

Aito Le Chat Dorén sisustus katosi, mutta Helsingin Unioninkatu 24:n talo on edelleen olemassa. Tilassa on ollut erilaista liiketoimintaa, tällä hetkellä kampaamo ja kampaamokoulu. Alkuperäinen kahvila sisustettiin modernin tyylinä kannalta ristiriitaiseen rakennukseen ja Amos Rexin väliaikainen rekonstruktio toteutti tavallaan alkuperäisen sisustuksen lavastuksellista Bauhaus-henkeä. Miten kahvila syntyi, miten se aikanaan vastaanotettiin ja miten sen maine säilyi ja se kanonisoitui? Näiden kysymysten kautta avautuu Carlstedtin kahvilan suhde myös 1920-luvun kansainväliseen ilmiöön: Bauhausiin.

### **Bauhaus 100-vuotta: Mikä oli Bauhausia?**

Mitä bauhauslaisuus sitten oli tai miten se näkyi Suomessa? Kyse oli 1920-luvulla syntyneestä kansainvälisestä ilmiöstä, joka on yhdistetty ennen kaikkea taideteollisuuteen ja funktionalismiin.<sup>5</sup> Alkuun on pohdittava, mitä ylipäätään bauhauslaisuus käsitteenä



tarkoittaa. Tai mitä se on tarkoittanut viimeisen sadan vuoden aikana, ensinnäkin toiminta-aikanaan vuosina 1919–1933, ja toiseksi koulun ideologian myöhemmässä leviämässä ja myöhemmissä historiallisissa tulkinnoissa? Kuten Bauhausia tutkinut arkkitehtuurihistorioitsija Winfried Nerdinger totesi: ”Liikkeestä, joka vastusti historiaa, on itsestään tullut historia.”<sup>6</sup>

Koulun historiasta tehty tutkimus on ollut erityisen aktiivista ja intensiivistä viime vuonna liittyen Bauhausin perustamisen 100-vuotisuuteen. Juhlavuonna 2019 ilmestyi muun muassa näköispainos taidekoulussa vuosina 1926–1933 julkaistusta lehdestä, *Bauhaus Zeitschrift*istä sekä teos Bauhausissa ja Bauhausista järjestetyistä näyttelyistä.<sup>7</sup> Esimerkiksi Suomessa Ateneumissa oli esillä jo vuonna 1967 Bauhausia esittelevä kiertonäyttely ”*Werstattarbeiten des Weimarer Bauhauses 1919–1925*.”<sup>8</sup>

Tutkimus on valottanut Bauhausia monesta näkökulmasta. Huomioitavaa on, että edes toimintavuosinaan 1919–1933 Bauhaus-koulussa ei ollut yhtä ideologiaa tai opinto-ohjelmaa, vaan lyhyen historiansa aikana sen johtajat, opettajat, opetusohjelmat ja sijaintipaikat, Weimarista Dessauin



**Kuva 3. Unioninkatu 24 vuonna 1921. Valokuva: Eric Sundström. Helsingin kaupunginmuseo/Finna.**

kautta Berliiniin, vaihtuivat. Tarkastelun kohteena ovat olleet esimerkiksi koulun johtajat, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe ja Hannes Meyer.<sup>9</sup> Bauhausin piirissä toimineita naisia ja sukupuoli-ideologiaa on myös tutkittu, mainittakoon Anja Baumhoffin väitöskirja vuodelta 2001 ja juhluvuonna ilmestynyt: *Bauhaus bodies: Gender, sexuality, and body culture in modernism's legendary art school*.<sup>10</sup>

Viime aikoina on nostettu esiin Bauhaus-ideologian performatiivisuus eli se, miten ideoita esitettiin ja jopa lavastettiin valokuvissa. Etenkin Robin Schuldenfrei on painottanut sitä, miten Bauhausin aatteet jäivät yksittäisiksi toteutuksiksi ja ideoiksi vaille laajaa käytännönpanoa tai toteutusta.<sup>11</sup> Bauhausissa ajatut periaatteet, kuten koristeeton suunnittelu ja käyttötarkoituksen eli funktion korostaminen, tuotannon standardoiminen teollisuutta varten ja tavoite parantaa demokraattisesti eri yhteiskuntaluokkien arkea paremmalla tavara- ja tuotannolla, eivät toteutuneet käytännössä. Epäonnistumiset johtuivat monestakin syystä. Yhteistyötä teollisuuden kanssa ei saatu järjestettyä. Uniikkina käsityönä tehty ja arvokkaista materiaaleista valmistettu esineistö oli kallista, eikä suuren kuluttajakunnan tavoitettavissa. Esinevalikoima ei myös-





kään ollut välttämättä uudenaikaista ja koko kansan tarpeisiin, vaan tehty pikemminkin vaurasta porvarillista elämäntapaa silmällä pitäen. Niinpä esimerkiksi modernistisen niukkakoristeisella sähkökahvipannulla tai sähkövalaisimella ei voinut edes olla suuria markkinoita, koska vain harvoissa kodeissa oli sähköä käytössä. Bauhaus edusti aikanaan idealistista utopiaa ja sen ideat olivat laajassa mittakaavassa toteuttamiskelpoisia vasta myöhemmin.<sup>12</sup>

Ideat siis realisoituivat pikemminkin lavastettuina esityksinä ja valokuvina uniikeista esineistä kuin todellisina sisustuksina tai kaupallisina tuotteina. Schuldenfrein näkökulma korostaa Bauhausin elitistisyyttä ja suhdetta luksukseen sekä sitä, miten kuvaa Bauhausista rakennettiin erityisesti näyttelyissä ja julkisuuden kautta.

Bauhausin modernien ja aikaansa edellä olevien harvojen toteutettujen kohteiden, rakennusten ja sisustusten sekä esineiden synnyssä oleellista oli tilaajan ennakkoluolettomuus, vauraus ja valmius hyväksyä uusia ideoita.<sup>13</sup> Samoin oli Birger Carlstedtin kohdalla, jonka tärkein tukija ja Le Chat Doré -kahvilan tilaaja ja rahoittaja oli äiti, ravinto-oloitsija Amanda Carlstedt. Amanda Carlstedt

oli edistysellinen ja moderni, itsensä elättävä nainen, jolla oli muun muassa ajokortti.<sup>14</sup> Le Chat Doré oli aikaansa edellä, mutta liian moderni ”tavalliselle kansalle”, se oli taiteellinen voitto pojalle, mutta taloudellinen katastrofi äidille, kuten Bengt von Bonsdorff on kirjoittanut.<sup>15</sup> Toisaalta voi pohtia kenelle kahvila oli oikeastaan suunnattu. Luultavasti kahvilan modernin sisustuksen ei ollut tarkoitus houkuttaa tavallista kadunmiestä, vaan se oli ajateltukin tietyille, ”elitistiselle” ryhmälle: taiteilijoille, kirjailijoille ja näyttelijöille. Kuten Carlstedt itse on kirjoittanut kuvitteellista kahvilasta:

Kahvila I.I.M. on taiteilijoiden ja snobien kohtaamispaikka, jossa hillitty pianomusiikki luo viihtyisän tunnelman. Puhutaan kaikesta maan ja taivaan väliltä. Kauniit mannekiinit esittelevät uusimpia muotiluomuksia. Pari kertaa viikossa pidetään kirjallisia iltoja, joihin kaikki seurueet voivat osallistua. Paikoin on kodikasta puheensorinaa ja hälinää, paikoin hiljaista kuin kirkossa, ja kauniit naiset yrittävät näyttää mahdollisimman intelligentteiltä.<sup>16</sup>

### **Birger Carlstedtin bauhauslaisuus?**

Le Chat Doré -kahvilan ranskankielinen nimi on ymmärrettävissä Birger Carlstedtin henkilökohtaisesta taustasta käsin. Carlstedtin kosmopoliittinen lapsuuden perhe matkusti Euroopassa, kotikielinä olivat ruotsi, ranska

ja saksa.<sup>17</sup> Carlstedt tunsu erityisen hyvin Pariisin,<sup>18</sup> jonka kukoistavaa kahvilakulttuuria ihailtiin Suomessakin.<sup>19</sup>

Bauhaus oli laajasti tunnettu ja kansainvälinen ilmiö 1920-luvulla, eikä ole syytä epäillä, etteikö Carlstedt olisi ollut hyvin perillä tästä 1920-luvun uudistusmielisestä taideteollisuuskoulusta ja sen opeista. Taiteilijaidentiteetiltään Carlstedtia voi pitää bauhauslaisena. Kuten Bauhaus-koulun opettajat ja opiskelijat, hän oli kiinnostunut laajasti niin kuvataiteista, arkkitehtuurista, taideteollisuudesta kuin teatterista ja kirjallisuudesta. Carlstedt työskenteli muun muassa huonekalusuunnittelun ja sisustustaiteen, mainospiirtämisen, muodin sekä lavastamisen ja puvustamisen parissa. Kahvilan suunnittelun aikaan Carlstedt oli 22-vuotias. Hän edusti 1920-luvun nuorta sukupolvea, jonka kouluttamista varten Saksan Bauhaus oli perustettu. Carlstedt oli opiskellut Helsingissä Taideteollisuuskeskuskoulussa, jonka opinto-ohjelmassa Bauhausin opit eivät vielä tuolloin suoranaisesti vaikuttaneet, mutta jossa harjoitettiin monipuolisesti ja erilaisia taideaineita ja eri osastojen opiskelijoille järjestettiin yhteisesti muun muassa eri taideteollisuuden alojen kilpailuja. Carlstedtin



luonnoskirjat kertovat nuoren suunnittelijan monialaisista kiinnostuksen kohteista kuvittamisesta ja mainospiirroksista huonekaluihin. Kuvataiteilijana Carlstedt sai vaikutteita monilta taiteilijoilta, kuten Bauhausissa opettaneelta Wassily Kandinskyllä.<sup>20</sup>

### **Le Chat Doré -kahvilan bauhauslaisuus?**

Kahvilan suunnitteluun Carlstedtin rinnalla osallistunut arkkitehti Karl Malmström teki lyhyen esittelyn kahvilasta *Arkkitehti*-lehteen otsikolla: ”Ultramoderni, mutta kuitenkin viihtyisä”. Valokuva kahvilan alakerran salista pääsi myös lehden kanteen.<sup>21</sup> Kahvila sai alusta asti positiivista julkisuutta ja myönteistä huomiota. Lähes aina ihailen muistetaan Carlstedtin nuori ikä suunnitteluajankohtana. Le Chat Dorén bauhauslaisuus, värit ja konkretismi ovat myös usein mainittuja asioita. Kirjoituksissa heijastuvat kulloinkin vallalla olleet käsitykset Bauhausista. Sisustusta on kuvailtu ultramodernina ja funktionalistisena, kokonaistaideteoksena ja yhtenäistaideteoksena. Kahvilan bauhauslaisuus on yhdistetty erityisesti sisustuksen kokonaistaideteoksen ideaan, ja esille nostetaan kahvilassa käytössä olleet Marcel Breuerin Bauhausissa suunnittelemaat metalliputkituolit – erityisesti

Wassily-tuoli – sekä lattian abstrakti koriste-maalaus. Lattian maalauskuviointin merkitys on korostunut, kun on pohdittu Carlstedtin kehitystä kuvataiteilijana. Kuviointia pidetään Suomen taidehistoriassa ensimmäisenä konkretistisena maalauksena. Se näkyy kahvilasta säilyneissä guassisuunnitelmissa hyvin, mutta valokuvissa lattiakuviointi peit-tyy osittain huonekalujen alle. Myös Amos Rexin kahvilan rekonstruktiossa maalaus jäi huonekalujen jalkoihin. [kuvat 4–6]

Suurin osa lattian koristemaalausta käsittelevistä kirjoituksista on perustunut Carlstedtin guassimaalauksiin, joita on esitelty taideteoksina. Niissä huomion kiinnittää juuri lattian abstrakti kuvio ja voimakkaat värit, joiden tyyppisyys 1920-luvun funktionalismille unohtuu helposti, jos katsoo vain aikakauden mustavalkoisia valokuvia. Silti Le Chat Dorén tulkinnan kannalta tärkeitä ovat mustavalkoiset valokuvat, kahvilan sijainti ja kahvilan sijoittaminen rakennukseen, joka oli valmistunut ennen funktionalististen arkkitehtuuri-ideoiden esiinmarssia. Guassipiirustusten perusteella kahvilaa on tulkittu nimenomaan visuaalisena, katsottavana taideteoksena, ei niinkään esineellisenä, tilallisena arkkitehtuurina tai kokemuksellisena kaupunkitilana.

Taideteollisuuden kannalta kiinnostava on Suomen taideteollisuuden keskeisen ja vaikutusvaltaisen hahmon, sisustusarkkitehti Arttu Brummer-Korvenkontion arvio Carlstedtin kahvilasta *Domus*-lehdessä, joka oli vuosina 1930–1933 ilmestynyt aikakauslehti sisustustaidetta, taideteollisuutta, maalaus- ja kuvanveistotaidetta varten. Mitä oletettavimmin kahvilassa asioinut Brummer, joka kirjoitti nimimerkillä Petronius, osoitti olevansa perillä nykyajastaan ja uusimmista suunnitteluperiaatteista. Hän piti kahvilaa Suomeen saapuneena ”ensimmäisenä funktionalistisena pääskysenä” ja kiitteli nuoren suunnittelijan tekemää sisustusta. Brummer toi esille kuitenkin myös sisustuksen ongelmakohtat funktionalismin kannalta. Kahvilan pääsalin katon ensokartonkiparrut olivat Brummerin mielestä ”jyrkässä ristiriidassa funktionalismin pääpiirteen, sen selvän käytännöllisen rakenteen kanssa, joka loppujen lopuksi on juuri funktionalismin a ja o.” Brummer näki myös kahvilan sisustamisen vanhan puodin paikalle ongelmallisena samoin kuin ikkunaverhot. Huonekalut – mustat ja punaiset pöydät ja tuolit sekä niklatut metallituolit – sen sijaan sopivat Brummerin mielestä funktionalistiseen sisustukseen.<sup>22</sup>





Kuvat 4-6. Birger Carlstedtin guassiluonnokset. Birger Carlstedtin arkisto. Amos Rex.



Valokuvien perusteella pahviset kattopalkit ja tilaa hallitsevat, voimakaskuviolliset verhot vaikuttavat sopivan hankalasti ultramodernin kahvilan osaksi, mutta ne ehkä loivat kahvilaan viihtyisyyttä. Malmströmin artikkelin otsikko onkin oireellinen: ”Ultramoderni, mutta kuitenkin viihtyisä”. Se paljastaa, että viihtyisyyttä ei ole pidetty ensisijaisena funktionalismin piirteenä, vaan jopa sen vastakohtana. Kattopalkeilla ei tuntuisi olevan funktiota juuri muina kuin koristeina, elleivät ne toimisi avoimen tilan akustiikan parantajana. Verhoilla saattoi olla tehtävä myös sisällä hyvin todennäköisesti toimivan salakapakan kätkejänä. Kieltolain aikaan lähes jokaisessa ravintolassa ja kahvilassa myytiin alkoholia.<sup>23</sup> Salamyhkäinen piiloutuminen esirippumais-ten tummien verhojen taakse samoin kuin keinotekoiset pahvipalkit katossa vievät ajatukset myös kahvilaan näyttämönä ja lavastustaiteeseen.<sup>24</sup>

Verhot saattoivat oikeastaan olla bauhauslaisemmat kuin ensikatsomalta näyttäisi. Uudehkon 1920-luvun alussa valmistuneen arkkitehti Matti Finellin suunnitteleman rakennuksen raskas punatiiliarkkitehtuuri edusti tyystin toisenlaista arkkitehtuuri-ihannetta kuin Carlstedtin moderni sisustus.



**Kuva 7. Chat Dorén pääsali, jonka rekonstruktio rakennettiin Amos Rexin näyttelyyn. Birger Carlstedtin arkisto. Amos Rex.**

Birger Carlstedtillä oli siis Bauhausin suunnittelijoiden tapaan ongelma, miten sovittaa modernit sisustukset ja esineet rakennuksiin, jotka eivät noudattaneet uusia arkkitehtuuri-ihanteita. Kuten Schuldenfrei on tuonut esille: Bauhausin sisustuksissa

verhoilla oli funktio kätkeä rakennuksen epäfunktionaalisia piirteitä, kuten pieniä ikkunoita tai koristeellisia ikkunapuitteita. Peittäväillä katosta lattiaan ulottuvilla verhoilla ikään kuin lavastettiin tila modernimmaksi kuin se olikaan.<sup>25</sup>





Kuva 8. Luonnos ns. venäläisestä kabinetista. Birger Carlstedtin arkisto. Amos Rex.

Kuva 9. Chat Dorén venäläinen kabinetti, josta tehtiin VR-versio näyttelyn yhteyteen. Birger Carlstedtin arkisto. Amos Rex.

Carlstedt joutui siis sovittamaan tai ikään kuin lavastamaan funktionalistiset ideansa suhteellisen pimeään ja sokkeloiseen tilaan, josta puuttuivat funkkiselle tyypilliset piirteet, kuten avoin pohjaratkaisu ja valoisat nauhaikkunat. Carlstedt korvasi ne lavastuksellisesti nauhamaisten, teknologisesti uuden aikaisten valaisimien avulla.

1920-luvulla Bauhausin piirissä korostettiin uusinta teknologiaa ja sen hyödyntämistä. Esimerkkinä uusimman teknologian hyödyntämisestä voi pitää Le Chat Dorén kahvilatiskille sijoitettua kahvikonetta. (Kuva 7) Sen sijaan ravintolatoiminnan kannalta keskeistä tilaa eli keittiötä ei ole dokumentoitu kuviin. Joko sen suunniteluun ei erityisesti panostettu tai sitä ei pidetty julkisesti esittelynarvoisena. Tämä on kiinnostavaa, koska keittiö, etenkin kotien keittiöt, nousivat tärkeäksi suunnittelukohteeksi 1920-luvulla.

Funkiksen innoittamasta pääsalista poike- ten ravintolan perällä oleva venäläinen sali oli muusta sisustuksesta täysin poikkeava. Jollain tavalla sen sisustus kuitenkin kertoo aikakauden murroksesta ja toisaalta nuoren Carlstedtin kamppailusta esittävän ja ei-esit- tävän taiteen välillä. Sitä voi myös verrata hänen ateljeekoteihinsa, joissa hämmettä-

västi yhdistyivät funktionalistiset elementit, kuten putkihuonekalut, pallovalaisimet ja voimakkaat suuret väripinnat orientalismin koristeellisuuteen ja tavararunsauteen.

Lavastusmaisuus yhdistää kahvilan Carlstedtin 1940- ja 1950-lukujen lavas- tuksiin, joita ei ole toistaiseksi tutkittu. Bau- haus-ilmioon Suomessa liittyen myös Birger Carlstedtin muut ja aiemmin analysoimatto- mat sisustukset, erityisesti hänen itselleen tekemänsä ateljeekodit, olisivat kiinnostavia. Kaupunkiasuntojen lisäksi Carlstedt laajensi reviiriään myös arkkitehtuurin puolelle suun- nittelemalla itselleen talon Villa Fyrenäsin samoihin aikoihin Le Chat Doré -kahvilan kanssa 1930-luvun vaihteessa. Kodeista säilyneiden valokuvien ja luonnoskirjojen pe- rusteella näkyy, että Carlstedt hyödynsi Bau- hausin ideoita. Hän käytti kodeissaan, kuten kahvilassaan, jo mainittuja Marcel Breuerin suunnittelemlia terästuoleja, ja luonnosteli itsekkin moderneja putkikalusteita. Esimer- kiksi Wassily-tuoleja ei tuolloin, eikä myö- hemminkään, suomalaisista olohuoneista löytynyt. Yksi harvoista julkaistuista esimer- keistä oli Aino Marsio-Aallon ja Alvar Aallon kodin olohuoneessa Turussa<sup>26</sup>. Wassily-tuolit edustivat niin kotimaassaan kuin Suomessa

elitistisiä luksusesineitä, joita vain harvat ym- märsivät tai hankkivat koteihinsa.<sup>27</sup> Carlstedt käytti sisustuksessaan myös Bauhausin piiristä tuttuja pallovalaisimia. Carlstedtin kotisisus- tukset ovat Suomen Bauhaus-kontekstissa kiinnostavia, kun huomioidaan myös se, että Bauhaus-koulun ideologisenä tavoitteena oli keskittyä yksityiseen, ei niinkään julkiseen, eli ensisijaisesti luoda uutta ja nykyaikaista asumisen arkea.

Yhteenvetona uusimman kansainvälisen tutkimuksen valossa voi todeta, että Carlst- edtin Le Chat Doré oli bauhauslainen jopa siinä, miten ideat jäivät vajavaisiksi toteu- tuksiksi. Suomessa samoin kuin Bauhausin piirissä 1920-luvulla ideoita toteutettiin käy- täntöön rajallisilla reunaehdoilla.



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**FT, dos. Susanna Aaltosen väitöskirja käsittelee suomalaista sisustusarkkitehtuuria. Hän on perehtynyt erityisesti muotoilun, mutta myös arkkitehtuurin historiaan. Aaltonen on opettanut taidehistoriaa Helsingin yliopistossa, Aalto-yliopistossa ja Avoimessa yliopistossa.**





# How Nordic Designers Reacted to Bauhaus? “Nordic Design: The Response to the Bauhaus”

Petteri Kummala & Joonas Rantasalo

**Exhibition review: “Nordic Design: The Response to the Bauhaus”. Bröhan-Museum, Berlin, 24 October 2019 – 1 March 2020.**

The centennial of the original Bauhaus in 2019 generated a plethora of different exhibitions, shows, displays and seminars throughout Europe, particularly in Berlin. When our good selves visited the city in December 2019 there was still a major Bauhaus exhibition ongoing in the Berlinische Galerie as well as some smaller displays around the city. An interesting exception – from the Finnish perspective – to the usual display of Bauhaus “classics” was offered by the Bröhan-Museum with their exhibition *Nordic Design. The Response to the*

*Bauhaus* [*Nordic Design. Die Antwort aufs Bauhaus*].

The Bröhan-Museum specialises in art nouveau, art deco and functionalism. It was originally founded in 1973 by Karl H. Bröhan (1921–2000), a passionate, self-taught collector and connoisseur of art nouveau, art deco, and Berlin Secession. Bröhan donated his notable collection to the city of Berlin in 1981, and in 1983 the museum moved to its current location in the former barracks building belonging to the Charlottenburg Palace complex. Since 1994 the Bröhan-Museum has been one of the 17 organisations under the auspices of the Berlin State Museums [Staatliche Museen zu Berlin].

The Bauhaus as a theme fits perfectly with the profile and scope of the Bröhan-Museum. It is thus no surprise that *Nordic Design* was already the second exhibition on that theme in the museum in 2019. The year began

with *From Arts and Crafts to the Bauhaus*, which concentrated on the evolution of the Bauhaus. The second exhibition focused on the post-Bauhaus era in the Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark) and the reaction that the Bauhaus and German modernism caused in the new design that emerged in these countries from the late 1920s and early 1930s onwards. Both exhibitions were curated by the current director of the museum, Dr. Tobias Hoffmann, the first in collaboration with Dr. Anna Grosskopf. For a Nordic visitor, the focus on the Nordic response to the Bauhaus felt inspiring, not only because it is part of our design history but also because the topic itself is still fresh and open to new research and interpretations.

The main premise behind the exhibition was that Nordic modernism – as opposed to German modernism – did not first and



foremost aim at being avant-garde. That is to say, the main advocates of modernism in the Nordic countries from the mid-1920s onwards were certainly aware of the Bauhaus (and the development of modernism in Germany in general) but adopted their own independent approach to modern design. Instead of aiming to invent avant-garde forms *per se*, the aim of their work was to create custom-made and practical solutions to the problems at hand. Moreover, as the exhibition's introductory text stated, modern design in the North merged with various national characteristics of the respective countries, becoming a constant component in defining their identities.

For visitors like us who have a keen interest in the development and the evolution of Nordic modernism the starting premise of the exhibition was thus quite promising.

The exhibition started with a room dedicated to Finland, comprised mostly of Aino and Alvar Aalto's designs for the Paimio Sanatorium (completed in 1933). Thereafter, each country had its own separate section consisting of respective design classics. The displays were typical and of high quality: each object was well lit and could be viewed from

an appropriate distance. Pieces of furniture sitting neatly on podiums and light fixtures hanging from the ceiling were accompanied by a few well-selected images on the walls depicting iconic sites such as Arne Jacobsen's SAS Hotel in Copenhagen (opened in 1960).

The basic layout of the first part of the exhibition was thus quite traditional and neutral to the extent that it even risked becoming a bit dull. One of course understands the curatorial decisions because the exhibition was designed primarily for a German audience – not for a Nordic visitor who is used to living amidst and even using similar objects every day. Nevertheless, one can't help but wonder if many similar exhibits haven't already been showcased in similar exhibitions several times over the years in Germany. Therefore, a bit more of an out-of-the-box approach would not have gone amiss.

In this respect, the latter part almost felt like a different exhibition altogether. The exhibition design was more inventive and versatile, and the selection of objects more diverse. The approach moved away from national design classics and instead concentrated on the issues of "childhood", "demo-

cratic design" and "hygge". Chronologically the focus of the latter part was on the post-war years up until the 1980s. The displays were playful and imaginative, and the themes were addressed through such Nordic design phenomena as Lego and IKEA. Endearing photographs of children and children's design, together with well-chosen posters, established a happy and optimistic background to the exhibits.

The iconic names or objects were not, however, forgotten; particularly delightful was one of the final displays showing Eero Aarnio's (born 1932) chairs *Ball* (1963), *Pastil* (1967) and *Pony* (1972) together with Verner Panton's (1926–1998) lamps *Type G* (1969), *SP3* (1970) and the *Sitting Wheel* chair (1973) accompanied by images of Panton's fantastic interior designs. In contrast to the preceding exhibition rooms, the walls of the final section were painted black, which gave it a more intense and atmospheric feeling. Even the more traditional displays in the final section, such as Marimekko and Björn Weckström's jewellery designs, gained from this more atmospheric approach.

The second part of the exhibition clearly made up for what was lacking in the first





Figure 1. From the exhibition “Nordic Design: The Response to the Bauhaus”, Bröhan-Museum, Berlin, 24 October 2019 – 1 March 2020. Photo: Joonas Rantasalo.

part: there were interesting comparisons, juxtapositions even, and dialogues between the icons of Nordic design. This type of approach indeed made a more profound point, and one that we would have liked to see throughout the whole exhibition. The founding fathers of Nordic modernism, such as Aalto, Sven Markelius, Gunnar Asplund, and Paul Henningsen, were in constant dialogue and even co-operation with each other (it is a well-known fact, for example, that it was Markelius who proposed Aalto as a member of CIAM before the Frankfurt congress in 1929).

From the Nordic point of view, this actual interaction between Nordic designers seemed to have been neglected and thus deserving of criticism. The interaction between the key players and the cross-pollination of ideas, not only in terms of design and architecture but also in terms of the role of the designer in building a better society, was crucial in the development of the Nordic societies.

It was therefore a pity that even in the second part of the exhibition the central themes of these societies, namely the welfare state and (social) democracy, received at most only a cursory treatment – partly because of





Figure 2. From the exhibition "Nordic Design: The Response to the Bauhaus", Bröhan-Museum, Berlin, 24 October 2019 - 1 March 2020. Photo: Joonas Rantasalo.

Figure 3. From the exhibition "Nordic Design: The Response to the Bauhaus", Bröhan-Museum, Berlin, 24 October 2019 - 1 March 2020. Photo: Joonas Rantasalo.



the short texts on display. In the exhibition book, Dr. Grosskopf's article on democratic everyday design delightfully improves on this in a scholarly manner. However, the other articles in the book, even though expanding on their subjects, are not really able to exceed national boundaries or cover societal themes. Particularly from a Finnish point of view, one also wonders why Artek, originally the epitome of innovative and democratic design, was not even mentioned in the exhibition texts.

For a Nordic visitor, *Nordic Design. The Response to the Bauhaus* proved to be a thought-provoking and promising opening to an interesting topic. Hopefully, the exhibition (and the book) inspires further research. It is evident that there is much more to this topic than one exhibition is able to grasp.

Exhibition book: Tobias Hoffmann, ed., *Nordic Design. Die Antwort aufs Bauhaus – Nordic Design. The Response to the Bauhaus* (Berlin: Bröhan-Museum / Stuttgart: arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2019).



Figure 4. From the exhibition “Nordic Design: The Response to the Bauhaus”, Bröhan-Museum, Berlin, 24 October 2019 - 1 March 2020. Photo: Joonas Rantasalo.

**Joona Rantasalo is curator in the Museum of Finnish Architecture, and Petteri Kummala the head of information services and research in the Museum of Finnish Architecture. Both are members of the board of Docomomo Finland.**



# Antelias kirja Kaija ja Heikki Sirenin arkkitehtuurista

Kirja-arviot

Riitta Nikula

Juhana Lahti & Frans Autio, toim. *Kaikki ja ei mitään. Arkkitehdit Kaija + Heikki Siren* (Helsinki: Suomen arkkitehtuurimuseo, 2020), 159 sivua. Kirjoittajat Juhana Lahti, Elina Standertskjöld, Osmo Lappo, Frans Autio, Susanna Aaltonen ja Kirsi Siren.

Sotien jälkeisen Suomen ankarassa arjessa kasvoi arkkitehteja, jotka kehittivät innovatiivisesti uutta arkkitehtuuria yksityisiin ja julkisiin tehtäviin. Heistä Kaija (1920–2001) ja Heikki (1918–2013) Siren nousivat huomion kohteeksi 1950-luvun alusta lähtien. He perustivat yhteisen toimistonsa 1940-luvun lopulla ja jatkoivat yhteistyötä 1980-luvulle asti. Sen jälkeen toimiston työtä on jatkanut heidän poikansa Jukka. Arkkitehtisukupolvien ketju on poikkeuksellinen, kun muistetaan, että Heikin isä oli J.S. Sirén, Eduskuntata-



lon arkkitehti ja Teknillisen korkeakoulun nykyaikaisen arkkitehtuurin professori.

Sirenien työstä on pitkään kaivattu tutkimukseen perustuvaa kirjaa. Otavan 1976 julkaisema suurteos on kaunis kuvakirja, joka herättää mielihyvää ja mielenkiintoa, mutta ei vastaa herättämiinsä kysymyksiin.

Arkkitehtuurimuseo ja Espoon Kaupunginmuseo KAMU yhdistivät voimansa Siren-tutkimuksessa. Arkkitehtuurimuseo julkaisi tukevan kirjan *Kaikki ja ei mitään. Arkkitehdit Kaija + Heikki Siren* ja KAMU teki WG-keskukseen Elina Standertskjöldin kuratoiman näyttelyn, joka valitettavasti jäi koronakaranteenin jalkoihin. Onneksi tuore kirja onnistui erinomaisesti ja siinä on keskeisiin teemoihin keskittyvät tutkielmat, hyvät kuvat ja tarpeelliset luettelot.

Kirjan toimittajat, Juhana Lahti ja Frans Autio, saivat aikaan opuksen, jossa tuore arkkitehtuurianalyysi liittyy suunnittelijoiden elämäntapaan. Monipuolinen kokonaisuus tarjoaa paljon kaikille.

Juhana Lahden johdanto avaa Sirenien minimalismin pyrkinyttä suunnittelutyötä ”reduoiden jalostettuna arkkitehtuurina”. Käsitteiden täsmällinen selittäminen palkitsee lukijaa. Heikki Sirenin puheenparteen ei teoretisointi kuulunut.

Muistan ikuisesti, miten Heikki 1968 selitti Hakanien ympyrätalon ratkaisun löytymistä talon valmistuttua. Ryhmä seisoivat talon juurella. Arkkitehti kuvaili vauhdikkaasti ongelmia, joita vilkkaan liikenteen jär-

jestäminen vanhan asemakaavan kulmikkaisiin ratkaisuihin olisi aiheuttanut. Hän viittaili Arenan talon pyöreään kulmaan ja Hämeentieltä Siltasaarekadulle valuvaan autojen jonoon ja kiepautti sitten kädellään ilmaan ympyrän. ”Sitten me keksittiin, että ympyrämuotoinen talo ratkaisee ympäristön ja liikenteen ongelmat”.

Syvempien ulottuvuuksien löytäminen ja selittäminen jäi jälkipolville. Siinä uusi kirja onnistuu erinomaisesti. Lahti jatkaa redusoinnista arkkitehtuurin klassisten peruskysymysten pariin ja sijoittaa Kaija ja Heikki Sirenin työn luontevasti J.S:n luomalle tukevalle perustalle. Tällaista selkeyttä ei tavoita, jos katse ja ajattelu ovat takertuneet tyylihistorian kaavoihin.

Lahti keskittää huomion Sirenien materiaalien tajuun ja rakenneratkaisujen kehittämiseen yhdessä insinöörien kanssa. Yhteistyö oli ydinasia kokeellisessa puuelementtirakentamisessa, jota Heikki kehitti kymmeniä vuosia Puutalo Oy:n kanssa.

Analysoidessaan Sirenien tilasommitelua Lahti korostaa vertikaalisten siirtymien taitavaa hallintaa. Tässä yhteydessä hän muistuttaa, että sisäänkäyntien ja porrassousujen korostaminen kuului myös klassisen arkkitehtuurin keinoihin.

Asuntoarkkitehtuurin suunnittelijoina Sirenit nousivat eturiviin jo 1953 voittamalla Asuntoreformikilpailun arkkitehtonisen ja sosiaalisen sarjan ehdotuksellaan, jossa oli keskeistä rivitalojen kehittäminen. Sirenit

osallistuivat ahkerasti kilpailuihin. Lahti laskee, että he 1956–61 saivat maininnan 17:ssä, joista voittoja oli 11. Aktiivisimpina aikoina toimistossa työskenteli jopa 30–40 henkeä.

Elina Standertskjöldin artikkeli jatkaa ja laventaa saumattomasti Lahden tekstiä. Sirenien toimiston projektit kasvavat ja julkinen sektori tarjoaa uusia haasteita. Maa tarvitsee kouluja, liikerakennuksia, hallintorakennuksia, kulttuurirakennuksia, teollisuusrakennuksia, urheilukeskuksia, kirkkoja ja kappeleita sekä asemakaavoja. Menestys kilpailuissa jatkuu ja johtaa valtaviin tehtäviin myös ulkomailla. Bagdadin monumentaalinen konferenssipalatsi ja Linzin uljas konserttitalo lienevät parhaiten tunnettuja. Suomen Saudi-Arabian lähetystö ja Pariisin esikaupungin ketjutaloalue tunnetaan huonommin.

Standertskjöld selvittää suuren tuotannon tasapainoisesti ottaen esille yleisempiä näkökohtia töissä ja ajassa luontevasti edeten. Näin hän välttää hallitusti luettelomaisuuden ongelman.

Kansainvälisistä vaikutteista kysyttäessä Sirenit nostivat 1981 haastattelussa kärkeen japanilaisen puurakennusperinteen, sotien jälkeisen brasilialaisen arkkitehtuurin ja Mies van der Rohen. Richard Neutran, jonka töihin Sirenien töitä on aiheesta verrattu, he olivat tavanneetkin ensimmäisellä Amerikan-matkallaan 1960. Kiinnostava, mutta ei yllättävä tieto on sekin, että toimistossa luettiin tarkimmin 1950–1960 luvuilla tanskalaisia arkkitehtuurilehtiä.



Otaniemen teekkarikylän monivaiheisen suunnittelun ja rakentamisen yhteydessä Standertskjöld nostaa selkeästi ja monipuolisesti esille rakennustekniikan. Materiaalien ja rakenteiden innovatiivinen käyttö ja kehittäminen pommituksen rauniolta kerätyistä tiilistä vaihtelevien muuraustapojen kautta paljaiden puukonstruktioiden rohkeaan nousuun julkisiin tiloihin on vahva tarina. Menestyksekkäs yhteistyö insinöörien kanssa jatkui 1950-luvulta lähtien pitkälle.

Pientalojen elementtirakentamisessa Sirenit olivat pioneereja. Tapiolan Kontiontien rivitalojen puiset julkisivuelementit, kooltaan peräti 16 neliometriä, Sirenit suunnittelivat yhdessä Puutalo Oy:n kanssa. Rivitalojen elementtien kehittäminen johti yhä suurempien tilaelementtien valmistamiseen tehtaalla.

Kansallisteatterin pieni näyttämö oli 1950-luvulla maan ensimmäinen moderni teatterirakennus. Sirenit ratkaisivat sen tuomalla Onni Tarjanteen teatterilinnan taakse ja Eliel Saarisen päärautatieaseman naapuriksi askeettisen modernin kuution. Sen tiukka muoto- ja materiaaliratkaisu oli niin vahva kontrasti vanhalle, että Pietisen usein julkaistu kuva on usein, kuten tässäkin kirjassa (42) retusoitu ja rajattu niin, että vanhan päänäyttämön lavastetorni ei näy kuvassa. Alkuperäisessä kuvassa torni näkyy ylhäällä ja myös heijastuksena vesialtaassa. Sellainenkin kuva on julkaistu, jossa torni on retusoitu Sirenien teatterin yläpuolelta, mutta näkyy komeasti altaan vesipeilissä. Ainoa korjausehdotukse-

ni tämän kirjan seuraavaan painokseen onkin: ottakaa kuva, jossa torni on retusoitu talon yltä, mutta heijastuu veteen. Kuvatekstissä voisi avata keskustelua historiallisen kerrostuneisuuden arvostuksesta rakennetuksessa ympäristössä.

Kirkot, koulut ja kansainväliset työt jatkavat kooltaan kasvavien töiden ketjua. Selkeät perusmuodot ja taitavat valaistusratkaisut löytyvät. Turhaa ei tarvita. Ote pitää.

Esikoistyttären, Kirsi Sirenin artikkeli ”Kotkan ruusu ja pikkusireeni” on teatteriammatilaisen riemastuttava kuvaus perhe-elämästä. Vanhempiensa ja isovanhempiensa kuvat Kirsi maalaa niin reippailla väreillä, että lukija näkee mielessään suurmiehet ja mahtinaiset vauhdissa elämän suurella näyttämöllä. En ole ennen lukenut yhtä rehellisesti rakastavaa ja avoimesti nauravaa kuvausta vanhemmista sukupolvista ja onnellisesta lapsuudesta. Kiitos Kirsi!

Osmo Lapon artikkeli ”Heikin kyydissä” tuo kirjaan 10 vuotta nuoremman kollegan kokemukset. Lappo oli opiskelijana voittanut Teekkarikylän kolmosvaiheen sisustuskilpailun ja tuli Sirenien toimistoon nuorimpana neljästä työntekijästä (1952–1953). Lappo kertoo kiinnostavasti kokemuksistaan monissa hankkeissa ja muistelee, että ”arkkitehtuurifilosofisia keskusteluja ei muistini mukaan toimistossa käyty. Työssä oli vahva tekemisen meininki.”

Susanna Aaltonen hakee sisätiloihin keskittyvän artikkelinsa alussa Kaija Sirenin panosta yhteisessä toimistossa. Laaja-alainen kulttuuriharrastus ja visuaal-

lisen kulttuurin arkistenkin ilmiöiden arvostaminen oli Kaijan vahvuutta. Vaikka hänen osuuttaan yhteisestä suunnittelusta on hankala erottaa, värien valintaa hän ilmeisesti johti. Ainakin Andreas Kornerupin ja Johan Henrik Wancherin Värien kirjasta (1961) Aaltonen löytää Kaijan merkintöjä.

Sirenien vertaaminen Lilly Reichin ja Mies van der Rohen kriittisesti tutkittuun yhteistyöhön on perusteltua. Vaikka työnjako jää hämäräksi ja sitä on hankala tarkkaan määritellä, analyysi selventää suunnitteluprosessia. Aaltonen löytää myös toimiston piirustuksista kolmenlaisia leimoja: ”Heikki Siren, arkkitehti SAFA”, ”Arkkitehtuuritoimisto Kaija ja Heikki Siren” ja ”Sisustusarkkitehtuuritoimisto Siren”. Hän päätyy nimeämään Heikin orkesterin johtajaksi ja kapellimestariksi, Kaijan orkesterin intendentiksi.

Avustajien joukossa oli myös sisustusarkkitehteja, jotka olivat vasta etsimässä paikkaansa suunnittelutoimistoissa. Lars Gestranus oli Sirenien palkkalistoilla 1956–1968 ja osallistui 138 kohteen suunnitteluun. Monet sisustusarkkitehdit aloittivat toimistossa uran, joka jatkui oman toimiston yhteistyönä Sirenien kanssa.

Sirenien tuotannosta Aaltonen on valinnut sisätilojen keskitetyn tarkastelun kohteeksi edustavan joukon toisistaan poikkeavia keskeisiä töitä: oman koti- ja toimistotalon, Otsonpesän rivitalon, Otaniemen kappelin, Kansallisteatterin pienen näyttämön, Ympyrätalon ja Suomalaisen Yhteiskoulun tilat.





Kaikissa asuintaloissa Sirenit sijoittivat yksityiset tilat yläkertaan ja yhteisen oleskelun ja aputilat alakertaan. Perheasunnot suunniteltiin lapsiperheiden arkeen. Aravarivitaloista viiden tilavan asunnon Otsonpesän kalliiseen eleganssiin perusratkaisu oli periaatteessa sama.

Otsonpesästä asuntojen väljä mitoitus ja pintojen korkeatasoiset materiaalit tekivät erityisen loistokohteen. Lars Gestranus suunnitteli huoneisiin myös uniikkeja sisustuselementtejä pukeutumistiloista työhuoneisiin. Julkaisukuvien televisio-, radio- ja levysoitinkaappi saattoi aikanaan herättää vähävaraisemmissakin halua olohuoneen modernisointiin.

Otaniemen kappelin analyysi keskittyy kalusteiden yksityiskohtiin ja yhteenkuuluvuuteen, joka viimeisteli interiörin harmonisen askeesin. Tässä kohteessa kalusteet suunnitteli Heikki Siren. Kappeli on toimiston ainoa työ, jonka Heikki ja Kaija tekivät lähes kokonaan kaksin.

Maailma ja arkkitehtuuri muuttuivat 12 vuodessa Otaniemen kappelin valmistumisesta 1956 KOP:n Ympyrätalon vihkiäisiin 1968 niin perin pohjin, että ulkopuolisen lienee mahdoton uskoa niitä samojen arkkitehtien töiksi. Murros toi arkkitehdeille uudet vaatimukset – ja mahdollisuudet. Ympyrätalon alkuperäinen eleganssi kiiltää ja loistaa kuvissa kylmästi. Aaltonen lainaa osuvasti pankin mainosvideon tekstiä selittämään ajan henkeä.

Ympyrätalon tieltä purettiin aimo pala vanhaa kau-

punkia, monta Heikki Kaartisen suunnittelemaa asuintaloa. Nyt uusi talo on kokenut jo monta muutos- ja korjauskierrosta. Pelottavan elegantti pyöreä pankkitalo on purettu. Ympyrän ytimessä on nyt sekalaisia kauppaliikkeitä ja autopankki hakee uutta käyttöään.

Koulujen suunnittelussa Sirenit osuivat onnellisesti 1970-luvun koulu-uudistuksen toteuttajiksi. Suomalainen Yhteiskoulu nimettiin kokeilukouluksi. Sirenit suunnittelivat uudistukselle kaikesta vanhasta poikkeavat tilat ja hahmon, joka mursi maan kouluarkkitehtuurin vanhat konventiot.

Kirjan riemastuttavin yllätys on Frans Aution artikkeli ”Ajattoman puuarkkitehtuuriperinteen äärellä Suomessa ja Japanissa”. Sirenien omat puheet ja monen arkkitehtuurilehdenkin artikkelit ovat toki vuosikymmeniä rinnastaneet Sirenien arkkitehtuuria Japanin perinteisiin, erityisesti perheen Lingonsön saarelle rakentamia vapaa-ajan rakennuksia, mutta tutkimusta aiheesta en ole nähnyt. Tekstit ovat jääneet tunnelmoinniksi ja kuvien silmämääräiseksi vertailuksi. Harva on ylittänyt korkean kieli- ja kulttuurimuurin.

Japanin arkkitehtuuriin perehtyneenä ja maan kieltä taitavana Frans Autio tutkii nyt ensimmäisenä Sirenien ja Japanin suhdetta monipuolisesti ja selvittää kriittisesti erilaisia tulkintamahdollisuuksia. Analyysi keskittyy kahteen Sirenien Japaniin suunnittelemaan golfkeskukseen, joita hän pitää todennäköisesti ensimmäisinä suomalaisarkkitehtien Japaniin rakennettuina

kohteina. Suomen töistä hän keskittyy Otaniemen kappeliin ja Lingonsön lomasaaressa rakennuksiin.

Aution huomiot osuvat. Heikki Sireniltä alkuun lainattu repliikki Lingonsön kappelista hillitsee lukijankin mielikuvituksen holtitonta lentoa. ”Siitähän on suomalaiset sanoneet et se on niin japanilaisen näkönen ja japanilaiset sano et sehän on ihan suomalaisen näkönen.”

Aution teksti japanilaisuuden myytistä on tiivis johdatus aiheeseen. Hän löytää Arata Isozakin esseistä kiinnostavasti tukea tavalla, joka saa ainakin tämän kirjoittajan kiinnostumaan japanilaisen mestarin ajattelusta, vaikka hänen postmodernistinen rakennustaiteensa ei ole herättänyt erityistä mielenkiintoa. Isozakiä seuraillen Autio osoittaa terävästi, miten kapeasti valikoiden japanilainen arkkitehtuuri on eurooppalaisia kiinnostanut.

Otaniemen kappelin metsään aukeava tila johtaa Aution analyysin Japanin uskontojen synkretismiin ja siitä edelleen suomalaiseen rahvaanuskontoon, jonka luonnetta ja tapoja akateemikko Anna-Leena Siikala on selvittänyt. Aution laaja-alaiset lähteet johtavat hyvin perusteltuihin syviin ajatuksiin. Hänen analyysinsä Otaniemen kappelin kaikkia koskettavasta pyhästä tilasta on ihailtava! Pateettisuutta välttääkseni lainaan tueksi Heikki Sireniltä samaan yhteyteen saatua haastattelusitaattia: ”Siel on ollut buddhat ja shintot ja venäläiset ja kaikki niinku hyväksyy sen.”

Kesäparatiisinsa Sirenit rakensivat Lingonsön saarelle 1966–1969. Matalat asuinrakennukset asettuvat



terasseineen kaartuvana ketjuna kalliomaisemaan, kappeliksi kutsuttu rakennus sijoitettiin erikseen katsomaan avomerelle. Japanilaisuudeksi Autio toteaa mutkattoman koruttomuuden ja sisä- ja ulkotilojen yhdistämisen laajojen terassitasojen avulla. Hirsirakenteet ovat käsittelemättömiä, tehtaalla esivalmistettuja.

Japanissa 1965 julkaistu The Kindai Kechiku -lehti omisti yhden numeron Sirenien arkkitehtuurille. Kiinnostus heräsi siis jo ennen kesäparatiisin rakentamista. Sirenien koruton arkkitehtuuri puhutteli japanilaisia syvästi, ja he saivat 1970-luvun alussa ensimmäisen kutsun Seibu-yhtiöltä. Vuonna 1974 valmistunut golfkeskuksen ravintola Karuizavassa sai nimen Utsjoki. Sama yhtiö tilasi Sirenit suunnittelemaan vielä Onumaan golfkeskuksen, joka valmistui 1976. Golfkeskukset on sittemmin purettu, ja Sirenien arkkitehtuuria edustaa Japanissa enää kolme lomakylää, joissa on yhteensä satoja vuokrattavia hirsimökkejä.

Kaija ja Heikki Siren ovat nyt saaneet arvoisensa paikan suomalaisten arkkitehtuurikirjojen joukossa, joka on karttunut ilahduttavasti kuluneen vuoden aikana. Rohkenen liittää lopuksi sen vertailevaan luetteloon, koska olen huomannut monien arkkitehtuurikirjojen välttävän laajemman julkisuuden.

**Riitta Nikula on Helsingin yliopiston taidehistorian professori emerita.**

### **Kirjasuosituksia Riitta Nikulalta:**

\* Juhana Lahti & Frans Autio, toim. *Kaikki ja ei mitään. Arkkitehdit Kaija + Heikki Siren* (Helsinki: Suomen arkkitehtuurimuseo, 2020) on kaivattu kirja, joka onnistuu maltillisessa koossa (158 s.) tavoittamaan paljon. Se on huolellisesti dokumentoitu viiden tutkijan tuoreen artikkelin kooste, ilo asiantuntijoille ja samalla kirja kaikille arkkitehtuurista kiinnostuneille. Tutkijat tahtovat nykyään välttää suomenkielistä julkaisemista, koska englanniksi saa enemmän arvostuspisteitä. Toivon tietysti, että kirja ilmestyy vielä englanniksi, koska kansainvälistäkin kiinnostusta on.

\* Netta Böök & Kari Immonen, toim. & Aino Niskanen, arkkitehtuurin historian asiantuntijatoim. sekä Laura Berger, kuvatoim.: *Uno Ullberg. Viipurin arkkitehti* (Uno Ullberg -seura & Arkkitehtuurimuseo, 2020). Teos on peräti 23 suomalaisen ja neljän venäläisen tutkijan yhteinen ponnistus mestarista, joka on unohtunut kahdessa maassa. Monumentaalinen kirja on niin suuri, että sitä voi lähestyä ensin näytteenä ja sitten syventyä asiantunteviin artikkeleihin. Vaativa ratkaisu on perusteltu siksikin, että Ullbergin päätöiden kunnostaminen on Viipurissa ajankohtaista. Ks. Susanna Aaltosen arvio tässä julkaisussa.

\* Teppo Jokinen, *Arvorakennusten arkkitehti. Gustaf Nyström suunnittelijana ja opettajana* Helsinki: PARVS, 2020) on odotettu elämäkertä.

\* Esa Laaksonen, *Else Aropaltio, arjen arkkitehti* (Helsinki: Pen & Paper, 2020) on kelpo kirja ahkerasta asutosuunnittelijasta, joka sitoo Aropaltion paikkaan ja aikaan. Teoksessa on hyvät kuvat ja plaanit ja se nostaa näkyville arkiarkkitehtuurin miljöön ja mestarin, jota ei ennen juuri tunnettu Lauttasaaren ulkopuolella.

\* Mikko Laaksonen, *Betoni ja modernismi, Arkkitehti Pekka Pitkänen 1927–2018* (Berlin: DOM publishers, 1921). Ansiokas työluettelon täydentäminen reippaalla journalistisella otteella. Enemmän opas kuin opetus. Hyvä johdanto syventyvään tutkimukseen ansiokkaasta elämäntyöstä.

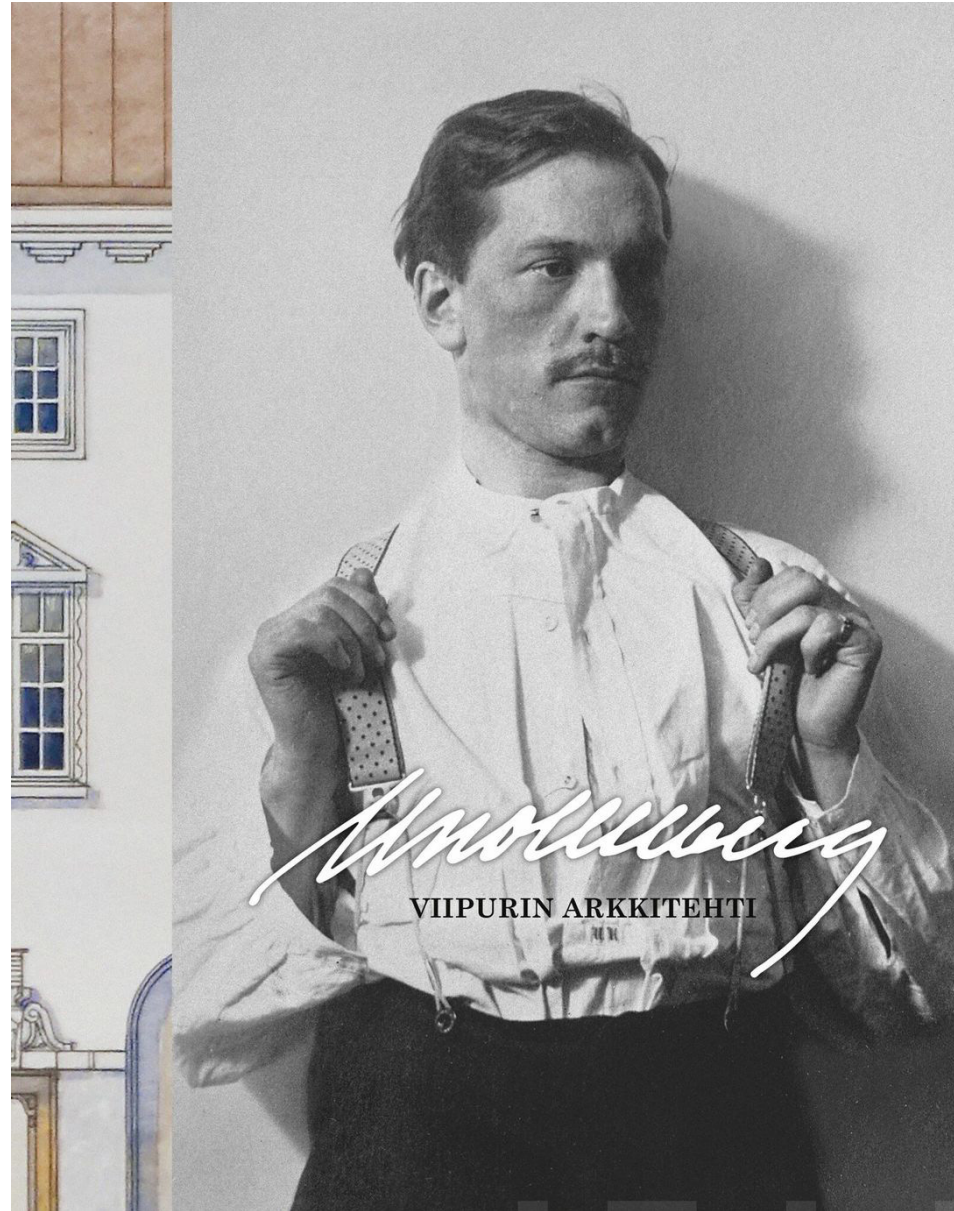


# Suomen arkkitehtuurin historia täydentyy

Susanna Aaltonen

Netta Böök, Kari Immonen, toim. & Aino Niskanen, arkkitehtuurin historian asiantuntijatoim. sekä Laura Berger, kuvatoim.: *Uno Ullberg. Viipurin arkkitehti* (Arkkitehtuurimuseo, 2020), 417 sivua. Kirjoittajat: Anna Autio, Laura Berger, Igor Borisov, Netta Böök, Viktor Dmitrijev, Maarit Henttonen, Kari Immonen, Olli Immonen, Timo Keinänen, Marja Terttu Knapas, Julia Kripatova, Liisa Lindgren, Irma Lounatvuori, Anastasia Martynova, Julia Moshnik, Petri Neuvonen, Aino Niskanen, Riitta Niskanen, Katariina Ockenström, Simo Paavilainen, Lauri Putkonen, Tuula Pöyhiä, Kimmo Sarje, Pirkko-Liisa Schulman, Elina Standertskjöld, Hannes Teräsvuori.

Suomen arkkitehtuurin historian kaanoniin on komealla ja painavalla tavalla lisätty arkkitehti Uno Ullberg (1879–1944). Ahkerasta ja aikaansaavasta arkkiteh-



dista on tehty kohteensa näköinen huolellisesti toimitettu ja tutkimuksellisesti runsas ja esikuvallinen teos. Kirjahanketta varten perustetun Uno Ullberg -seuran ja Arkkitehtuurimuseon julkaisema yli 400-sivuinen monografia muistuttaa hyvällä tavalla myös siitä, että arkkitehtuuritutkimuksen saralla on vielä runsaasti tehtävää ja kiinnostavia aukkopaikkoja täydennettävänä.

Teoksen nimi Viipurin arkkitehti on osuva. Uno Ullberg vaikutti merkittävästi Viipurin kaupungin muotoutumiseen 1910-luvulta 1940-luvulle. Hän perusti syntymäkaupunkiinsa arkkitehtitoimiston vuonna 1906(–1909) yhdessä opiskelukollegansa arkkitehti Axel Gyldénin kanssa, jatkoi sitten vuodesta 1910 alkaen omissa toimistossaan ja toimi Viipurin kaupunginarkkitehtina vuosina 1932–1936. Vuosikymmenten työn tuloksena Viipuriin toteutettiin kaupunkikuvallisesti tärkeitä ja näkyviä rakennuksia, kuten: Kauppahalli (1908, purettu) Pyöreän tornin uudistus sisustuksineen (1922–23) Pamppalan talo (1923–24), Viipurin Panttilaitos (1931), Viipurin taidemuseo ja piirustuskoulu (1928–1930), Viipurin maakunta-arkisto (1932–33) ja Viipurin naistensairaala (1936–37).

Aikalaiset ymmärsivät arvostaa Ullbergin työtä: ”Viipuri voi onnitella itseään, että sillä on taiteilija, joka näin pieteetillä ja taiteellisesti restauroi ja kaunistaa kaupungin muinaismuistoja” (s. 119 lainaus A. L. Weisenbergin kirjeestä Ullbergille 1924.) Kohteiden nykyinen tarkastelu nostaa esiin myös erittäin tärkeän ja akuutin

kysymyksen Ullbergin kohteiden rakennussuojelusta. Viipurin rakennusten kohtalo tuodaan omana teemanan esiin kirjan viimeisessä pääluvussa venäläisten asiantuntijoiden artikkelien kautta. Tämä on eittämättä Netta Böökin Karjalan-tuntemuksen ja venäjän kielen osaamisen ansiosta. Alvar Aallon Viipurin kirjaston tietävät kaikki. Nyt soisi, että myös Uno Ullbergin mittava elämäntyö Viipurissa saisi ansaitsemansa kohtelun ja muun muassa kulttuuri- ja arkkitehtuurihistoriallisesti arvokkaan Viipurin taidemuseon rakennussuojeluun panostettaisiin. Tätä varten teoksen osittainkin toimittaminen myös venäjänkielisenä olisi erittäin perusteltua.

Kirjan lähdemateriaali on kunnioitusta herättävän kattavaa. Suurta aineistoa on myös hyödynnetty tarkasti ja yksityiskohtaisesti. Arkkitehdin työstä kertovat dokumentit käsitellään seikkaperäisesti: toteutumatot ja toteutuneet suunnitelmat lukuisine piirrosluonnoksineen ja rakennetut rakennukset, niiden moninaiset vaiheet, vastaanotto, käyttö ja kohtalo hyvin säilyneistä raunioituneisiin, tärveltyihin ja kokonaan tuhoittuihin. Lukijalle välittyä antoisalla tavalla sekä Uno Ullbergin henkilökohtaiset saavutukset että arkkitehdin työn luonne yleisellä tasolla.

Uno Ullberg oli ennen kaikkea aikaansa seuraava ja uusiutumiskykyinen arkkitehti. Nykyään kai puhuttaisiin resilienssistä, kyvystä joustaa erilaisissa tilanteissa. Tämä joustavuus näkyi niin Uno Ullbergin

työurassa kuin henkilökohtaisessa elämässä, jossa ensimmäisen puolison Maiju Rannan varhainen kuolema vuonna 1917 loi varjon Ullbergin elämään. Uuttera työnteko jatkui vastoin käymisistä huolimatta äkilliseen sairastumiseen ja kuolemaan vuonna 1944. Viimeisimpinä työnä pöydälle jäi Helsingin Lastenkliniikka, joka valmistui 1945.

Ullbergin ammatillinen vahvuus näyttää ilmenneen kykynä omaksua ja soveltaa kansainvälisiä esikuvia, huomioida kollegoilta saamiaan virikkeitä kulloiseenkin kohteeseen eläytyen. Omalla tavallaan hienostuneesti Ullberg otti haltuun erilaisia paikkoja, tiloja ja suunnittelutehtäviä, kaupunkien asemakaavoista kaakeliuuneihin. Uusiutumiskyky ja hienostuneisuus ovatkin kirjoittajien usein käyttämiä sanoja. Ullberg hallitsi suvereenisti erilaiset rakennustyytit: koulut, kirkot, teollisuus- ja liikerakennukset, sairaalat ja asuintalot. Myös erilaisten rakennustekniikoiden hyödyntäminen ja kulloiseenkin kohteeseen sopivien materiaalien käyttö osoittavat Ullbergin hallinneen ammattinsa monipuolisesti. Ullbergin uran laaja-alaisuutta valotetaan lähes kaikista mahdollisista näkökulmista. Ainoastaan sisustukset jäävät hiukan vähemmälle huomiolla. Tytären, sisustusarkkitehdiksi opiskelleen, mutta varhain kuolleen, Tuja Kirkkalan kautta ne olisivat kiinnostava lisäpohdinnan aihe.

Kirjan toimittajien, arkkitehti Netta Böökin ja emeritusprofessori Kari Immosen sekä koko työryhmän



kunnianhimosta kertovat kirjaa varten kootut mittavat liitteet. Ullbergin työluettelo on pienimmät työt poisra-  
jattuinkin kunnioitusta herättävä. Rakennusten kohde-  
kartat, tiedot muuttuneista paikan- ja kadunnimistä li-  
säävät kirjan arvoa lähdeoteoksena. Ullbergin *curriculum  
vitae* on toteutettu visuaalisesti kauniina aikajanana,  
johon on koottu yhdelle sivulle tiedot perhe-, opiske-  
lu- ja virkavuosista sekä tärkeimpien rakennusten yms.  
tiedot ja vuodet.

Laura Bergerin kuvatoimitus ansaitsee erityismai-  
ninnan. Kuva-aineisto on häkellyttävän runsas: pii-  
rustuksia, aikalaisvalokuvia, postikortteja Ullbergin  
omasta albumista. Petri Neuvosen ottamat, tuoreet  
värivalokuvat on julkaistu ansaitsemassaan suuressa  
koossa. Salla Bedardin taitto on tyylikästä ja ilmavaa.  
Jotkut pohjapiirustuksista olisi ehkä voinut julkaista  
suurempina ja siten helpommin tarkasteltavina. Laa-  
jaan kuva-aineistoon ei sisälly vain Ullbergin kohteita.  
Kuvien avulla myös vertaillaan Ullbergin töitä aika-  
kauden muiden arkkitehtien töihin. Se havainnollistaa  
tekstiä ja tukee tutkimusta syventäen Ullbergin töiden  
suhdetta aikaansa ja painottaen niiden merkitystä ai-  
kakautensa arkkitehtuuridiskurssissa.

Teoksen runsaudesta on vaikea ehdottaa turhien  
rönsyjen poistamista, sillä 27 kirjoittajan ja 49 artik-  
kelin kokonaisuus toimii hyvin. Yksittäiset artikkelit  
ovat ansiokkaita ja esittelevät kaleidoskooppimaisesti  
kohdetta eri puolilta. Ullbergin työn kontekstualisointi

syntyajankohtaansa ja paikkaansa sekä myös tutki-  
muksen nykykenttään onnistuu joitakin pieniä puutteita  
lukuun ottamatta erinomaisesti. Tekstien lyhyys ja  
luonne vaikuttavat siihen, etteivät ne aina johdattele tai  
ehdi syviin analyyseihin, mutta luonteva kokonaiskuva  
niistä rakentuu. Erikoisartikkelit puolustavat paikkaan-  
sa. Toimittajien Netta Böökin ja Kari Immosen esipuhe  
ja ensimmäinen artikkeli, ”Uno Ullberg –kaikessa mu-  
kana” ja arkkitehtuuriprofessori Aino Niskasen yhteen-  
vetoartikkeli Rajankävijä-luvussa ovat tietysti oleelliset  
valtavan materiaalin paketoinnin onnistumisessa. Näi-  
den keskeisten tekstien avulla hahmotetaan artikkelien  
suhdetta toisiinsa ja luodaan kokonaisnäkemys Ullber-  
gin arkkitehtuurin merkityksellisyydestä ja vaikutuk-  
sesta ennen ja nyt.

#### Jatkopohdintoja

Hyvin tehty tutkimus antaa aina ajattelemisen aihetta ja  
innostaa jatkotutkimukseen. Rikkaan lukukokemuksen  
jälkeen jää vielä miettimään arkkitehdin työtä, roolia ja  
vaikutusmahdollisuuksia yleisemminkin. Miten Ullber-  
gin kohdalla näkyi arkkitehtuurin luonteeseen kuuluva  
ryhmytyö? Entä minkälainen rooli yksittäisellä arkki-  
tehdillä oli uusien tuulien käyttöönotossa ja ideoiden  
levittämisessä? Entä miten voisi tarkemmin tarkastella  
esimerkiksi juuri Bauhausin vaikutusta ja kansainvä-  
listä tyyliä (tyyli, jota Suomessa kutsuttiin funktionalis-  
miksi) Ullbergin arkkitehtuurissa? Ja laajemmin voisi  
pohtia tutkimuksellista käännettä, jossa yksittäisen

arkkitehdin uran sijaan katsottaisiin laajemmin arkki-  
tehtuuria prosessina ja osana kulttuuria.<sup>1</sup>

Ullbergin työn kontekstualisointi Viipuriin on näh-  
däkseni juuri tällainen yritys tarkastella arkkitehtuuria  
prosessina, rakennuskulttuurin merkityksistä käsin.  
Kirjan luettuaan ymmärtää hyvin senkin, että otsikko  
”Viipurin arkkitehti” ei pysty tavoittamaan Ullbergin  
koko toiminta-aluetta tai ammattikuvaa. Kuten kirjas-  
sa tuodaan esille, Ullberg suunnitteli paljon muuallekin  
kuin Viipuriin, erityisesti Itä-Suomeen, Sortavalaan,  
Imatralle, ja Helsinkiin mm. Bensowin liiketalo ja Las-  
tenklinikan sairaalan, jonka parissa Ullberg työskenteli  
Helsingissä viimeisinä työvuosinaan Lääkintöhallituk-  
sen yliarkkitehtina 1936–1944.

Bensowin liiketalo ja Lastenklinikan sairaala ovat  
esimerkkejä myös bauhaus-ideoiden –funktionalismin  
ja teknisten innovaatioiden – näkymisestä ja sovelta-  
misesta Suomessa. Kuten Aino Niskanen yhteenve-  
toartikkelissaan kirjoittaa, Ullbergin kaikkein uuden-  
mukaisimmat ideat näkyivät tuoreeltaan 1930-luvulta  
eteenpäin, erityisesti sairaala- ja linja-autoasemien  
suunnitelmissa. Aino Niskanen mainitsee vuonna  
1941 valmistuneen Bensowin talon tekniset uutuudet  
Ullbergin itsensä esiin nostamina: sähköistys omine  
muuntajineen, koneellinen ilmanvaihto ja helposti  
vaihdettavat neonkilvet. Riitta Niskanen puolestaan  
tuo esille, että linja-autoasemat edustivat uutta, autois-  
tuvan, modernin maailman rakennustyyppiä. Ullbergin



suunnittelema vuonna 1935 valmistunut Sortavalan asema oli paitsi Sortavalan ensimmäinen funktionalistinen rakennus myös Suomen ensimmäinen funktionalistinen linja-autoasema. Bauhausiin esikuvana ja ilmiönä viittaa suoraan (s. 299) ainoastaan Maarit Henttonen, joka tulkitsee Lastenklinikan modernismia myös bauhaslaisten silmälasien läpi.

Modernismin näkökulmasta Ullbergin merkitys suomalaisen arkkitehtuurin kentällä on huomattava, siitäkin huolimatta, että Ullberg oli enemmänkin soveltaja kuin innovaattori. Kirjan tuottama perustutkimus on tärkeä suomalaisen arkkitehtuurihistorian aukon täydentäjänä. Esipuheessa tavoitteeksi asetetaan Ullbergin asemoiminen pysyvästi arkkitehtuurihistorian kartalle. Tässä on onnistuttu erinomaisesti. Kansikuvaksi valittu valokuva Uno Ullbergista henkseleitään paukuttamassa kertoo, mistä kirjassa on kysymys: melko tuntemattomaksi jääneen arkkitehdin elämän ja työn yksiin kansiin kokoamisesta. Uno Ullberg ei korostanut itseään, mutta ansaitsee nyt saamansa huomion.

#### **Viitteet**

1 Ks. esim. Jessiaca Kelly & Claire Jamieson, "Practice, Discourse and Experience: The Relationship Between Design History and Architectural History", *Journal of Design History*; Feb2020, Vol. 33 Issue 1: 1–15.

**FT, dos. Susanna Aaltosen väitöskirja käsittelee suomalaista sisustusarkkitehtuuria. Hän on perehtynyt erityisesti muotoiluun, mutta myös arkkitehtuurin historiaan. Aaltonen on opettanut taidehistoriaa Helsingin yliopistossa, Aalto-yliopistossa ja Avoimessa yliopistossa.**

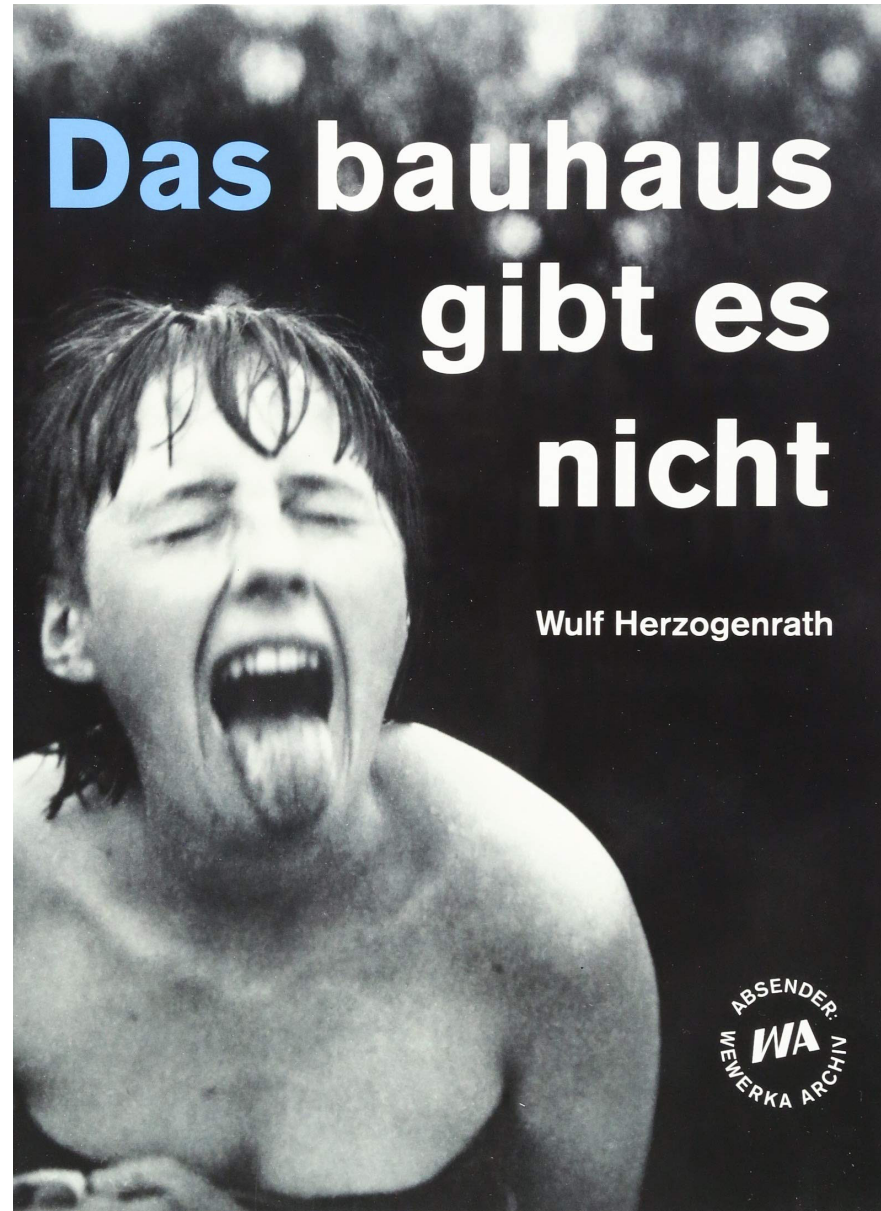


# Bauhausin moninaiset kaudet

Essi Syrén

Wulf Herzogenrath, *Das bauhaus gibt es nicht* (Berlin: Alexander Verlag, 2019), 152 s.

Bauhausin 100. juhlavuosi sai aikaan aihetta käsittelevien saksan- ja englanninkielisten kirjojen aallon. Lukuisten yleistajuisten taidekirjojen sekä tutkimuksellisemmin painottuneiden teosten lisäksi Bauhaus on noussut esille myös fiktion aiheena esimerkiksi Theresia Enzensbergerin romaanissa *Blaupause* (2017). Yksi Bauhaus-tutkimukseen liittyvistä teoksista on Wulf Herzogenrathin *Das bauhaus gibt es nicht* (2019), joka on kokoelma taidehistorioitsija Herzogenrathin eri vuosikymmeninä ilmestyneitä artikkeleita Bauhausista. Vaikka teos on artikkeli- ja sivumäärältään melko suppea, se onnistuu tuomaan yllättävän hyvin esille Bauhausin erilaisia lähtökohtia ja painopisteitä.



Kirjan provokaatioksi tarkoitettu nimi *Das bauhaus gibt es nicht* liittyy Herzogenrathin ydinteisiin. Nimi on suoraan käännettynä *Bauhausia ei ole*, mutta otsikon aloittava saksan kielen määräinen artikkeli *das*, joka viittaa yhteen määrättyyn kokonaisuuteen, kritisoi kielen tasolla yhdenmukaisuuden ajatusta. Nimen voisi siis kääntää myös *Yhtä Bauhausia ei ole*, sillä yhden Bauhausin sijaan vuonna 1919 perustetun koulun historia koostui lukuista erilaisista, usein myös ristiriitaisista näkemyksistä arkkitehtuurista, muotoilusta, pedagogiikasta sekä taiteen ja politiikan suhteesta. Herzogenrath siis kritisoi näkemystä, jonka mukaan Bauhaus olisi pelkistettävissä yhteen ominaisuuteen, Bauhaus-tyyliin.

Teokseen valikoidut Herzogenrathin artikkelit ovat vuosilta 1977, 1978, 2009 ja 2010. Kirjan aloittaa johdantoartikkeli, jonka hän on kirjoittanut vuonna 2018 nyt arvioitavaa teosta varten. Hän tarkastelee kanoisoidun tulkinnan taustoja Bauhaus-vastaanoton eri historiallisten tilanteiden näkökulmasta ja keskittyy erityisesti vuonna 1968 järjestettyyn suureen Bauhausin 50-vuotisjuhlanäyttelyyn, joka on vaikuttanut merkittävästi myöhempään vastaanottoon. Saksan liittotasavallan ulkoasiainministeriön rahoittama näyttely kiersi ympäri maailmaa ja keräsi miljoonayleisön. Näyttely vaikutti omalta osaltaan Bauhaus-tyylin käsitteen syntyyn ja yksinkertaisti näin myöhempää tulkintaa koulun taiteellisesta ja yhteiskunnallisesta toiminnasta.

### Bauhausin viisi vaihetta

Teoksen ensimmäinen varsinainen artikkeli ”Die fünf Phasen des Bauhauses” on esitelmäkäsikirjoitus Centre Pompidoussa järjestettyä kollokviota varten vuodelta 1978. Artikkelissa Herzogenrath painottaa Bauhausin moninaisia puolia, jotka vaihtelivat kolmen eri johtajan kaudella suunnittelun tavoitteissa, materiaalivalinnoissa, työprosesseissa ja yksittäisten tekijöiden omissa monimuotoisissa lähtökohdissa. Artikkelista muodostuu kirjan ydinteksti, sillä Herzogenrathin muissakin artikkeleissa toistuva keskeinen argumentti Bauhausin monipuolisuudesta tiivistyy teoriaksi 14 vuotta toimineen Bauhausin viidestä eri vaiheesta.

Ensimmäinen, ekspressiivis-individualistinen käsityöläisvaihe ajoittuu Weimarin Bauhausin alkuvuosille 1919–1922. Ensimmäistä maailmansotaa edeltänyt ekspressionismi vaikutti edelleen voimakkaasti saksalaisessa kulttuurissa, mikä näkyi myös Bauhausiin rekrytoitujen opettajien kuten Lyonel Feiningerin ja Paul Kleen taiteessa. Johannes Itten toi Mazdanan -opin myötä myös aikakauden esoteerisia virtauksia Bauhausiin. Gropius antoi vapauksia opettajilleen eikä pyrkinyt määrittelemään kurssien sisältöä, minkä vuoksi vuonna 1922 Willem Huszar kritisoi *de Stijl* -lehdessä Bauhausia ”sattumanvaraiseksi ja oikukkaaksi” (29). Käsitteellisyys ja materiaalien tutkiminen olivat alkuvaiheen keskeisiä arvoja, jotka myöhemmin muokautuivat teollisen tuotannon mittasuhteisiin.

Toinen, konstruktivistinen vaihe ajoittuu Weimarin ajan kahdelle viimeiselle vuodelle. Herzogenrathin mukaan Bauhausin henkilökunta ja opiskelijat irrottautuvat vuoden 1922 lopussa ja 1923 työssään tunteesta, yksilöllisyydestä sekä ornamentista. Uudet typografiset kokeilut, selkeät muodot ja uudenlainen arkkitehtuuri, joka tiivistyi Georg Muchen suunnittelemassa Haus am Horn -esimerkkitalossa, olivat esillä vuoden 1923 suuressa Bauhaus-näyttelyssä, joka esitteli koulun mestareiden ja oppilaiden tuotoksia.

Bauhausin toiminta oli uhattuna talvilukukaudesta 1924 alkaen ja lopulta uusi koulu avattiin Dessaussa 4. joulukuuta 1926. Herzogenrath ajoittaa Bauhausin kolmannen, funktionaalisesti painottuneen ja teolliseen tuotantoon tähtäävän kauden vuosille 1924–1927, joskin hän myöntää itsekkin, että vaiheen ajallinen rajaaminen on muutosten liudentumisen vuoksi hankalaa. Bauhausin muutto Dessaan teollisuuskaupunkiin korosti entisestään teollisen tuotannon merkitystä alkuvuosien käsityöläisyyden sijaan. Esimerkkinä kauden muotoilusta Herzogenrath käyttää Marcel Breuerin putkirunkoista Wassily-klassikkotuolia *Clubsessel B 3* (1926), joka on edelleen tuotannossa.

Walter Gropius oli vuoteen 1927 mennessä luonut Bauhausiin haluamansa kaltaisen arkkitehtuuriolosuhteen, jonka johtajaksi tuli Hannes Meyer. Meyer nousi huhtikuussa 1928 Gropiuksen seuraajaksi, jonka kaudella arkkitehtuuri ja sen funktionaalisuus korostui





entisestään. Herzogenrath ajoittaakin Bauhausin neljännen vaiheen Meyerin johtajakaudeksi 1928–1930. Meyerin pääpyrkimys arkkitehtuurissa oli luoda asuntoja yhteiskunnan vähävaraisille ja hänen myötäan politiikka tuli mukaan Bauhausin toimintaan. Oikeistoradikaalien kasvava painostus paikallispolitiikassa lopetti lopulta Meyerin kauden ja vuonna 1931 Bauhausin toiminnan Dessausa. Viidennessä vaiheessa vuosina 1930–1933 poliittisesti Meyeria neutraalimpi Ludwig Mies van der Rohe jatkoi koulun kolmantena johtajana, joka loi uusia kontakteja teollisuuteen ja yritti pitää toiminnan käynnissä jatkuvasta kansallissosialismin paineesta huolimatta. Berliiniin muuttanut Bauhaus sulki ovensa lopullisesti huhtikuussa 1933 muutama kuukausi kansallissosialistien valtaannousun jälkeen.

Herzogenrathin esittämä jaottelu on perusteltu ja toimii hyvänä argumenttina kirjan ydinteeseille, joka vaikuttaa nykykontekstissa yllättävän tuoreelta artikkeliin kirjoitusajankohdasta huolimatta. Uudemmassa tutkimuksessa samankaltainen kritiikki yksipuolista Bauhaus-tulkintaa kohtaan on noussut esille muun muassa Bauhaus-arkiston tutkijan Adriana Kapsreiterin Tahiti 8: From Material to Immaterial: Art Historical Practices in the Contemporary World -konferenssissa pitämässä esitelmässä.<sup>1</sup> Hän kritisoi näkemystä tiukan funktionaalisen Bauhaus-tyylistä ja nosti sen sijaan esille Bauhausin varhaiskauden esoteerisuuden, ekspressionistiset ideat sekä opetusta leimanneen yhteisölli-

suuden, jotka heijastuivat myös Bauhausin myöhempiin vuosiin.

Herzogenrathin sinällään perusteltua jakoa eri kausiin voi toki kritisoida yksittäisten vaiheiden yksinkertaistamisesta, joka on väistämätöntä periodisoinnissa. Lisäksi jaottelussa korostuu voimakkaasti hallinnollinen näkökulma ja kolmen eri johtajan rooli. Johtajat ovat ymmärrettävästi linjauksillaan vaikuttaneet merkittävästi opetukseen, opiskelijavalintoihin ja opettajien rekrytointeihin. Olisi kuitenkin kiinnostavaa, jos Herzogenrath olisi avannut laajemmin myös opiskelijoiden näkökulmaa eri kausina. Kaiken kaikkiaan Bauhausin monimuotoisuuden analysoiminen erilaisten kausien avulla mahdollistaa koulun toiminnan tarkastelun eritellymin.

### **Bauhausin ja politiikan jännitteinen suhde**

Herzogenrath käsittelee ansiokkaasti teoksessaan usein huomiotta jäänyttä aihealuetta eli Bauhausin suhdetta Weimarin tasavallan poliittisiin ideologioihin sekä Thüringenin ja Anhaltin osavaltioiden sekä Weimarin ja Dessauin kaupunkien paikallispolitiikkaan. Bauhaus perustettiin huhtikuussa 1919 pian ensimmäisen maailmansodan päättymisen jälkeen ja hieman ennen Versailles'n rauhansopimuksen solmimista. Weimarin tasavallan alkuvuodet olivat taloudellisesti niukat suurten sotakorvausten vuoksi, minkä vuoksi Bauhausin ylläpitäminen pakotti Walter Gropiuksen solmimaan

hyvät välit paikallisiin poliittikkoihin. Jo koulun alkuvuosina toiminta oli usein yksittäisten paikallispoliitikkojen äänen varassa. Käytännön realiteeteista huolimatta Gropius pyrki pitämään politiikan etäällä johtamastaan oppilaitoksesta, minkä vuoksi Bauhausissa ei ollut virallisia poliittisia opiskelijajärjestöjä tai muita toimijoita Gropiuksen kaudella. Meyerin kaudella sosialismin merkitys alkoi korostua Bauhaus -arkkitehtuurin taustaideologiana, minkä vuoksi koulu ajautuikin ristiriitohin paikallistason kansallissosialistien kanssa.

Herzogenrath tarkastelee vuonna 2009 ilmestyneessä artikkelissaan ”Fanal einer neuen Zeit” Oskar Schlemmerin Bauhaus-freskoja ja niiden tuhoamiseen liittyviä poliittisia ulottuvuuksia. Schlemmer suunnitteli vuoden 1923 suurta Bauhaus-näyttelyä varten suuria freskoja eri puolille Henry van de Velden suunnittelemaa koulurakennusta (1907–1908). Näyttelyä varten maalatut freskot jäivät esille näyttelyn sulkeuduttua. Samaa tarkoitusta varten tehtyjä Joost Schmidin reliefejä kuitenkin vahingoitettiin toukokuussa 1924. Talonmiehen kirjeen mukaan syylliset olivat humalaisia opiskelijoita, joskin teolle saattoi olla myös poliittinen selitys, sillä osavaltiovaalien seurauksena nationalistit pääsivät valtaan Thüringenissä helmikuussa 1924. Bauhausin rahoitus puolitettiin seuraavana vuonna, mikä johti päätökseen olla jatkamatta opettajien määrällisiä suhteita ja lopulta koulun siirtymiseen Dessauhun. Schlemmerin suunnittelemat freskot maalattiin



lopulta valkoiseksi vuonna 1930 silloisen kansallissosialistien paikallispoliitikko Paul Schulze-Naumburgin päätöksestä (70).

Vaikka Bauhaus suljettiin lopullisesti vasta vuonna 1933, Herzogenrath näkee vuoden 1924 tapahtumat enteena Bauhausin myöhemmistä vuosista. Kansallissosialistit suhtautuivat lähtökohtaisesti hyvin kriittisesti Bauhausiin Gropiuksen poliittisesta neutraaliudesta huolimatta. Meyerin kaudella sosialistinen liikehdintä Bauhausissa lisääntyi, mutta opiskelijakunta oli silti hyvin heterogeenista. Stefan Kraus lainaa teoksen päätävässä artikkelissaan opiskelijan kirjettä vuodelta 1932, jossa kuvaillaan kahden ryhmittymän, kommunistien ja muiden vasemmistolaisien sekä oikeistolaisemman ryhmän välistä jännitettä. Oikeistoon orientoituneiden opiskelijaryhmittymän ideologiat ulottuivat kevyestä konservatismista kansallissosialismiin (140).

Bauhaus on herättänyt poliittisia intohimoja myös koulun sulkemisen jälkeen, mihin Herzogenrath viittaa lyhyesti johdantoartikkelissaan. Analyysia Bauhausin poliittisesta merkityksestä toisen maailmansodan jälkeen olisi ollut kiinnostavaa lukea enemmänkin, mutta aihealue olisi vaatinut teokseen vähintäänkin yhden artikkelin lisää.

### **Elämää Bauhausissa**

Bauhaus oli näkyvä osa Weimarin ja Dessauin kulttuurielämää ja koulu vaikutti monin tavoin kaupunkien

sosiaaliseen todellisuuteen ja katukuvaan. Alun perin vuonna 2010 ilmestyneessä artikkelissaan ”Bauhaus Weimar: 1915–1925: international oder ’anational’” Herzogenrath tarkastelee lähemmin koulun toimintaa nationalismin ja 1920-luvun kosmopoliittisuuden ja kansainvälisyyden näkökulmasta. Bauhausin 50-vuotisjuhlanyllyttelyn alaotsikoksi oli valittu ”german exhibition”, joka osoittautuu varsin harhaanjohtavaksi, jos tarkastellaan koulun toimintaa kansainvälisyyden näkökulmasta. Lukuisat opettajat, kuten sveitsiläinen Johannes Itten ja unkarilainen László Moholy-Nagy, kutsuttiin Bauhausin opettajiksi ulkomailta. Myös opiskelijoissa oli paljon nuoria Saksan ulkopuolelta, pääsääntöisesti Keski-Euroopasta. Lisäksi Bauhausin keskeisillä toimijoilla oli yhteyksiä moniin aikakauden taiteellisiin suuntauksiin Saksan ulkopuolella. Wassily Kandinsky loi yhteyden venäläiseen konstruktivismiin, kun taas vuonna 1921 ja 1922 Bauhausissa toiminut Theo van Doesburg toi opetukseen vaikutteita De Stilj -liikkeestä.

Teoksen päättää Stefan Krausin artikkeli arkielämästä Bauhausissa. Koulun toiminnassa korostui voimakkaasti yhteisöllisyys, joka näkyi lukuisissa perinteeksi muodostuneissa juhlissa. Naamiaisilla ja muilla tapahtumilla kuten vuosittaisella leijajuhlalla (*Drachenfest*) oli myös taiteellisia ja pedagogisia ulottuvuuksia, sillä opiskelijat joutuivat keräämään ja käyttämään arkisia materiaaleja ja tekemään luovia ratkaisuja. Hauskana yksityiskohtana Kraus mainitsee Bauhausin jazzorke-

sterin, joka vuosien mittaan kehittyi ja etabloitui niin, että *Berliner Zeitung* -sanomalehden kriitikko kehui orkesteria parhaaksi kuulemakseen jazzbändiksi (136).

Artikkelien lisäksi teokseen on sisällytetty myös valikoima Bauhausissa opiskelleiden Ruth Hollósin ja Erich Consemüllerin jäämistöistä koottuja aiemmin julkaisemattomia valokuvia. Monet kuvista on otettu naamiaisissa tai muissa juhlissa, mikä kuvastaa hyvin yhteisöllisyyttä. Kuvissa korostuu myös leikkisyys. Kirjan kanneksi valittu valokuva Katt Bothista näyttämässä kieltä kameralle tiivistää hyvin Bauhaus-opiskelijoihin liitetyn riehakkuuden, joka herätti närää erityisesti Weimarin ja Dessauin konservatiivissa piireissä.

Herzogenrathin teos onnistuu antamaan Bauhausista erittäin monipuolisen kuvan vain 152 sivussa. Joitain näkökulmia, kuten Bauhausin vaikutusta taidepedagogiikkaan, olisi voinut syventää, mutta tällöin julkaisu olisi todennäköisesti ollut useamman eri alan asiantuntijan koostama artikkelikokoelma. Herzogenrathin artikkelit muodostavat kirjoitusajankohtien vaihtelusta huolimatta selkeän kokonaisuuden, josta hahmotuu hyvin teoksen ydinteesi: yhden Bauhausin sijaan vuonna 1919 perustettu koulu edustaa lukuisia, usein myös keskenään ristiriitaisia näkökulmia muotoiluun, arkkitehtuuriin ja yhteiskuntaan.



## Endnotes

1 Adriana Kapsreiter, "From Immaterial to Material: An Art Historical Genesis of the Bauhaus Design Icons", esitelmä *Tahiti 8: From Material to Immaterial: Art Historical Practices in the Contemporary World* -konferenssissa, 28.11.2019.

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